

Angels

the strengths of everyday kindness

Digital Version



A set of 52 heart-warming watercolour cards designed to create conversations of hope and change.

Artist: Trace Balla
Booklet: Karen Bedford



w: innovativeresources.org

Welcome to the Digital Version of

Angels

the strengths of everyday kindness



St Luke's Innovative Resources is delighted to bring you the interactive, versatile, digital version of this conversation-building resource, first published as a hard copy card set packaged in a polypropylene box.

You can:

- swipe through the digital cards, one at a time
- swipe through a row of thumbnail images at the bottom of the screen
- bookmark/tag images
- write, scribble or draw on the digital cards—you may want to circle a relevant statement or scribble notes as a card is discussed
- add and drag notes anywhere on the images
- highlight, draw and write in multiple colours
- take a screen shot and access the image in your photo gallery
- send the image to the person you are working with so they have a copy
- print the image and mail it to the person so they have a hard copy
- save the image in your files as a record of your conversation.

How can I use this digital tool remotely with groups or individuals?

If you are running groups or meetings using Skype, Zoom or other similar video conferencing tools, you can use our digital cards and tools in a number of different ways.

A good place to start is to give the group or person some time to get to know the cards:

- The facilitator can share their screen, and scroll through the images so everyone can see.
- Point out the different features of the card set including the types of images, the format of the words (if any), the suits (if relevant) and any other unique features.
- Show them some of the features such as the scribble and text tools.

Deliberate Selection

- As you scroll through the cards, invite the person or group to pick cards that jump out at them for any reason. Perhaps it is the image that catches their attention. Perhaps it is a word or a question, or some other quality of the card. It may be a card they are curious about, or would find most helpful to focus on, or think is very important, or it may be a card that matches something they are thinking about or experiencing at the moment, or even a card that expresses something they have never thought about before.
- As the facilitator, you may wish to choose one or two cards to prompt an activity or discussion.

Random Selection

An alternate way of getting activities started is to select images randomly, for example:

- Ask each person to close their eyes and randomly say, 'Stop!' as the facilitator swipes through the images.
- Or ask each person to choose a number between 1 and X (X being the number of cards in the set). This is the number of their randomly selected card.
- Or use the timer on your phone set to a chosen interval—5 seconds, 10 seconds, etc. Stop on the image that is on screen when the timer dings.

Many videoconferencing tools allow you to put people into groups using 'breakout' rooms. So you may want to invite two or more people to discuss what a particular card means to them, and then come back to the whole group.



Some questions for reflection and conversation

Whether you use a deliberate or random selection method, you can then build the conversation by inviting each person to read or comment on their card, if they wish.

Facilitators can then ask individuals or groups questions like:

- What does this card mean to you?
- Have you thought about the topic on the card before?
- On a scale of 1-10 how important is this to you?
- Can you think of a time when this card was particularly relevant? What happened?
- When this is happening, what is the effect?
- When this is not happening, what is the effect?
- Do you know anyone who is really good at this?
- What do they do?
- What is one simple thing you could do today or tomorrow that would make a difference?
- How will you notice the effects? (Some people ask for feedback, and others prefer to notice carefully how it feels inside themselves and what the effect is on others.)



In the booklet written especially for the card set you have chosen, you will find a lot more information. It includes the purpose of this card set, its origins and practice base, things you should take into consideration before using the cards, and many creative ideas for using the cards. Please adapt the suggestions to the digital environment.

**Don't hesitate to call us for support
in using this digital resource.**



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Introduction: Everyday Kindness



Acts of everyday kindness are all around us. They can come in the form of a kind word, a helping hand, a nod of appreciation, an encouraging smile, a story, a wave, a letter, a gentle caution, a friendly visit or a meal shared. We could think of each one of these acts of everyday kindness as the touch of an angel.

While the kindnesses that people show us, and that we show others, may not take literal flight on fluttering wings, they can bestow a powerful blessing on the recipient. When a smile, a kind word or a helping hand arrives at the right time and in the right form, it can feel like an angelic gift to the one who receives it.

