

For Broadcast: 9th February 2020

LOVE

Richard and Celia

Richard: How do you feel when you're loved?

"Overwhelmed, yeah, just like a bubbling up inside."

"How do I feel when I'm loved? Supported, happy."

"When I'm loved I feel understood. Somebody cares, especially at my most vulnerable moment."

"And you're safe when you've got love."

Celia: How do you feel when you're loved? This is Richard and Celia from Messages of hope. Coming up we'll be talking about love. What does it take to truly be in love?

Richard: Feeling loved is one of the best things in the world and can make you feel like you're walking on air. On Valentine's Day the focus is on romance and love. Are they actually the same thing or is there a difference?

"Romance is getting a bunch of flowers."

"I would say love is more of a commitment whereas romance is more short term, more instant."

"Love is more of an effort than romance. It's easy to give people romance. Love is a lot harder."

"If you want romance in the evening it starts in the morning with doing the dishes. It goes for the whole day not just the act of actually loving each other."

Celia: So Richard how do you see love and romance? What is romance?

Richard: I think it's doing the little things, particularly at the start of your relationship and hopefully they continue but particularly at the start. I remember going away overseas for a couple of months when I first started seeing Kate and I was on the train a lot so I used to buy postcards and write postcards not knowing what she was thinking at the other end. But every day I would just try and send her a postcard of where I was. I'd try and remind her that I liked her. I don't know if it was her or her mom that enjoyed the postcards more but it's those kind of moments I think of the romance times.

Celia: And I think there's also the really nice things that you do but I reckon it's also that you've got to be a bit vulnerable. Put yourself out there and those fears of getting it wrong.

Richard: Did you have any awkward romantic moments?

Celia: Well I guess there was an early time when it was early days and no one at work knew that we were actually seeing each other and we kept it kind of quiet. We went to see my sister in Sydney one time and we were walking down the main street of Sydney and then we heard this car beep beep beep. Windows rolled down. "Hey how are you?". And it was people from back home that saw us in the middle of Sydney. And we were thinking "oh well everyone knows now". So it's just those little things where it's a bit exciting and you kind of wanted to keep it a bit to yourself. But it's public knowledge now.

Richard: Yes. That river of nervousness I think all of us have at the start of a relationship where you do those kind of romantic things to try and find out who the other person is and who you are. It's exciting.

Celia: Whether they really like you and the unknown of if I do this what will they think of me? And just that hard nervous feeling. It's exciting but nerves as well.

Celia: At the start of a relationship it's all about the romance but what stops romance turning into love?

"I reckon ourselves get in the way of love. Our jealousy, our pride, our self-centredness gets in the way of love."

"Love has to be received. And many of us don't know how to receive it because we have burdens from the past."

"I think it's hard to receive love sometimes because we have to let go to receive it and that's a scary thing."

Richard: When a relationship is fresh and new what are some of the things that stop it developing?

Celia: Well I reckon it's about putting yourself out there little bit and being willing to make yourself a bit vulnerable isn't it?

Richard: It's taking those two steps forward a bit, one step back. It's kind of putting yourself in, taking that risk and it's a way to get to know them but also to reveal a bit of who you are.

Celia: Oh yeah absolutely because you really need to get to know that other person and it's about starting to develop a trust in that relationship that okay that person isn't going to laugh at me if I'm stupid or do something embarrassing.

Richard: At that stage that's huge.

Celia: Yes. Still cute. It might not be in 10 years' time but at that stage it's true. And it's all about having that chance to show them who you really are.

Richard: And for liking who you are not something that they think you might be or you might think they are but you can love and start to love each other.

Celia: And that can be risky. But you have to take those risks. Otherwise it stays very, you know, you never get to know each other and it would be very superficial I guess. It's not a real relationship is it? So what about when a relationship has been established, what are some of the speed humps or difficulties?

"So we've been together for 13 years. There was fights and we managed to keep going for years. But the thing is, it's little things that actually set things off. There's usually an underlying thing, a big thing that's under the surface that hasn't been gone through properly. And if you don't go through it, without a doubt it's going to stay there and then something else will set you off like when you didn't open the gates for me. I can't believe that you did that."

Celia: So what are the things that make it hard to love your partner?

Richard: I think for us it's the business of life. It's the business of work and having all these external pressures on you all the time, things that come up that you don't expect. I think that adds to the whole stress and adds to roadblocks in a relationship. You don't know how you're going to get through some of those things some times.

Celia: And in the early days you make that time don't you whereas there is a time when I guess you get a bit more comfortable with each other and your interests go outside...

Richard: And you don't have the kids there either.

