



Anne-Marie Tipper and Sarah Rosborg

## Big Hearts for Life-Changing Work

THE INCREDIBLE SONYA DRIVER AND ECO TAN ARE HOUSEHOLD NAMES IN AUSTRALIA, BUT WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT SONYA IS THAT SHE HAS A HEART FOR CHARITABLE MISSIONS.

WORDS VANESSA FINNIGAN

Hearing about the transformational work of Anne-Marie Tipper and Sarah Rosborg, who have saved the lives of hundreds of children in Kenya through their charity Rafiki Mwema (which means 'Loyal Friend'), pulled at Sonya's heartstrings. The impact of sexual abuse and the profound lack of care and support for young girls in Kenya who experience abuse is heartbreaking, compounded by the stigma that follows. They have girls as young as two years old with them and teenagers who are now 15. Sarah and Anne-Marie work with families in the communities, and with schools, churches, villages and

government officials to ensure the cycle of abuse is broken and the children are given a chance to live as children should, and heal from their trauma.

They now have four therapeutic houses that are home to 70 children (two girls' houses and two boys' houses). This is in addition to 180 children who have left their care and returned to a safe family member in their community, still under the watchful eye of Rafiki Mwema's Outreach Team.

This month, these three gorgeous beings share their reflections on how they connected, what drives them and their experiential learning with 'gifting and receiving'.

"We found Sonya through our

ambassador Celeste Barber. It was many different events that led us together and how it all happened was meant to be. Sonya came into our lives when we were at an all-time low while living in Sweden. She reached out to us when we had \$500 in the bank and we literally (and we are not just saying that word for effect!) had no idea how we were going to continue. You can see the first post [www.rafikimwema.com/eco-tan-pledge-100k-to-rafiki-mwema/](http://www.rafikimwema.com/eco-tan-pledge-100k-to-rafiki-mwema/) about Sonya's first campaign with us on our website," said Sarah about her experience of 'ask and receive'.

Sonya responded with, "Well, you all know I'm going to say God made it happen! Or maybe God worked

through Celeste Barber. Yes, I sensed Sarah thought I was full of 'sh #t' like most people that say, 'I'm going to give you money'. I was a stranger, after all. Within seven days, Celeste, Sarah and I raised over \$100,000 through our social media platforms. I donated thousands of our certified organic 'Glory Oil'. It was actually really stressful; however, I believe it's the grit and pain where the gold is found."

Sonya, Sarah and Anne-Marie not only share similar values and world views, they also describe themselves as 'doers'. And when it comes to engaging in life-changing work, they say it's really a case of head down and tail up.

"We prefer to just get on with the job... get it done. No point in telling the world what you ARE going to do or what you WANT to do... just get on with it and do it. Actions speak far louder than words," said Anne-Marie.

"Sonya and I are always chatting about the injustices of the world. I often reach out to her when I have reached my limit and need to let go of my sadness, and she will tell me about people she has met that she is helping or projects she is helping. That is the amazing thing about Sonya. It's not just us she helps... there are so many, she is incredible," said Sarah.

Sonya is quick to point out that while she may be jaded and believe most humans are 'full of it', it's good intentions, ideas and words that matter. "KINDNESS has a cost," she shared. "Either your time, your convenience or your money."



Celeste Barber and Sonya Driver

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Every month 'Eco by Sonya' donate to Rafiki Mwema from the profits of their hand cream. These funds go directly into their monthly running costs, but they don't always make ends meet. They generally receive \$5-\$50 a month from each sponsorship and their costs are approximately \$40,000 a month, so they can struggle to meet this target.

'Receiving' can be a challenge for us at this time on our planet, whether we are an individual, organisation or charity. Receiving funds from people who place their trust in you and your work, is about allowing others to contribute, so that you can keep being an invitation and catalyst for change. "To give your hard-earned money to people who are doing work on the other side of the world is a huge gift that we will never take for granted. We will honour the money we are given and the hard work that it took to get the funds. We will always use it wisely and

with the children's well-being in mind," said Sarah and Anne-Marie.

Sonya shares, "It's a spiritual currency in my book."

As I found out more about the work Sarah and Anne-Marie were offering, it was clear it was very diverse, reaching some of the most disadvantaged groups of people in countries like India, Romania and Africa. And in Australia, they shared their efforts with the safe courtroom project for children in Kenya.

After devoting their lives to giving, I asked the ladies what they do to give back to themselves and what self-care practices they have in place for personal sustainability.

"Over the years, I have realised that my version of self-care is hibernating. I am a homebody, and I tend to hide for days/weeks/months. I have a wonderful group of friends that understand me and my funny ways and don't question it. They understand when I don't come to events and don't ever question our friendship. They know that I love my loved ones with everything and even if they don't hear from me and I say 'no' to most social events, that just means I need time to recharge," said Sarah.

Anne-Marie added, "My self-care is pretty mixed; I adore spending time with family, friends and those I love. I get so much back from being around my grandchildren and family. But I also love going for walks and just enjoying the world around me. I'm not really like Sarah, as I LOVE speaking at functions!"

Sonya shared, "I'm exactly the same as Sarah. I say 'no' to all engagements, and I withdraw to my home. Sarah knows how hard it is for me to go to a function too. She's expecting me at one in a few weeks... ha-ha. I recently joined a gym for my physical stress, and I pray for my spiritual and mental health. I also collect dogs."

*There are so many ways you can get involved with the amazing work SARAH and ANNE-MARIE are offering in Kenya, but obviously, the best way to help is through donations so they can continue to make a difference in the lives of these children. Another very useful way to help is by spreading the word about their work. This could be just telling someone you know about their story or by sharing one of their posts on social media. For more information, visit: [www.rafikimwema.com/get-involved/what-can-you-do](http://www.rafikimwema.com/get-involved/what-can-you-do)*