And it is not only the recipient who may feel that an angel has made a visit. The giver too experiences the glow of their impulse towards caring and generosity. It is as if in the thinking and acting out of kindness to another, we bestow something of the intended gift upon ourselves. In this way, even if the recipient does not choose to take up the intended kindness (perhaps with good reason), a true kindness is never actually wasted.

Even big challenges and sad times can contain blessings—both obvious and hidden. Such blessings or gifts may be in the form of the wisdom that we gain from our hard-won lessons and experiences, or even the simple awareness that we want to do something differently next time.

Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness is a set of cards for thinking and talking about the myriad of ways we give and receive. Not only the big, earth-shattering—and rather rare—moments of good fortune, but all the tiny, everyday ways in which our lives are enriched by our connections with others and with the natural world.

Perhaps it can be said that those who are most happy are those who have developed the capacity to notice and savour moments of kindness and upliftment, and extract the learning from any challenges along the way. Perhaps tiny kindnesses are scattered throughout everyone's day, but many of us may be more schooled in noticing what is wrong, and so we are missing out on their frequent appearances. Perhaps we have nurtured a kind of myopia to the everyday angels that visit us on a daily basis?

Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness is a tool for exercising the muscle of noticing instances of everyday kindness; noticing the strengths that others are generously sharing with us in all kinds of ways. It is also a tool for noticing and appreciating the strengths we ourselves share with others.



Angels is based on the understanding that by strengthening our capacity to notice and name the strengths and blessings that come into our day, we strengthen our own capacity to develop and communicate them. In this way we become a more abundant source of those strengths for others and for ourselves.

Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness is a tool for building conversations about the strengths we see within ourselves and within others. It uses the metaphor of an angel—a bestower of blessings—as a way of noticing and acknowledging the strengths that are demonstrated by others and offered to us, or that we ourselves demonstrate and offer.

Innovative Resources recognises that angels have particular resonance and specific meaning for various religious traditions. There are also conventions within some of these traditions for how angels are depicted and named. This is greatly respected. However, this card set presents the metaphor of an everyday and very human angel as a way of focussing on strengths, capacities, skills, qualities and goals that may be appropriate for everyone, regardless of cultural background or religious affiliation. We do hope that this ‘creative license’ does not inadvertently cause offence or discomfort in relation to any particular convention about angels.

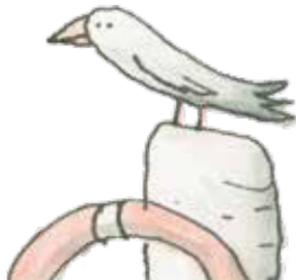
Each of the 52 cards in the *Angels* set features a beautiful—and even soulful—watercolour painting by artist, art therapist and author, Trace Balla.



In these 52 cards you will find a variety of angels—but don't expect a pious set of ascetics—here you will find grandparents, children, men, women, musicians, gardeners, sailors, boat-builders, bike-riders, hooting-tooting-saxophonists, tree climbers and chefs, as well as adventure-seeking wanderers. These angels depict the strengths of everyday kindness. Who knows when they will turn up in your day via a smile or a kind word? Or perhaps you will be the angel in someone else's day with your supportive action or virtue.

Sometimes there is more than one angel on each card. That's because in real life strengths attract other strengths. You could even say strengths are contagious! And sometimes it's hard to know who the angel really is. For example, when a parent gives love to a child, they offer an angelic gift; and when the child receives and basks in that love, they too, sprout invisible wings.

The *Angels* cards can help us become more aware of the angels (or blessings, or gifts, or strengths—call them what you will!) in our lives. To do this it is useful to develop not only the muscle to notice these strengths, but also the language to name them. That is why each of the cards features a word such as 'peace', 'assertiveness', 'clarity', 'skill', 'support', 'vision', 'confidence', and 'leadership'. Each of these words names a virtue or quality, the enacting of which is a blessing to ourselves and others.



