Speaker 1 (00:00:00):

So now onto the best part of the morning, my introduction of Anne Deveson, and as you know, has had a distinguished career and continues to have a distinguished career, which shows a deep concern for social justice, highlighting social issues and influencing policy in many areas, including poverty, aging, child abuse, and disability. That's just naming a few areas. And as a writer or broadcaster, a filmmaker, and has been at the leading edge of social change throughout her career for three consecutive years and won the UN peace prize, special gold citation for films she made in war ravaged Africa later, she wrote a book called tell me, I'm here about his, her son, Jonathan struggles with schizophrenia, a book that was published worldwide and won the 1991 human rights award for nonfiction, and is also an officer of the order of Australia for her work with mental illness and his most recent book, waging peace, explore some of the reasons for war and its consequences Bria.

Speaker 1 (00:01:12):

And this is a quote, really does a writer combined passion and substance. So effectively waging peace is a powerful call tomorrow arms. And that was written by Rick Sullivan at the Adelaide advertiser. So while we're talking about books and sexually has a selection of books out the front, you would have seen them as you walked through the foyer and she will be available at the end of the session to sign any for people if they would like, but I've all events books. One of the most enduring and most popular of her books is called resilience today. And we'll be exploring the mysterious nature of resilience, how some people can be resilient in adversity while others become overwhelmed and how we can learn how to be resilient and teach our children to be resilient. So over to you and welcome,

Anne Deveson (00:02:06):

I was delighted when I thought about coming back here and I lived in Adelaide for six or seven years because it was here in Adelaide, really that I had my first lesson in resilience. It wasn't a subject I thought of very much until one winter's evening. I'd been working at the south Australian film commission. We were living in in south terrace and I came home feeling very tired and very frightened. My, my eldest son, Jonathan had schizophrenia very badly and he was going through a period when he thought that I was the devil and that he had to kill me, which was a very terrible time for all of us. But and then on this particular occasion, this is why I was frightened. I home and I was frightened and I opened the door and a major pipe water pipe had bust and the floor was a wash with freezing cold water.

Anne Deveson (00:03:08):

So it was the last straw. And I sat down and felt very sorry for myself. I got hold of a directory, rang a plumber called Dave and Dave turned up almost immediately, but he wasn't interested in the pipe. He looked at me and he said, what's up love? And I said, nothing in my very British voice, nothing's nothing's wrong. And he said he said, but you're crying. And so I told him the story about how I was frightened of staying there on my own. I'd already sent my other two children to boarding school simply because during that period, it wasn't safe. And he listened to me and he said, oh, I'll fix that, got a phone love. So I gave him the phone and he rang up and he said, bet, there's a lady here. Who's frightened. He said, mind if I stay the night?

Speaker 3 (00:04:02):

And he didn't. As a matter of fact, he stayed two nights

Anne Deveson (00:04:05):

And it was the beginning of a long lasting friendship. Because I learned that Beth and Dave had two sons with schizophrenia and they knew all the tricks in the, in the area. They knew people who were beginning to start up a fellowship here. And they were my friends and my sanity throughout the whole of the time that I, that I lived here. I remember thinking afterwards that because of my English background, which had taught me that you were always all right, you know, even if your leg was dropping off, you were all right, you were fine. And that's why I'd answered my grant. And it's something I've done all my life, but it is, it is not a good thing anyway. And particularly if you're in a situation where things are going wrong and you are frightened or you do need help, it's very important to ask for help, you know, and that's not what I was brought up to do so that I'd say to everyone, I'm absolutely fine. And it taught me one of the most important lessons I think, in, in learning to develop resilience. And that is not being afraid to ask for help.

Speaker 1 (00:05:23):

That's so important. That's one of the things that we founded Anglicare all of the time is people are often in absolute dire straights, but are too afraid or too ashamed, or their pride gets in the way of asking for help. And it is important to do that because one of our roles is not to come in and save. What we will actually do is give people the skills and the knowledge and the confidence to actually make change.

