

For Broadcast: 14th June 2020

A NEW NORMAL

Conversation with Richard and Celia

Richard: The coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions it's forced upon us have brought plenty of challenges. It's also given us a few positive surprises and the opportunity to reflect on what's important in our lives. I'm Richard Fox from messages of hope. I hope you can join Celia and I this week, as we talk about those positive surprises and what our new normal could look like into the future. What things do you want to carry over into your new normal?

Richard: Well, the coronavirus has certainly changed the way we live.

Celia: I did not want to work from home I tell you, I dug my heels in big time because I thought "what am I going to do stuck at home with my family?" And I'm not very disciplined at working from home.

Richard: And all the work meetings. Admittedly I probably wasn't going to miss some of those, but catching up with people, you know, and just interacting with people.

Celia: And I reckon it's that day to day, face to face. Even the incidental interactions with people that you're not necessarily trying to meet with...

Richard: down the street, like going to the shops and getting a haircut or, you know, just the routine things in life that you just took for granted.

Celia: The people stuff, isn't it?

Richard: Now it's like we're taken out of the world. It was like being grounded.

Celia: Almost. My boys are desperately missing the football, like the AFL. That's their whole weekend. And I know that one of my sons really struggled with the structure of getting through a weekend. What do I do? What do I actually do?

Richard: I know. My girls early on were learning for musicals and plays and all sorts of things. All of that was just cancelled.

Celia: There's a lot of disappointment isn't there?

Richard: Yeah, there were a lot of tears and trying to work all this out and what it might mean in the future. So a lot of fear and anxiety and breakdown, but now to see how they interact with their friends online and just see them talking on FaceTime or whatever it is, and come up with new ways.

Celia: I think there was a lot of that loss initially wasn't there because it happened so quickly but I think we've almost moved on past that, haven't we? I mean it was a friend that said to me the other day, there's a little part of me that actually doesn't want this to end. And I sort of thought, I can relate to that.

Richard: Coming up. We'll talk about some of those surprising positives of isolation and some of those things that we might not want to end.

Celia: I think I've spent most of my life saying, life's too busy and I don't know how to make it stop. Well, somebody did.

Richard: Now it stopped. And it gives you more time to reflect and actually have those times with family, doesn't it. To actually sit down around the dinner table or wherever and chat about these things and go, well, how's this going to work for us? So one of my daughters is in one space and another in another space, and myself and my wife in a different space again.

Celia: You've got your own little areas.

Richard: Yeah.

Celia: But it must be nice for them to actually see you at home because your hours are pretty long and you're actually there and physically present with them.

Richard: Yeah. And even when I had to record the radio shows and I'd do a few rehearsals before actually doing the final one to be a bit natural. So saying, you know, "Hi, I'm Richard Fox from Messages of hope" a few times and the like, my daughters were finding that hysterical. So they were mimicking me and when I finished the recording, they got up and said, "Oh dad, we could have done all of that for you. We know exactly what you said. We've memorized it all because you kept saying it over and over and over again."

Celia: So they get to see part of your life, and there's a preciousness about that too.

Richard: There is, because I think they just see mum and dad or whoever just go off and do work and they're not necessarily sure what that is, but to actually see each other, live our lives through the day and how we go about it.

There's been a lot of mutual learning and even seeing my daughters and them growing up. I think our dog as well, he's going, "well, how come you're home all the time?"

Celia: That's going to be trouble when it all finishes isn't it?

Richard: I think he wants that to continue.

Celia: You know, even though we're missing a lot of stuff, there's actually been some really, really positive things that have come out of it. For example, my whole neighborhood street, that's become almost like my family now because I see them more than I've ever seen them before. And the other day one of the neighbors sent a text "okay, it's 10:30 coffee, bring it to the end of your drive. And we did. We all sort of, went out and we had a cup of coffee together.

Richard: That's fantastic.

Celia: It was so nice,

Richard: I agree, like even though I'd said hi to our neighbors, I never really had a chance to find out about who they were, but to get out with a glass of red wine and just stand at the end of the driveway and...

Celia: red wine at 10:30!

Richard: Well ours was more in the afternoon. (laughter)

Celia: the other thing that was really nice was, they said, "Oh, I've got a whole lot of tomatoes." You know, "I'll leave a bucket at the end of my drive. Go and help yourself to whatever you need" and that triggered someone else to say, "yeah, and we've got heaps of lemons." And it was just like, Oh my goodness, we need this whole neighborhood produce thing.

