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BEYOND THE STRESS

Conversation with Celia, Janine and Anna

Anna: *I want to have less stress, 100% --*

Celia: *And everyone would say that wouldn't they?*

Anna: *Yeah. Yeah. So how do we give ourselves the confidence or.....*

Celia: *Permission?*

Anna: *Permission, to actually have a less stressful life.*

Celia: **This is messages of hope and I'm Celia Fielke. How would a stress free life look to you? Today I'm talking with my friend Janine, mother of 3 and Stress counsellor Anna, about why it's so hard to get beyond the stress.**

Celia: You know, why is it that we know the theory, we know what we're meant to do, and we still keep getting stressed? I still have stressful moments. You laugh. Okay, Janine, tell me what stressed you today?

Janine: Busyness. Having a million things to do at the same time and not enough time to give your full attention to any of them. So, at the moment, in our family, I'm playing two sports this summer, so I'm playing softball and netball. I never used to do it. I used to always like, "No, I'm not playing any sport. I'll leave it for the kids and I'll just run them around. But no, this year I've decided I'm doing something for me!

Anna: Good job.

Janine: So I'm playing softball and netball. Noah is playing softball, modball and maybe soccer? Kane is playing soccer and basketball.

Celia: Do you know what? I heard this exact conversation from you during your winter sport. Have we not learnt anything, Janine?

Janine: Well, I can't say, "No," to them.

Celia: So when you put your schedule down on your calendar and there's actually no gaps and there's lots of crossovers of who has to get where and stuff...

Janine: Yeah, something's got to give. And I know this term for me is going to be full on, but I also know that soccer is going to be for eight weeks. So it's eight weeks of busy. Then I can breathe. It's okay, we're going to do this, we're going to make it. I've got people I can ask to help me.

Anna: So you're trying to convince yourself that it'll be okay.

Janine: It will be fine.

Celia: She says with gritted teeth.

Janine: It will be fine. Yeah.

Anna: Isn't it interesting how we find ourselves almost making excuses or reasoning away how crazy our life is

Celia: That it will be okay and I will manage.

Anna: That's right. And even if it's for a season, like I always kind of say the seasons of life go for three months. And so often when I'm thinking about my own stuff that's going on or if I'm talking to other people, I'm always curious to go, exactly what you just said then Celia, like I remember having this conversation with you about winter, so is it actually a season of three months or is it a season of six months or 12 months? If it's longer than 12 months, it's no longer a season. Although I think sometimes we can have a season of 12 months especially with bringing up kids, that obviously goes longer than 12 months. But I think sometimes the level of craziness and our adrenaline which is actually what happens in our body around stress is actually there for fight and flight.

Celia: And you still have those physical reactions. I know stress for me is right here in my stomach, I feel it, even when I'm thinking now about stuff that I need to do, I feel it here.

Janine: I actually feel it here. My heart starts beating faster and I actually feel really tight chested and all of that sort of thing. And I know my biggest thing I guess is not being able to say no.

Celia: I mean you've got three kids who are very active and they're wanting to do stuff and you're wanting to do stuff and how do you actually make it work? And then also caught up in that is that whole thing about wanting to be the perfect mum which I know that about you Janine.

Janine: Yes. I'm getting better.

Celia: And I know it's not just, perfect mum, we're all like that. Even men want to be the perfect this or the perfect that, it's not just whether you're a wife or a mother or anything, it's about that whole -

Janine: The innate, want to do the best you can in each situation.

Anna: And I think that's what you said before Celia. "Why, why do we do this?" And I think that's starting to get to the cause of stuff, the cause of why do we allow ourselves to be so stressed? I think the perfectionism thing is huge and it's everywhere in our society where we think in order for me to show the world or show people around me that I'm perfect, then I need to be doing five sports, or working however many hours a week or not being able to say no or whatever. Because when we put boundaries on those things, then we start to go "Oh, now I'm not perfect. What will people think?"

Celia: What will people think? And that's still huge, and I'm thinking, Oh my gosh, here I am it my age still worrying what people think. I think I'm becoming more comfortable with who I am and the fact that I've done enough, I don't need to 'do.' It's that whole doing, isn't it?

Janine: Yeah.

Celia: I don't need to 'do' anything. And I was listening to something the other day and just reminding me that actually, that whole thing about grace and God and the fact that doing isn't going to make him love me any better, doing isn't going to make me a better person. If you take away all those roles, if you take away wife, mother, taxi driver, cook, cleaner, all of your roles and you are just Celia, you are just Janine, you are just Anna, what is that like? Who are you?

Anna: Do you know what the first thing was when you said that for me?

Celia: What?