Each card is designed to build conversations, tell stories, and help people think differently about the struggles they face. They can be used to create conversational pathways about:

- Who we are
- What is important to us
- What we want to change
- How to re-story our lives
- Noticing and savouring everyday moments of strength and blessing.

These strengths-based cards can be used in such settings as:

- Counselling
- Supervision
- Education
- Tutoring
- Management
- Parenting
- Employment services
- Team Building

We hope that these cards will be messengers of hope, change and transformation for you as well as for the people with whom you live and work!



The Gift of Giving



Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness reminds us that a gift is not always something that is bought and wrapped up with brightly coloured paper. Not all gifts are the kind you can place in a gift box and tuck under your arm when attending a wedding or birthday party. While these tangible gifts can be utterly delightful (and sometimes disastrous) many gifts are not ‘things’ at all.

On a daily basis most of us give and receive gifts that are intangible. Such intangible gifts may come in the form of encouragement in times of need, good advice, a smile or a helping hand, or someone enacting a virtue such as honesty or patience (qualities named in the *Angels* cards).

Whether a gift comes wrapped in polka dot paper, or is of the intangible kind, giving has a wonderfully circular quality. You could almost call it ‘Janusian’, a word derived from ‘Janus’, the ancient Roman God who is represented by a head with two faces—each facing in opposite directions. When a gift is given, the benefit flows to the recipient and in the opposite direction back to the source—the giver. It is the recipient who receives the gift and yet it is the giver who experiences the fruit of their own generous action; the intangible inner atmosphere that is generated via the very impulse to give.



What is the effect of such giving on the giver? One person's story can serve as inspiring testimony about this: One month after her wedding day, thirty-three-year-old Cami Walker was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She was soon in and out of emergency rooms with alarming frequency as she battled the neurological condition that left her barely able to walk and put enormous stress on her marriage.

Then, seeking relief for her condition, Cami contacted a friend, an African medicine woman named Mbali Creazzo, who told her to give away 29 gifts in 29 days.

The gifts, she said, could be anything, but their giving had to be both authentic and mindful. At least one gift needed to be something she felt was scarce in her life.

Many of her gifts were simple—a phone call, spare change, even a Kleenex. Yet these acts of kindness were transformative. Cami has subsequently written a book about how this simple daily practice of giving affected her outlook and her medical condition. Subsequently, over 11,000 people in 48 countries have signed up to embark on their own 29-day giving ritual and raised thousands of dollars for charities.

In 2008, a British government think tank called 'Foresight' issued a report called *Mental Capital and Wellbeing*. In the report, giving to neighbours and communities was cited as one of the five critical elements of wellbeing and mental illness prevention.

In an article called ‘It’s Good to Give’ (*Ode* magazine, Dec 2011 Vol 8, issue 6; odewire.com), author Diana Rico points out ‘...the word “community” comes from the Latin *communis*, which means “bound together”—and that word, in turn, has as part of its root the word *munus*, meaning “gift”. So giving is the glue that binds us as a group, creating a system of exchange and acknowledging our interdependence as humans.’

The *Angels* cards can be used to name qualities such as ‘trust’, ‘curiosity’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘balance’. Such qualities, when embodied and shared, are great gifts—gifts that form part of the glue that keeps families, teams and communities together.

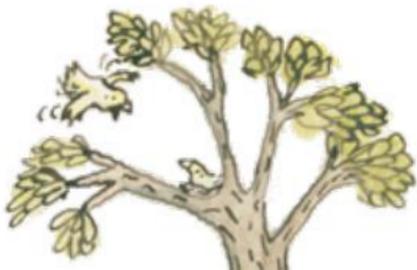
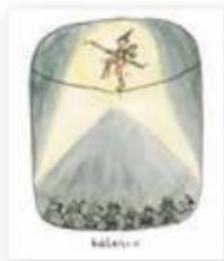


The Host of Angels



There are 52 cards in *Angels*—the strengths of everyday kindness. This is but a small gathering of angels. How many possible blessings or strengths are there in the universe? Perhaps it is a number approaching infinity. However one quantifies it, there have to be far more than 52!

