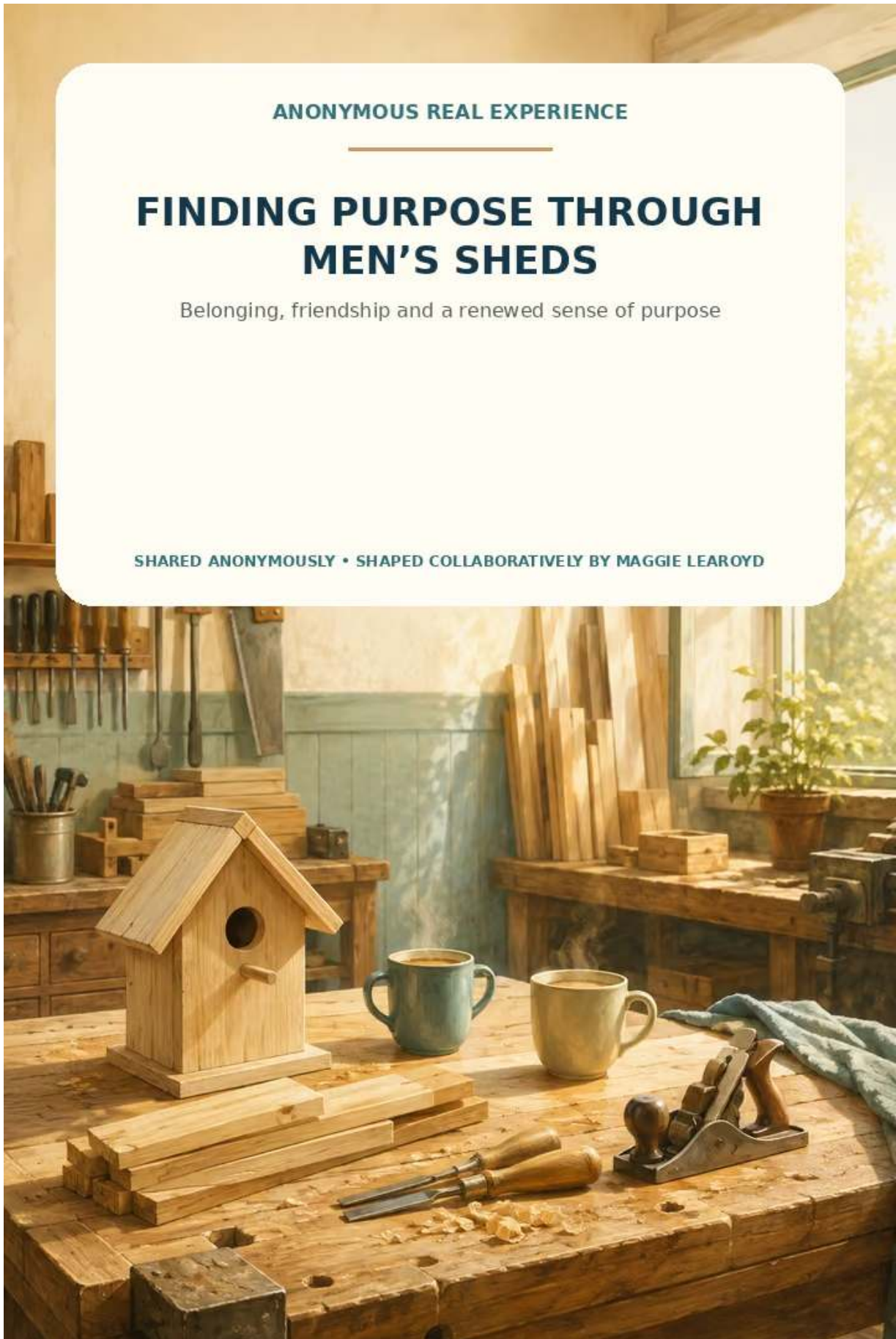


ANONYMOUS REAL EXPERIENCE

FINDING PURPOSE THROUGH MEN'S SHEDS

Belonging, friendship and a renewed sense of purpose

SHARED ANONYMOUSLY • SHAPED COLLABORATIVELY BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



Finding Purpose Through Men's Sheds

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"After I retired, I wasn't prepared for how much my life would change. I'd spent over 40 years working, and suddenly the routine, the conversations and the sense of purpose had all disappeared. My wife kept telling me I needed to get out of the house, but I wasn't interested. I convinced myself I was just enjoying retirement, when really I was becoming increasingly isolated.

A neighbour mentioned our local Men's Shed. I imagined it was somewhere you needed to be good at woodworking, which I wasn't. Still, I decided to give it a try.

The first thing I noticed was how welcoming everyone was. Nobody asked why I was there or expected me to explain myself. Some people were repairing furniture, others were making bird boxes, while a few were simply sitting with a cup of tea chatting. There was no pressure to join in straight away.

Over the following months, I found myself looking forward to my weekly visits. The projects gave me something to focus on, but it was the friendships that made the biggest difference. We laughed, shared stories and, without even realising it at first, started talking about the things that really mattered. I discovered that many of the men had experienced loneliness, bereavement or mental health challenges of their own.

Joining Men's Sheds didn't just fill my time—it gave me back a sense of belonging. It reminded me that purpose isn't only about having a job. Sometimes it's about having somewhere you feel welcome, where people know your name and you're valued simply for turning up.

If someone had told me a year earlier that spending a few hours each week in a shed would change my outlook on life, I wouldn't have believed them. Looking back now, walking through that door was one of the best decisions I ever made."

A Note About This Real Experience

This is a real person's lived experience, shared anonymously in their own thoughts and feelings. The contributor spoke openly about what happened, and Maggie Learoyd shaped the piece collaboratively, preserving their meaning and voice. They want their experience to be heard and understood but have chosen not to be named. Some identifying details may have been changed to protect their privacy.