Anne Deveson (00:05:49):

No I, and another story here, I remember when I was writing this or thinking about this, all these memories returned was about a year later when Jonathan sent far to the back of the house, which, which fortunately was quite easy to put out, but he'd also, he was very mad in that period and very frightened himself when it was hard to get anybody to come, it was hard to get the police to come because there weren't enough of them and they weren't trained often. Then you'd ring them up and in a panic, in a bad situation and then say, oh, we can't come to five or six o'clock in the morning and you'd run them at night. So that you know, it think it was much harder than, than it ever would be now. And we know much more about illnesses like that.

Anne Deveson (00:06:41):

And we know that help is essential, but here Jonathan had really done a job properly. He'd he'd trashed everything we ever possessed well, more or less, and he'd thrown it right up south, right up the whole street. He'd thrown radios, he'd thrown cameras, he'd thrown pictures, he'd thrown books. He'd just, he just, the seat was street was a washed with all my belongings and bet came the wife of the plumber. She came and it was a sunset and she stood there with her arms, a Kimber, and she looked like a Drysdale painting. She stood there and she said, well, love you shore told him one thing if a job's wet properly.

Anne Deveson (00:07:28):

And I tell these stories because they were linked to my sanity you know, you need to laugh, you need to be able to laugh. And that's when I began to wonder about the whole nature of resilience and what the word meant. And I discovered that the, the Spanish didn't even have a word for resilience and the French did, but they were reluctant to use it because they thought it was an Anglo American construct and nothing to do with them. And it was only during this period that people began to be aware of the possibilities of encouraging people making sure that people could learn how to be resilient, because

quite apart from the exercise of asking for help humor's important and hope is the most important thing of all. And it's, it's not even if things look hopeless, there's always something that you can grasp hold of.

Anne Deveson (00:08:30):

So these were the exercises that I, that I suppose I, I gathered around me and my, my children who'd be furious if they knew I was talking about now, they're grown up. And my, my children also learned, had to learn how to be resilient and how to do things that help them make feel more secure. So my, my, who was then about 14, 15 used to write poems and she put them under my door. It was easier for her to write poetry about what was happening and how she was feeling than actually to confront it by talking about it. So everybody had their own way of, of coming together, but it was very important that the whole family worked together and that we worked with communities. And that was where I think it was in south Australia, that the first schizophrenia fellowship was started and people were hanging almost from the rooftops. People turned up so desperate was their need resilience itself. I'm going to stop here because it's a good place for questions, I think because we're talking about us, we're talking about the fact that nearly everybody goes through periods in their life when they need resilience. And I'm just wondering how many of you have had stories or instances where resilience has become very important or anyone has a question they'd like to ask.

Speaker 1 (00:10:03):

If you want to raise your hand to indicate that we could actually take a microphone to you

Anne Deveson (00:10:09):

Because it's from hearing all these stories. I think that our understanding it's like a wave of resilience that I was able to weave around me through hearing that I wasn't the only one who was having a difficult time. We all have difficult times in our lives, right?

Speaker 4 (00:10:26):

Yes. I've had a few instances where I've certainly had to call on my internal resources to cope with the situation. But my, my question is on the link between resilience and vulnerability. I wondered if you had some insights into, into the, I suppose I'm looking at it. The flip side of exercising resilience is, is, is being vulnerable. And there has been some studies by an American psychologist and social worker on vulnerability and the positive benefits of a vulnerability to happiness and wellbeing.

Anne Deveson (00:11:02):

I mean, I think, I think we, all of us have times when we're vulnerable, stop me. If I'm not going in the right direction for you. I think if we're not vulnerable, then we're not really being human, which we're shutting off. Our fears we're shutting off our vulnerability and it's vulnerability can, can open all sorts of doors for us. It's, it's like going back to saying I'm vulnerable. It's like asking for help again. It's like going into a situation where not only are you vulnerable, but the people around you are maybe vulnerable and, and the importance of talking it through. I think I mean, that's my take on vulnerability that, can you take it a bit further? What was the actual research that you talked about?