Richard: I think there's a new kindness about it. So there's all these different memes that are going around in social media to lift people up and to give people some hope.

Celia: I think you're right. I think initially you used to have a lot of horrible stuff happening on social media sometimes, which I really didn't like.

But, through this, it seems to be there's a lot more positive people posting about. Posting about their neighbors or the ways that they're connecting or sharing ideas of what they're doing or, you know, it just seems a lot more of a positive place. And I think you're right. I think people are looking for ways to be kind.

Richard: That's right. We're all in this together, and it's about just journeying with each other. It reminds me of a story in the Bible, the Emmaus story of Jesus coming alongside two people straight after his resurrection.

There's two people walking along. They're just distraught about what's going on. They don't know that Jesus is risen from the dead, but he comes alongside of them and just asks them, well, How are you going? How are you feeling about this? What's actually happened? And he's interested and concerned about them, and then people open up and it's just amazing for them to see on this journey that someone has come along and walked beside them and cares about them, and here's Jesus doing that for them.

Celia: And that's kind of what is helping people now, isn't it? That just being alongside and actually asking, how are you going and listening and being interested.

Richard: Coming up, we'll be talking about, what is this new normal? What is the new way or the new life might look like for us?

Celia: There'll be a lot of negative things that we'll be happy to let go of. But what are the positive things that we all want to make part of our lives, moving forwards?

Richard: The coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions it's forced upon us have brought plenty of challenges. It's also given us the opportunity to reflect on what's important in our lives.

Celia: That friend of mine that said to me, you know, there's a little part of me that doesn't want this to end. Actually really resonated with me because I was thinking about that. There's a lot actually that I don't want to end. I don't miss the flat out weekends of, your work week finishing and you basically go straight into a weekend where you're all super scheduled.

I don't miss that at all. I get to the end of a Friday and my day can finish and I think I've got nothing ahead of me.

Richard: The peace.

Celia: It is actually a really lovely feeling. I'm going to have to become a lot more, discerning about what I let back into my life.

Richard: This time has actually been fascinating to actually sit and reflect on about what is important.

Celia: It has made you almost like take a deep breath and evaluate things. It's given you the time, hasn't it?

Richard: Like a trial run in real life.

Celia: It is. And there's a lot of things actually that I won't want to let go of.

Richard: What are some of those things that you want to?

Celia: Well, I think just having that time and space, not scheduling every minute of every day. Being home more rather than looking outwardly to do things.

Richard: Having that time just to do random acts of kindness. Time where it's not scheduled, where you can just go and maybe check on the neighbor and see how they're going. We've made those connections through this time now, just to keep that going. It's being intentional, isn't it? To have that time and space and to realize that it is important to do that, to allow for time, that we don't have to fill it.

Celia: And it might be that one thing, one thing on a weekend, that that is it.

Richard: Yes. Just having that time to be, I think is so important to us as people. It gives us that perspective then of connecting with others and appreciation of others as well.

Celia: Having that time and space now, I can connect a lot better. It's something that I want to keep with me, and that's something that I'm wanting my life to look like in the future.

Richard: And to me that gives me more hope and joy than having a life full of stuff, you know, to actually have a future where we can just interact with people. Like the story of Jesus on that road, on Emmaus with those two people and them sharing what was on their hearts and minds. Then Jesus giving them the hope to say hey I'm with you. There is a hope and a future. So much so that Jesus wanted to keep going and they said, no, no, we want you to stay here and be with us. So they went and had a meal and Jesus served them that meal. And I think that's a great illustration for us too, and how Jesus was kind to them.

He's kind to us and with us. And so whenever change is going on, like everything seems to be changing every day at the moment about what's happening in the world and where the restrictions are or not. But Jesus is with us on that journey. And I think having him as a point of reference to say, yes, you're with me here.

It doesn't mean that we might be conflicted in the change or angry about it. We can be angry about it and conflicted. But then having that opportunity to share that with a neighbor or a friend or family member, we don't have to do this on our own. There's a community of people. God wants us to be in community and to lean on each other, but to listen to each other as well and to grow together. So even if we have differing opinions is fine. You know, the opportunity to listen to each other and not judge each other.

Celia: Yeah.

Richard: But just care about each other. That to me is a hope for the future through this and seeing more of that with this whole coronavirus restriction and isolation than ever. This willingness to actually see we're in this together.

Celia: Yeah. You have that sense of you're not alone.

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