Each person who uses the cards will no doubt have a huge array of strengths that visit from time to time. They will also have many strengths that live within them permanently in the form of their well-established capacities, qualities and virtues. We can use the 52 cards in the *Angels* set to imagine, talk about and celebrate many, many more.

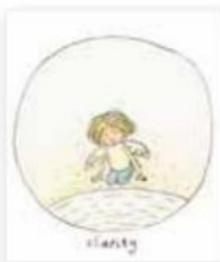




beauty



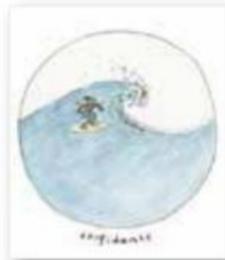
carefulness



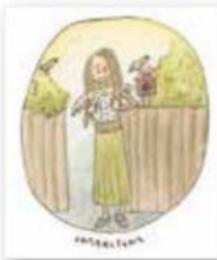
clarity



commitment



confidence



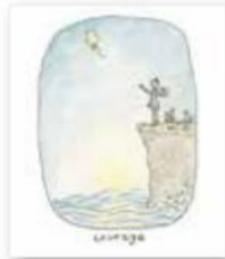
connection



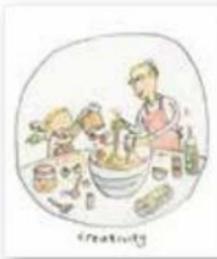
creativity



cooperation



courage



creativity

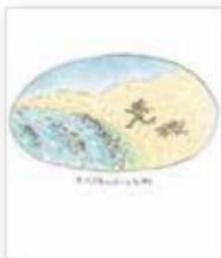
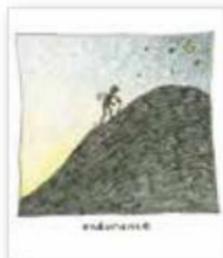


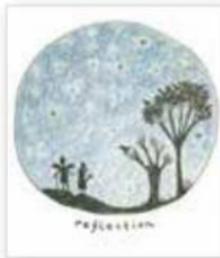
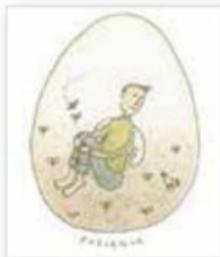
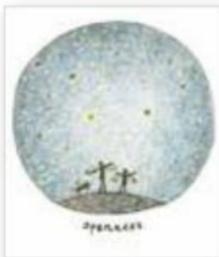
curiosity

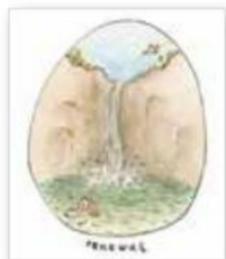
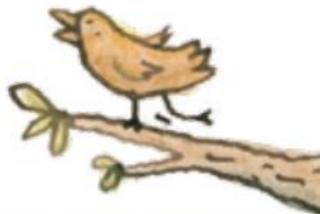
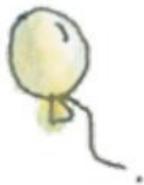


encouragement









Renewal



Protect



Serenity



Skill



Support



Suspect



Tolerance



Trust



Vision



Vitality



Wisdom



Wonder

Here are the concepts for each of the 52 cards:

- Acceptance
- Adventure
- Assertiveness
- Balance
- Beauty
- Carefulness
- Clarity
- Commitment
- Confidence
- Connection
- Contentment
- Co-operation
- Courage
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Encouragement
- Endurance
- Enthusiasm
- Fairness
- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Generosity
- Grace
- Gratitude
- Honesty
- Hope
- Independence
- Insight
- Inspiration
- Joy
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Love
- Openness
- Optimism
- Patience
- Peace
- Playfulness
- Purpose
- Reflection
- Renewal
- Respect
- Serenity
- Skill
- Support
- Surprise
- Tolerance
- Trust
- Vision
- Vitality
- Wisdom
- Wonder



Methods for Using the Cards



While there are a myriad of creative activities that can be found for using both the front and the back of the cards, in general, these all fall into two broad methods: 1. Spread, Scan and Select. 2. Serendipity.

