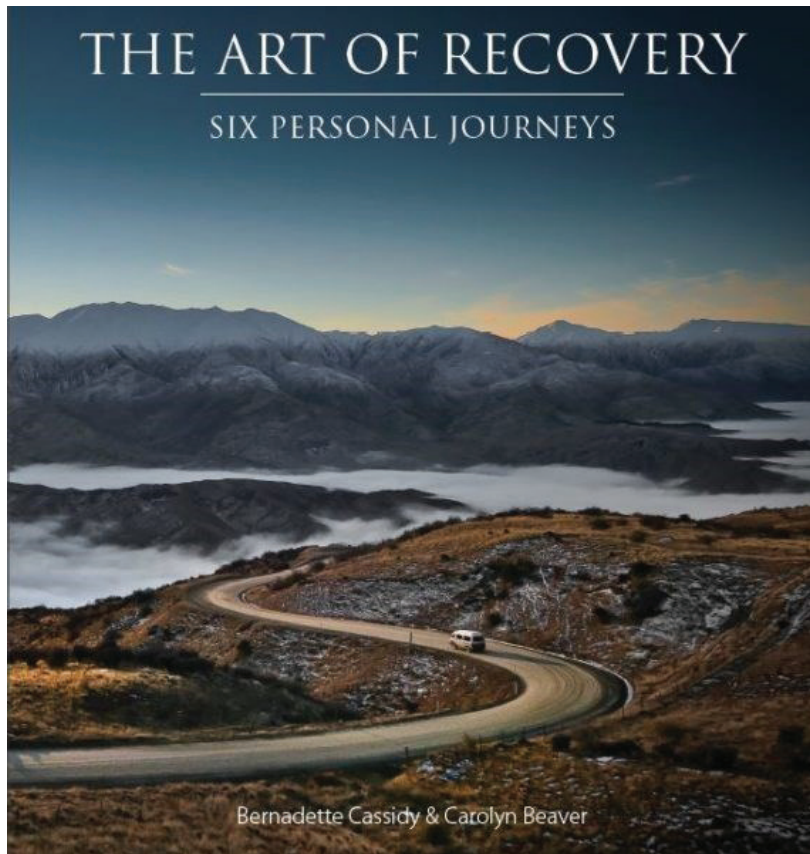


# The Art of Recovery: Six personal journeys

Frank Frizelle



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**A**s an editor you receive books for review, which are sent to suitable people following an email agreement to review. Usually they do, sometimes, for various reasons they don't. Usually when that happens, the book disappointingly disappears. Rarely books are returned, often with a note of apology. This is such a book.

This book is not a handbook on rehabilitation and is six stories of recovery from various major life/health events with a constant theme. There is a foreword by Gerben DeJong and another by the late Alan Clarke. DeJong (as I found out from this book) published on an independent living paradigm in 1979, and the basis

for this forms one of the main messages for this book. Alan Clarke was Professor of Surgery in Dunedin, before becoming Dean of the Christchurch Clinical School (part of University of Otago) and subsequently Director of the Burwood Spinal Unit. These changes in direction in Alan's life all followed major health issues, as such he had a personal and professional interest in the recovery process.

The message from the book is well outlined in Alan Clarke's foreword, that is during recovery from serious illness or injury the person (patient, consumer) must be in charge of the rehabilitation process, not the rehabilitant professionals; these as

Alan Clarke stated are best regarded as staff. The patient has to own the problem, it is theirs, and they have the most incentive to get it right.

The chapters tell the story in the patients in their own words of their experience of rehabilitation, often with quite long follow-up. The chapters describe the events following various health events, including depression and addiction, head injury, spinal cord injury, cancer, multiple limb amputation and cerebral palsy. Some of the stories are a bit jarring and one chapter comes with a warning “some contents of this story may disturb!” The stories are told in the patients’ own words and are an interesting read in themselves, however the framing, partially

by Alan Clarke’s foreword is excellent and puts a context around the message.

There are a few factual errors, eg, Alan Clarke was a general surgeon, not an orthopaedic surgeon, though he did end up as Head of the spinal unit. The book is well put together, glossy good-quality pages, reasonable binding and has a number of pictures. Text is of a good size and quality. The cover has a picture of a van on a long winding road, emphasising the message of rehabilitation/recovery being a journey.

This book will appeal to any patient or health professional involved in the recovery process, and it is a book that can be read more than once.

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**Competing interests:**

Nil.

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