Speaker 4 (00:11:59):

I'm sorry. I can't recall the ladies. Yeah, but I know Brad. I suppose I'm looking at it in the context of like, even in modern workplaces, it's really not acceptable to show vulnerability, although there's lots of talk

about building resilience and as one of the values that they talk about, but if you don't have obvious examples or role models of people showing their vulnerability and saying, look, I'm not coping with this. It's a bit of a false dichotomy. And it's, it's hard for, for younger people to sort of say, yes, it is okay to be vulnerable and, and to express your emotions or your fears, and still be viewed as somebody who's competent and able to get on with the job.

Anne Deveson (00:12:48):

I've I was reading about this fairly recently and, and there was an article in Sydney may have been done here as well, but it was about this very subject that young people, particularly in, in factory situations where, or any other work situation where you're not supposed to be vulnerable, because then you can't do your, your work properly. And I think good management has to allow for vulnerability. It was something I learned when I ran the film school, the national film school for about four years, and I knew nothing about management. And I didn't realize I knew nothing about management till I actually got to the film school. And there was a deputy who didn't particularly want me there because he thought he should have the job. And he started by asking me what my views were about delegations and I hadn't a clue what he meant I'd come in because then found it hard to find somebody who they wanted, who had the background in actual filming and made a lot of documentary films then, and that seemed more important than knowing about management.

Anne Deveson (00:14:00):

But boy, after a short, I wished I'd had more management experience and I had to be prepared to be vulnerable. In the end I had to bring it up with, with the council because I felt I needed feedback. And I had to, I think expose my vulnerability to someone I knew, I thought could probably help me. There was a wonderful woman called still a Cornelius who, who had a lot to do with peace initiatives and who died fairly recently, but she was like a godmother to me. And I was getting more and more plowed under, under the ground by not being prepared to be vulnerable. And by recognizing that I doing my job well, I went, I used to go down to the the men's the students lose after work at night. They went downstairs because that's where a whole lot of graffiti used to go up.

Anne Deveson (00:15:03):

And it was when I found graffiti of the previous director who was a lovely person of he had a dagger stuck in his back drawing of story with a dagger in his back and drops the blood on the floor. And next to him was a drawing of me with a noose around my neck and the hangman's, you know, and a big question mark, which wasn't very charming to find. And that's when I went in, in, in my, in trouble, I was not sleeping at night and I went to Stella to ask her and to say, I'm not coping. And I went with a pencil and a pen, and I went prepared to write down a whole lot of lessons, number one continue to go to the downstairs toilets.

Anne Deveson (00:15:55):

And she took one look at me and she took me by the hand and she laid me down on a long sofa and she covered me with a cashmere rug. And she said, number one, lesson, look after yourself. And that was another very important lesson that I had look after yourself. And she told me how her husband had been a, an international farrier. And when he died leaving her a lot of money, she didn't approve of scalping animals. And so she sold the whole business. And she began starting circles of peace all around us Australia. Actually, she became very singularly important and she was a person I always used to go

back to discuss where w where I was going, where I was going with the book. I found when I wrote the story of my son schizophrenia, which was called, tell me I'm here.

Anne Deveson (00:16:56):

And I wrote it about six months after Jonathan died because I needed, I needed to write it. I needed to understand what had happened. And a psychiatrist friend rang me from Adelaide within, in Sydney and said, and if you're doing this book you're going to need backup. You're going to be times when you find it really tough to ride. And I'm suggesting that you've get four people whom you really trust, maybe get a psychiatrist or a doctor get three or four people who you can ring and who are prepared to let you ring even at night, if you're really distressed and I'll be the first one to volunteer. And that was a really important thing that I did because it allowed me when I was writing this book sometimes to ring up and say, look, I need help. And so is, so I guess I think that's a very important point you brought up because it obviously has management ramifications. And I'm wondering if anyone here has come across this as a manager about the need to allow staff at times to show vulnerability, or if anyone has any response to that. I think it's a critical point that is with us now in contemporary times.