The Three Ss: Spread, Scan and Select

Firstly, there is the method known as ‘The Three Ss’—Spread, Scan and Select. Using this method, all or some of the cards are spread face up on a flat surface and participants are invited to scan the cards and make a selection. Sometimes spreading the cards on the floor can create a different dynamic. Participants are invited to walk around the cards and in so doing they have a more bird’s eye view of the array of cards and they also engage their bodies more fully during the process of selection. This can open up learning and reflection in different ways.

The amount of time allowed for scanning the cards can vary enormously. Generally, the more complex the cards and the more reflective the activities, the more time is needed. As always though, it is preferable to move at a pace that the users are comfortable with. As in any therapeutic conversation, managing the available time well is an important skill.



The Fourth S: Serendipity

The second method for using the *Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness* cards is the fourth ‘S’—Serendipity. Sometimes interesting learning occurs when a touch of random choice is introduced into a conversation using cards or other prompts. This method includes such activities as shuffling and dealing the cards, placing the cards face down on a surface, fanning the cards and having participants randomly select a card, playing a range of games that involve hiding and finding cards, lucky dips, random cards on chairs, selecting a card with eyes closed, and so on.



Ideas for Using the Cards



There are countless creative ways for using the cards. Here are some ideas to spark your imagination.

Giving and Receiving

Each of the *Angels* cards names at least one gift we can give or receive, and invites us to practise the art of noticing the exchange of gifts that bind us together and create community.

- Can you choose a card that represents something you have received or given today? (For example, it could be a quality, a feeling, a virtue, or an act of kindness)
- Who gave the 'gift' and who received it?
- Where did the idea to give this gift arise from?

If you were the receiver:

- How did you feel receiving this gift?
- Did you notice that this gift (or angel) had arrived straight away or did it take you a while to realise what was happening?
- Was it easy to receive this gift or did you have to work hard to do it?
- How did you feel before, during and after receiving this gift?
- Have you ever received this gift before? Was it different this time?
- Do you hope to receive this gift again? Would you want to receive this gift differently next time?



- Do you think there is an art to receiving a gift?
- Can you choose a card that represents a very important gift you have given/received in your life?

Angels at my Table

- Is there are card that reminds you of someone you know?
- Think of someone who you think could really use some support right now: What card (or cards) would you choose as an angel to visit them?

Inviting Angels: Goal-setting

- Is there one card (or 2 to 3) that represents a strength or quality you would really like to develop more? Why?
- What is one step you could take towards developing this quality a little more?
- Who do you know who might help you develop this quality?
- How will you know when you have developed it?
- What will others notice?
- What will you notice?
- For something you are about to undertake, which 2 or more cards represent the qualities or strengths you think will be of most value?
- Which *Angel* represents how you would like to be by the end of the year (or the end of this course, etc)?
- What do you imagine you will be doing, thinking and feeling when you achieve this?



Storytelling and Creative Writing

Storytelling can take place in groups, in pairs or in a solitary way within one's imagination via writing or journalling.

- Choose one card. Can you tell/write a story about a time when this quality (angel) featured? (Perhaps you experienced someone else demonstrating this quality, or you demonstrated it yourself.) Can you remember the first time/last time you experienced this quality?
- Place the cards face down and randomly choose 3-6 cards. Or shuffle and deal the cards. Can you tell/write a story using all of these cards?
- A variation is to leave the ending open and randomly choose another card that will give you clues to the ending of the story.
- Do you think these qualities are related? How was it to connect these angels or qualities together in one story like this?
- Choose a card. Can you tell/write a story about what happens when this angel seems to disappear from our own individual life, or the life of our family, community, workplace, or world?
- What actions could you take to 'invite' the angel back?
- What if you decided to be this angel? What is one simple thing you could do each day to practise being this angel?
- Can you tell a story using the *Angels* cards about your best, worst and funniest experiences today or this week?

