

Five *on*
Friday

Musings on Mental Health

[Get the Popcorn](#)

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I am just recovering from my Thanksgiving food coma!! How about you?



[Photo Credit](#)

Whether you are in America celebrating Thanksgiving weekend or down under celebrating the coming of summer; whether you like your popcorn with butter or prefer to pass on this savory snack and have a glass of wine instead, it's time to curl up on the sofa with family and friends to be taken into the stories of everyday people whose dreams and grit teach and inspire us.

1. The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind. William Kamkwamba was born to a farming family in Malawi, and in the mid-2000's his village is devastated by drought and famine. As a young schoolboy, William devises a plan to build a windmill to power an electric water pump. But to succeed, he needs his father to agree to dismantle the family bicycle for parts, which is the only bicycle in the village and the family's last major asset. This is a story of gumption in the face of adversity for a boy, a family and a village. [Watch the trailer.](#)

2. Brian Banks. Wrongfully convicted of a rape that he did not commit, Brian Banks spent 5 years in prison and another 5 years as a sex offender. Ultimately aided by the California Innocence Project, his is a story of the broken and racist criminal justice system in America. It is also a quintessential reminder that all we can control in life is how we respond to what life dishes out. [Watch the trailer.](#)

3. Rudy. Vintage and perfect for all sports fans everywhere. Released in 1990, *Rudy* is based on the real life story of Eugene "Rudy" Ruettiger who dreams of playing football at Notre Dame. From the mental health perspective, it is a superb example of how a proper diagnosis - in Rudy's case a learning disability - can make a world of difference. Add to that the unwavering support of a mentor who believes in him and Rudy finds his way to make his dream come true. [Watch the trailer.](#)

4. Maiden. Released this year, *Maiden* is the story of Tracy Edwards, a 24-year-old cook working on charter boats who becomes the skipper of the first ever all-female crew to enter the Whitbread Round the World Race

in 1989. In the exclusive world of sailing, Edwards dares to defy the assumptions of gender. Despite the naysayers who take bets on her failure, Edwards and her crew upset the chauvinistic world of yachting with their own version of victory. Girl power all the way. [Watch the trailer.](#)

5. The Farewell. Having recently bid farewell to a much loved family member, and having a much loved daughter-in-law who was born in China, this movie touched me in ways I still have yet to articulate. Released just a few months ago, it is the story of a Chinese family who discovers that the matriarch of their clan has a terminal illness. Instead of telling her, they fabricate a wedding to bring everyone together once more before she dies. It is a poignant reminder that how we demonstrate our love for someone and how we say goodbye seems universal until we experience cultural traditions that are not our own. [Watch the trailer.](#)

How grateful I am to celebrate Thanksgiving with my adult children and extended family and friends. How happy I am to be inspired by these stories where the injustice and indifference of the world lose when they come up against individuals who dare to persevere, imagine, and love.