Speaker 5 (00:18:20):

And thank you for being here today and raising the topic of resilience. I think it's a hugely underestimated part of our wellbeing and our psyche. I've come through quite distressing depression recently. And I made quite a conscious decision not to fudge it in my workplace to be quite open about it. Partly because fudging, it is just too much hard work, but also to realizing that vulnerability is actually a strength. It's often seen as a weakness, but it is truly a strength to, I guess, expose your soul regardless of the consequences. And I've found in the majority of cases, it's actually been met with an equal amount of vulnerability from my colleagues in particular. I work for local government, which is not renowned for a huge amount of emotional intelligence. However for the majority of people when I did reveal to them, the struggles I was having, the support was very much forthcoming and the sharing of stories also was very much forthcoming.

Speaker 5 (00:19:35):

I still think we have a long way to go in management circles in terms of how they quote, quote, unquote, deal with someone with mental illness. I think there needs to be a lot more awareness about it and it's not to be feared. And having gone through the quite distressing period and out on the other side, actually look at it now as a blessing, because like you, I refuse to ask for help in any circumstance. I was brought up to be strongly independent, and I thought asking for help was a weakness, but now I see it as a strength. Thank you for that.

Anne Deveson (00:20:14):

Very good. You think I had never had anything to do with my first I'm making this anyone like to enter that anyone? Yes. We'll go. Yeah. We've got a lady down we've got

Speaker 1 (00:20:32):

Behind.

Anne Deveson (00:20:34):

Yeah. Oh, it's coming. It probably I'm just thinking it's probably comes up with athletes as well with super athletes that whole scandal mess that was made of the last Olympic games when kids were imbibing, as athletes were imbibing drugs and so on. And so on, there were clearly some who were very alarmed by what was happening, but didn't speak up. So it is a very important point. Sorry,

Speaker 1 (00:21:05):

But it didn't you. Yes. Thank you. Thank you for that. I don't know who was speaking, but I appreciate it very much.

Anne Deveson (00:21:14):

Can we just ask who was speaking when, who was speaking? Thank you. I was roaming around thank you. Sorry.

Speaker 1 (00:21:24):

This whole idea of vulnerability and relates very much to my work. I work with families with adolescents who are experiencing mental health issues and school refusal. And so in that area I find often that there are had, there are many layers to reasons why these kids are refusing school. They're not always just defiant defiance disorders, that there's a lot of anxiety behind that and vulnerability behind that. And so I'm wanting to shift the question just a little bit to ask about my interest in this to find out whether you believe that resilience is something that is part of the personality inherent in a personality and the links between how resilience is learned and how this for an adolescent in particular, who is facing a mental health issue and refusing school, how reframing their thinking from, from how they see a vulnerability. I appreciate those comments very much, you know, seeing this as a strength in how they can work

Anne Deveson (00:22:57):

With that. So it's reframing their vulnerability and by bringing their vulnerability out into the open by seeing that as a strength.

Speaker 1 (00:23:07):

Yes. And so, you know, the question is around learned resilience versus personality.

Anne Deveson (00:23:18):

Yeah. Yeah. I have a hunch. I mean, my belief is that everybody has the capacity to be resilient. I think it's a part of our life force. It's how we sustain often terrible things. Life can be rotten at times comes up and does something nasty to you. And I th I think people learn from example and I thought of with my mother who, who was an extraordinary resilient woman, where we were, we'd been living in, in Malaya, Malaysia where my father was a rubber planter. We were there when the Japanese invaded we escaped my mother and children escaped. But my father was missing for a long time, believed in. And and we were sent by the red cross to a derelict farm just outside Albany. And we were told to live off the land. And there was only a strawberry patch that had little round strawberries, like brown bullets.