Transitions

Times of transition such as divorce, marriage, a new job, pregnancy, changing schools or moving house, can be full of creative potential, but they can also be times of uncertainty and vulnerability. They are times when the touch of an angel in the form of an everyday kindness can make a huge difference.

- Can you think of a time when you were going through a significant change in your life?
- Is there an *Angels* card that says something about how you made it through this time?
- When you want to change, how do you do it? Is there a card that represents a quality you draw on to help you or the circumstances change?
- Which *Angels* do you think are most helpful in times of need?



Casting Shadows

Is it possible to get too much of a good thing? Strengths can also give rise to shadows. There are times when a quality can tip over and create havoc.

- Choose 3 cards: Is there ever a down-side to each if these qualities? Can you share an example of this?
- Is there a card that you can never get too much of?
- How do other people's strengths impact upon you? Consider for example, the 'Assertiveness' card: How do you react when someone close to you is manifesting this quality?
- Is there a card you think you would like to ask to visit less often?
- When a strength is tipping over, is there another angel that could help? For example, too much 'Playfulness' could be tempered with the angel of 'Serenity'. Can you choose pairs of angels that could help balance each other?



Creating Your Own Angels

It can be very powerful when people create their own cards. Facilitators, counsellors and teachers may wish to supply blank pages and invite students, clients and workshop participants to draw, paint or collage their own angels. They may want to make up different words, or to take existing words from the cards and create their own images.

You can spark their imagination with questions such as:

- Is there an angel in your life right now? If not, what angel would you like to invite into your life?
- What does this angel look like? Is your angel a male, female, child, or baby? Perhaps it is an animal or an aspect of nature such as a plant, cloud or mountain? Or is it an inanimate object such as your journal, a teapot or a quilt?
- What will your angel be doing in the picture?
- Will other people or angels or objects also be present in the picture?
- Will you be in the picture somehow? (You may be the angel!)
- Will your angel have wings, or will there be another way to tell that they are an angel?



Angel for a Day

Another idea for using the cards is to select a single card that will be the focus for the day, week or month. There is also something delightfully serendipitous about randomly selecting a card and using this as the focus. Teachers of young children speak of the fun and excitement that can be generated by placing a set of cards in a bag and having a lucky dip where a different child selects a card from the bag each day. The card can then be placed on the wall, on a shelf or in any prominent position. By focusing on an *Angels* card each day, a teacher, team leader, manager or facilitator can help build a culture of noticing strengths, as well as a strengths vocabulary.

Once a card has been selected, questions like the following can be asked:

- What does this card mean to you?
- What sorts of things will we see if we notice people 'being' this angel (ie enacting this quality) today?
- What are 2 or 3 things you can do to be this angel today?
- Are any of your family or friends good at this skill? What do they do that tells you they are good at it?
- Can you find a poem or a quote that uses the word on the card of the week?



Team-building and Leadership

The *Angels* card can be used as a refreshing window into the strengths of teams and leadership.

- Which 3 (or more) cards do you think are important strengths in effective leadership?
- Thinking of a team you are part of, which card do you associate with each person on the team?
- Which 3 cards represent qualities you are able to bring to the team?
- Which cards represent strengths your team already does well?
- Which cards represent strengths you would like to see your team develop further?
- Can you select a card that identifies a style of leadership you think your project, position or team needs right now?
- Is there a card that represents something you or your team struggles with from time to time? Is there another card (ie strength) that could help with this?



Using the Back of the Cards



Every physical card, by its very nature as a three dimensional object, has a front and a back. The card sets produced by Innovative Resources usually feature the branding information on the back—that's all the boring bits including copyright statements and publisher's logo. For many of our card sets, there is no other information on the back of each card except the title of the card set—and all the suggested activities relate only to the illustration, photo or text on the front of the cards.