Celia: Yes. We just don't have time. You know with the kids now, it's not just about you or each other anymore it's about them and sometimes I just feel like the only conversations my husband and I have are "OK you need to make sure that you're home for when it's time to take them there" and "who's got that and who's taking them to that practice?"

Richard: It's hard to find time for yourself in amongst all that and for your relationship.

Celia: You're struggling sometimes just to keep your head above water let alone having the energy to put back into the relationship.

Richard: Then you get all the financial pressures, the emotional things. Life can get quite full and busy sometimes and there can be real roadblocks and even conflicts. You can't avoid conflict. I think there's a myth out there that says if you have conflict then you don't love each other. But everyone experiences conflict. But it's how you then work through that together and deal with all these things that we've been mentioning.

Celia: It's always going to be something that will get in the way. I don't think there's ever enough time to do anything but I guess it's about making time, being intentional. Coming up we'll talk about some of the things that we can do to perhaps help give that time back to each other.

If you have a funny romantic story you'd like to share. We'd love to hear it. Go to our Facebook page Messages of hope it might inspire others to give romance a go. That's Facebook messages of hope.

Richard: This is Richard and Celia from messages of hope. We've been talking about love and romance and what are some of the things that get in the way. So what keeps love alive?

"The small things again are linked to the smile, the handhold, the cuddle, the doing the dishes occasionally means a lot."

"Spontaneity is really important I think, try and keep things fresh and try and keep the element of surprise in the marriage."

"Don't try and smother your partner let them grow and change and evolve."

"Having someone you can trust that has always got your back regardless of how long you are."

"Communication. Putting your feelings out there; they might be right they might be wrong, but the only way you're going to come to a compromise or a decision is by both communicating."

"Never being too proud to say you're sorry."

"It's all about forgiveness."

Richard: So what's helped you Celia?

Celia: It's really I guess paying attention to some of the little things. But also the fact that for me what I've learned from my husband is that love is a verb not a noun. It's the little things that he does day in day out. We don't celebrate Valentine's Day or anything like that but there will be a day where he knows I've had a huge week and it's been really busy and he'll just come home with a bottle of champagne and say we're not doing work tonight. You know, just do things for no special occasion. It's like he'll clean the kitchen. When I know it was messy and the kids have not done it and he would just get in and do it without saying anything.

Richard: It's having that awareness of the other isn't it? It's having the care here and the concern.

Celia: It's doing the little things that mean so much to me.

Richard: So they might not necessarily seem as romantic to others but they are to you. Because they make a big difference.

- Celia:** Absolutely. I'd prefer that than a bunch of flowers any day. You know for him to do something that shows he gets me. He gets what's happening.
- Richard:** We often sit down after the kids have gone to bed and have a chat about the day and sit there on the lounge together and reminisce and just remind each other of who we are. And it's having that time isn't it?
- Celia:** It is. You have to make the time and it doesn't matter if that might sound clinical but to schedule that time, because you schedule everything else in your lives, but just schedule that time in. We're the same you know, we'll probably do it mostly first thing in the morning and go exercise together because that's not going to get in the way early in the morning; nothing's going to interrupt that. Otherwise it's the other end of the night and that's just chaos
- Richard:** Be tech free and put the work aside and be there for each other.
- Celia:** It's what we say to the kids all the time don't we? When actually it's about modeling it ourselves.
- Richard:** It's showing that commitment to each other and that you do value the other person. You're willing to sacrifice your own wants and desires and you want to show care and concern, you want to be committed to that person. And I think that makes a big difference in a relationship.
- Celia:** And also I think the fact that we have God in a relationship as well. You know it's not just me and Craig or you and Kate. God is there in that relationship and our understanding of God's love is what makes a huge difference to us.
- Richard:** I agree. I think it's not just a relationship between two people then. It's a relationship with three and with God involved and his love for us, some way where we can look as an example of love and his sacrifice to us but also the love we can draw on from him that we can go to him and he's constant, he's always there so no matter whether we're going through tough times in our relationship where we're not necessarily feeling the love we can go back to him.
- Celia:** It's those times where you just thinking "I'm not loving you very much anymore but I love you". That constant love is there and I think because you know God's constant love, you know that that's not going to go away. You might not particularly like that person at the time but that isn't going to destroy that basis.
- Richard:** That's all that source of loving God that we can rely on. His forgiveness and his love that he gives to us that we can also then go and forgive our partners and love them and enjoy our relationships.

For more about keeping the romance alive go to messagesofhope.org.au You can also order your free booklet, Renew the romance. Or call 1800 353 350. I'm Richard Fox a pastor of the Lutheran Church where love comes to life. I hope you can join us again next week for another message of hope. Real hope to cope with life's challenges.

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