Anne Deveson (00:24:27):

And our mothers knew nothing about farming and they didn't even know how to wash sheets when the first time they washed sheets, they start them. And this time, like, you know, did some comparable huh. And eggs. I remember the first time they cooked things they were, they were brown and bullet like, and

this wasn't because they, they were stupid. It was because they've grown up in colonial times when you had seven seasons do all that sort of thing. And my mother was the first person who, who saw what was happening and she had an innate resilience, I think, as well as a learned resilience. And I certainly learned my resilience from her because I remember the first time I saw this we were all of us unhappy. We were, we were deeply worried about our fathers that were six children and three mothers.

Anne Deveson (00:25:23):

One mother was very ill. We were in this house, there was, there were no fly screens. There were flying strips, dangling in front of our noses at the breakfast table. And the milk was curdled. And as children, we were all about age 12 and onwards 10, 12 on winds. And we were behaving very badly because we were unhappy. We were kicking the table, we were spilling the milk. We were whingeing. We were whining. And my mother started drumming on the tabletops, wearing a red shirt. I remember, and I thought, that's travel. She got up. And she said, come on. She said, holding the whole, like journal articles. And she said if you're in ship, there's no point in lying down in it as well. And we pushed her aside and ran out into the paddocks yelling,

Speaker 3 (00:26:22):

And she chased us. I remember recognize,

Anne Deveson (00:26:26):

I think then the fact that actually she would never give up on us, her her desire to live into, to, to break through trouble was enormously strong. And I certainly think, I think I learned from her whether I have an innate, I probably didn't actually know. I think of it because I was a coward at school. I was bullied because I looked different. I had this funny toffee English voice. This is when we went to an Australian school. And I, they, everybody thought that I'd be good at sport cause I had long legs, but I was absolutely ruffled at support. And so they'd pick me for a team and then I'd I'd fall over. So I, I, I think my resilience was a learned one. I mean, who knows, which is, which is which, but what do you think? I mean, not about me necessarily.

Speaker 3 (00:27:21):

Well, you can't talk about me

Speaker 1 (00:27:23):

In my thinking on that, your comment about the human race being resilient. This to me is evident, you know, as we look through the horrors of natural disasters that have happened and how people somehow transcend that. But I also believe that it is learned and just simply by the way that we are raised, even if our home environments are the worst, that one can imagine, still people transcend that somehow in their own way. Sometimes their coping mechanisms, science the best, but they somehow seek

Speaker 6 (00:28:09):

To somehow just

Anne Deveson (00:28:13):

To stick it to hang in. Yeah.

Speaker 1 (00:28:16):

And so this, this, this discussion for me about the permission to be vulnerable is really important and the aspect of storytelling, you know, hearing stories and encouraging people to tell their stories, but that's that's, that's, what's triggering something positive for me in that I

Anne Deveson (00:28:40):

Think also we see more stories on television. We see some pretty bad stories on television, but you do quite often see some good stories now coming through. Yeah.

Speaker 1 (00:28:52):

We've got a couple of other questions. The gentlemen in the fourth row. Thank you.

Speaker 7 (00:28:57):

Hi. I had a, quite a related on the, I was trying to conceptually look at resilience between denial and somehow occurring the ability to move on. Because yesterday I saw a fascinating thing. The ABC radio, as you know, that is blazing to the blue mountains. And there are a lot of people who were in distress, but then one lady when replying to a journalist, everything was burned and around her quite a nice bill house, she was quite calmly when the journalist asked her how she was coping. She said, look well, the, the, the best thing is that we are alive. All the, all these can repeated again. Now I was really wanting, this is really, is it denial? Or is it somehow she acquired that ability that is inevitable. What can you do with it and have to move on with it? And I was wondering in this kind of situation, whether spirituality or religion, whatever can play the role. Thank you.

Anne Deveson (00:30:02):

Anyone like to then responding in, particularly in nature in terms of spirituality and its and its association. Yeah.

Speaker 1 (00:30:13):

Oh, goodness. Christian. Yes.