For some cards sets, however, there is significant content on the back of the cards as well (such as a question) and participants are asked to refer to both the front and the back of the cards. Often the activities for these card sets involve looking at one side of the card and then turning it over to respond to the information on the other side.

Angels is one of those card sets where facilitators can build activities around both the front and the back of the cards. The fronts of the cards feature the complete water colour illustration plus the word that relates to the quality or strength being depicted in the illustration.



The backs of the *Angels* cards have all the usual branding information plus a detail from the illustration. It is almost as if a camera had panned into the scene painted by the artist and picked out a portion of the image. It is interesting to relate this to an idea that is very significant in strengths-based practice as well as in solution-oriented counselling: ‘what we choose notice’.

In life, while some things come to our attention in unavoidable ways, each of us makes choices about what we make a habit of noticing. For example, will we focus on what is wrong, what is not working—or will we focus on what is going well? Will we choose to notice and explore problems or strengths and exceptions to the problem?

Here are some questions facilitators can use to bring the back of the cards into play:

- What does the image on the back of the card mean to you?
- How is seeing a detail different from seeing the whole picture?
- Is there a part of your life where the picture is not yet complete?
- What do you think might be the next detail or significant event or object to be added to that part of your life?
- Picturing ‘a scene’ from your life right now, is there a small detail you could choose to focus on (such as the next tiny step) instead of the whole picture?

- Is there a detail that could be a symbol of hope, or of another quality?
- What does that detail mean to you?
- Choose a card. Look at the front (the whole picture) and the back (a detail from the picture). If you were going to pick out a different detail for the back of the card, what would it be? Why?
- Take one of the cards and focus on several different small details one at a time. Do these details reveal different meanings for you?
- Tell a story that relates to the front of the card (the whole illustration) then tell a story that relates only to the detail on the back.
- Make your own card by drawing one small detail from one of the cards. What name would you give this angel?

Have fun panning in and out of any situation—and noticing the different perspective this gives you.



Taking Care



No hands-on conversational prompt is a panacea. Each of us has our own personal taste in language, metaphor and illustrative style. Even when great care is taken, the tool or exercise simply may not work for a particular group or individual.

In using any conversational prompt it is always important to be aware of its potential impact.

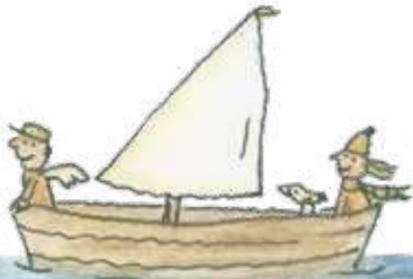
At times, the most light-hearted or innocuous-looking visual prompt can contain huge potency for people and cause all sorts of powerful emotions to tumble out.

We can all be caught by unexpected revelations in our conversations, and adopting a position of 'taking care' often requires that thought be given to:

- The counsellor or facilitator's own comfort with the metaphor or artifact. Does it work for you? Are you comfortable using it yourself or with family and friends who you know well?
- Your knowledge of the materials. Are you familiar with the cards? Do you need to use all of the cards or are there some you can leave out? Have you used the cards before?

- Your knowledge of your clients. Does your knowledge of the culture of those you are working with suggest that they will understand the metaphor? Are you comfortable taking the risk, however slight, that the cards may not work as you anticipate?
- The safety of the setting. Do you believe you have created a 'safe space' for people to talk openly and honestly? Is there respect in the group? Is the timing right? Have rules such as listening and confidentiality been established?
- Your expectations. How do you imagine conversations will flow? What if something different happens? What constitutes 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' use of the cards? Do you have an alternative plan if something isn't working? What if the cards elicit strong emotions?
- Setting the context. Have you thought about how to best introduce the cards? Do you introduce them with a particular activity or do you simply leave the cards on a table or in the tea room where clients or colleagues may find them and pick them up?

On the one hand, caution is essential. On the other hand, great results are often achieved by stepping out of our comfort zones and trying something different, including something seemingly whimsical.