Anna: It scares me. I think it's really interesting. I haven't thought about this before but the theory is that I'm a daughter of the King, right? I'm God's daughter and I believe that as well. I think this is the whole thing about the journey is that you can believe it but sometimes we don't live what we actually believe in. So I think sometimes the path is actually bringing that together. So the thing that scares me is kind of like, what would I do with my life? Where would I go? Who would I talk to? What decisions would I make? All those 'doing' things.

Celia: Isn't being Anna enough?

Anna: Yeah.

Celia: Anna without your roles.

Anna: Yeah.

Celia: Stress is something most of us seem to be feeling in our daily lives. And there are all kinds of reasons that lead us to be stressed. What if the answer to being over stressed, didn't actually have anything to do with - stress!? What are some simple practical steps anyone can take towards a less stressful life?

Anna: I want to have less stress, 100%!!

Celia: And everyone would say that wouldn't they?

Anna: Yeah. Yeah. So how do we give ourselves the confidence or I don't know what the word is, but you know, to -

Celia: Permission?

Anna: Permission, maybe to actually have a less stressful life. How do we get to that?

Celia: Because we keep saying it, I want a less stressful life. But do things change?

Anna: For me, that's about going through a process of reviewing what's most important to you. Even just writing a list of everything we do and everything we're involved.

Janine: Oh my goodness, that would be long!

Anna: Including chores, like doing the laundry, like all those things, as well as netball and soccer and this job and that job and that church committee, however many things there are. Then we can actually logically look at those and kind of go, "Hmm, okay." We could even rate them, to be able to rate this out of 10 of how important it is to me, or the pros and cons of each. Or, if we're going through something that we're like, "actually I need to get off that committee", but we feel like we can't do that. Well actually -

Janine: You can.

Anna: So let's write a pros and cons list with God and go, God, what is it that you're telling me about that? And then you do the practical.

Celia: Is it this one, or that one? It might come out that it's something else that you actually need to get rid of.

Anna: That's exactly right. So when there's the 'nots', it's sometimes we need to challenge the 'nots', to go what's underneath that? Is that because we're worried about what Joe Blogs is going to say, or is it because God is telling us not to do it? So really checking in sometimes, is how we know which decisions to make.

Anna: Because I think when we live a life that's less stressful, it's all just about making choices. That's the crux of it, is you just have to choose different things and different ways of spending your time.

Celia: And sometimes it's hard isn't it, to do that hard work.

Anna: Yeah.

Celia: And you keep going in that rat race because you think, oh I don't have time, but to make the time.

Janine: Yeah.

Celia: Stress often leads to feelings of inadequacy and not being good enough to cope. But you can feel good about yourself even when you can't get everything done?

Anna: Society tells us to be busy, hustle, keep everyone happy, do whatever you need to do to climb the ladder, all these things. And that's often not in line with who we are or who we want to be.

Celia: It might be good for 2% of the population, but you hear about it and you feel like you should be like that.

Anna: Do you know how many people I see who are doing that? Because they think it's what they're supposed to do.

Celia: You would see a lot, in your role.

Anna: And so helping them to get off of that treadmill of, "I'm just doing this because it's what I've learned to do. I'm just doing this because this is what I'm supposed to do. I'm just doing this because of whatever..."

Janine: It earns the best money.

Celia: And I'll get to my retirement and everything will be fine. And you've missed out on 20 years of your life.

Anna: Exactly.

Celia: Living a way that you don't really want to be living. Okay. So where does that feeling of worth come from?

Anna: Well, for me, it comes from God. It comes from who I am in Christ. It doesn't matter what we do. Nothing's going to make him love us less. But no matter what we do, nothing's going to make him love us more as well. And I think sometimes we go, "Oh, we can't do anything that's going to make him love us less, but we can do something that'll make him love us more."

Celia: Yeah. But God's love is complete and huge, and it's not going to be more, he can't love us more.

Anna: That's right.

Janine: I got told something once, that God loves you the same on your best day as he does on your worst day. It doesn't change.

Anna: Yeah, I love that.

Janine: That's gold.

Anna: Yep. And that's worthiness. You're worthy. So he loves you because you're worthy. That's it. It's like the end of the sentence.

Celia: Full stop, that's the full stop.

Anna: That's right.

Celia: Not because you're worthy because of everything you've done, it's just because you're worthy.

Anna: Exactly.

Celia: Full stop.

Anna: Yeah. And it's his view of you and the relationship that he already has with you that actually is where the worthiness comes from.

Celia: But you're worthy basically, because you always have been.

Anna: Just because you exist.

Celia: You've always have been worthy.

Anna: Yeah. Always have been. Love that.

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