Speaker 5 (00:30:16):

Some of the perspectives on resilience. Talk about this idea of perhaps being bending or flexible in the face of the flow and flux that life throws up for us. And I guess part of that for me, I think is, is noticing and examining where we're rigid and, and inflexible in ourselves. I was just wondering whether that's had, how much that's been part of your process or how consciously that's part of how you see resilience

Anne Deveson (00:30:42):

Of, of, of being inflexible or

Speaker 5 (00:30:45):

Of not, well that consciously looking for an examining where you were, where you may be rigid or parts of you that may be rigid or inflexible in the face of what's being thrown up for you.

Anne Deveson (00:30:59):

I think Ben with the wind I think you can be, and I'm probably, I'm just looking back. I think I found that being inflexible didn't help me ever for that may not be the answer you're seeking. I mean, I think it varies. Are you, do you see yourself as flexible or inflexible? You don't have to answer that. Sorry, we didn't quite figure that out.

Speaker 5 (00:31:31):

I, I guess all of us have areas where we're, you know, we have rigidity or flexibility or some sort of construct there for us. And I guess I'm just, I guess I'm curious about whether that was a conscious part of your, your sort of journey examining, so those parts of yourself and yeah, because you know, the, those areas where we're in flexible lab, the things that are going to catch us against the flow of life.

Anne Deveson (00:31:59):

Yeah. I, I truly don't think, I mean obviously there may, there may be times when I'm like that, but I think it's not a major part of my makeup. And that's interesting because it brings us back onto the differences in individual makeups. Isn't it, where some people are much more flexible than others. Some inflexibility can be very important to, to push you through. I think for me I was just looking here and remembering some research that started in America in the 1960s, seventies when they wanted to look at the experience of children, whose mothers had a mental illness. So these were children who were growing up in extremely difficult circumstances with mothers who were really quite, quite mad and there was very little help. And so they did a study of a number of children. One of them, interestingly enough, was Gloria Steinem the celebrated and very successful American author.

Anne Deveson (00:33:12):

But she grew up with a mother who was crazy and who used to alarm rats through the house all the time, because she thought they were useful. They might becoming useful. And and Gloria apparently learned to deal with this by imagining that she wasn't there. She would imagine that she was in a place or movie and one, yeah, they would all pass that somebody would write a different script for, and she would no longer have to live with her man mother and as indeed that happened. But well, other interesting things happened from this, that it, every child developed a different way of coping. So there was one little boy who used to do maths. He was, he was dead keen on maths and all he would do sitting outside was doing maths. So these children had different coping mechanisms and another was a child.

Anne Deveson (00:34:15):

They called the boy with the bread sandwich. And this was even earlier when the seventies, this was in the sixties when an American psychotherapists called Garmin Etsy set out to explore how children coped, why some children coped and others didn't. And so he went around primary schools the American version, and he asked the principals, have you got any kids in your class, any children in your class or your school who are coping and the principals of the school almost always used to almost faint because they usually have people asking if you've got any really difficult children here and here and here was this this man coming around and saying, I want children who really are coping. And the boy was the bread sandwich had been noticed by the teachers and that he always came to school with his lunch, beautifully wrapped in newspaper, but very well folded and, and tied together with string walls to get home.

Anne Deveson (00:35:18):

And when they, I didn't, I made friends with him. It turned out that all he had in his sandwich was two bits of stale bread. And his mother was an alcoholic and he didn't want to let her down. And for everyone else in the school to to see that she was an alcoholic or learn, she was an alcoholic. So used to it very carefully pack up a lunch for her with stale bread and newspaper so that he would, he would be able to hide what was going on from the rest of the school. And then they were able to work with him and help him. And the other thing that came out of all this research was that these young people did better with the, with not with the officials, not so much with the social workers and sorry, in memory.

Anne Deveson (00:36:09):

There w w but with maybe the the parents of the child, they were a child they were friendly with. So it was the informal help that often was the most useful. But it gave, it was a start into being able to raise the kind of issues that some of you raised already and for these kids to make progress. And some of them made remarkable progress when they looked also for the, for the the good things that were happening for these children. And later, remind me to tell you the story of Dave, because that's an amazing one.