St Luke's Innovative Resources



St Luke's Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, a community service organisation providing social work services throughout Victoria and New South Wales, Australia. Innovative Resources is a unique publishing enterprise located in Bendigo and designed to value-add to service delivery roles. We do this through:

- **Publishing:** We publish materials used by thousands of teachers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors and other human service workers throughout Australia and overseas.
- **Online Retailing:** We sell our own original materials including over 60 card sets, various sets of stickers, picture books and texts.
- **Training:** A small group of trainers regularly travels within Australia and elsewhere delivering a variety of practice training and 'tools' workshops.

Please contact us to discuss your training needs.

Innovative Resources produces a free catalogue and a free online newsletter entitled SOON. One of the main purposes of our newsletter is to provide forums for sharing ideas about using the resources. Stories about creative ways of using Reflexions or any of our other strengths-based materials are very much appreciated by readers of the newsletter.

Let us know your stories!



Creators & Supporting Angels

Artist: Trace Balla

Trace created the illustrations for *Angels: the strengths of everyday kindness*. Trace works as an illustrator, animator and facilitator of creative workshops. She writes books and songs, often inspired by her son Joey and by nature, and is currently making a graphic novel for kids. Trace has a particular passion for facilitating doll-making workshops, which she calls 'Soul Doll'. She can be found riding her bike, spending time in nature, dancing, and sketching musicians at gigs. Since painting the water colours for these cards, Trace says she has become much more aware of, and grateful for, the everyday angels in her life.

Email: traceballa@yahoo.com; website: www.traceballa.yolasite.com

Booklet author and editor: Karen Bedford

Karen is the author of this booklet and the project manager for the card set. Karen has been part of the editorial team at Innovative Resources for about 14 years. She is also a counsellor and the author of a book entitled: *The Uses of Sadness; why feeling sad is no reason not to be happy* (Allen and Unwin, 2009). The reflective practices of journalling and poetry writing are where Karen discovers many angels.

Continued overleaf...



The artist and author wish to acknowledge a number of other angels whose contributions to this card set were pivotal. Firstly, thank you to **Russell Deal**, the creative director at Innovative Resources, whose idea it was to celebrate people's strengths using the metaphor of angels. Russell was the author of a much-loved card set called *Angels with Attitude*, which was Innovative Resources' first foray into the metaphor of angels, together with artist, **Peter Gibson**.

Thank you to **Mat Jones**, for the design and layout of the cards, booklet and box.

Thank you to **Caitlyn Lehmann**, who contributed significantly to the development of this resource as part of the editorial team.

And finally to you, the users of these cards: The famous French poet and film maker, Jean Cocteau, once remarked that he felt there was an angel inside him whom he was constantly shocking. If you feel that way from time to time, remember that the wings of angels are often found on the backs of the least likely people.



First published in 2012, reprinted in 2016 by:



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ISBN:

Edited by Karen Bedford and Caitlyn Lehmann

St Luke's Innovative Resources acknowledges the Jaara people of Dja Dja Wurrung country, the traditional custodians of the land upon which our premises are located and where our resources are developed and published. We pay our respects to the elders—past, present and future—for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and other First Nations peoples. We must remember that underneath this earth, upon which we so firmly stand, this is, was and always will be, the traditional land of First Nations peoples.



Angels—the strengths of everyday kindness is a set of 52 colourful, heart-warming cards featuring whimsical angels. But these are not angels from another realm; they are the angels you meet every day as a kind word, a helping hand, a friendly smile!

These strengths-based cards are designed to build conversations, tell stories, and help people of all ages think differently about who they are, what is important, and how to navigate life's ups and downs.

Use these cards to notice and savour everyday moments of strength and blessing in:

- Counselling
- Supervision
- Education and Training
- Coaching
- Management
- Parenting
- Team-building
- Employment Services



Each card features a watercolour painting by Trace Balla, artist and art therapist. Includes a 32-page booklet of suggestions for using the cards.



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