Speaker 1 (00:36:45):

And we've got a couple of other questions, this one down here, then the gentlemen in the red shirt up there before we do that, though, I'm not sure that your question's been answered around the Bush fires and the person being in denial versus what, what was their, what skills do they actually have? What resilience skills do they actually have? That's allowed that woman.

Anne Deveson (00:37:08):

Yes. I think w we probably didn't go into the spirituality.

Speaker 1 (00:37:12):

Okay. Well, can I move? We got a microphone just for this lady here.

Anne Deveson (00:37:16):

It was, was talking about spirituality. That's right. Yeah. The microphone's coming

Speaker 1 (00:37:24):

While we're waiting for it to come. I have a question. One of the comments that you made before was you were taught, you were told to look after yourself. What did you take from that? How do you look after yourself?

Anne Deveson (00:37:36):

Well, how do I look after myself very badly, quite often. I, I look after myself, I go and sit in the garden as if it's sunny. And I just sit there and I enjoy the peace of the garden and the beauty of the garden, which isn't a very beautiful garden, but it's quite small, but I get great respite out of, out of that. And, and also going down to the sea, I'm fortunate enough to live near the sea. So I'll go and either walk on the sand or or just go and sit in on the rocks and watch the sea beating or swim sometimes, and, and drinking too much coffee, which is not good. I do too. Another coffee. So

Speaker 1 (00:38:28):

I don't know if this is going to answer your question about spirituality, but a whole range of thoughts comes up for me. One is, I guess it's an individual and how attached a person is to things. But I think also we can have periods of grief. We can grieve the loss of the house and we can have faith and we can move on. So it's all spiritual. The grief is spiritual too. It's not about, you know, denying a tour, not having a feeling about it. So that's some thoughts on that. And the other thing that comes up for me about housing in my own personal experiences, I worked with a client once who was needing support because her partner, this was sort of at the beginning of the JFC, her husband, they had to move house of the out of the family home because he'd lost his job.

Speaker 1 (00:39:22):

And they'd lost their money and it was a big deal and it was a huge change. And I was thinking, whoa, how full on is that? And, and, you know, feeling for her and feeling like, wow, I'd never be in that position. And since then, I've had a similar situation where my husband and I have kind of lost two houses because of financial situation. And we really been in financial crap for about four or five years. And so we've had to go through losing our house twice the first time. It was like losing the family home that we'd built together and my little daughter and my stepchildren. And, and so that was really hard. And it was very stressful. And I dealt, I was living in high stress and coping for quite a long time. My daughter was six months old at the time, and we put a house on the market.

Speaker 1 (00:40:12):

It wasn't selling for over a year. So we had open inspections every weekend for about a year. And I'd carry my little daughter out in my cot who was six months old, so that we could take the cot out of the house every week to the shed anyway, blah, blah, blah. The thing is, is as we've been through it a second time, I'm serene miss time, because with age and experience, I've discovered. And I mean, this may be obvious, but it's wonderful for me to realize this, that I can worry about it, or I can not worry about it. Things always will flower up from the ashes because they did last time. So I have a trust in life. I have more trust in life. Thank you to this, gentlemen. Can everyone hear at the back? No.

Anne Deveson (00:41:06):

I'm wondering, can you can you hear me I'm wondering if it would be helpful if people stood up when they spoke or whether that's not a good thing, you think it's all right as it is. Well, if you feel like standing up, do stand up. All right, Nick, wasn't another, is this gentlemen here? Second row.

Speaker 5 (00:41:30):

Yeah. Thank you. See you. I just want to do you raised the issue very early on that the way you were brought up, everything had to be all right, your perspective. And I was reflecting on a study. I read a long, long time ago during the troubles in Belfast where they, there was tremendous worry about the welfare of the children and how they were going to cope with this. Now, the interesting thing was they did a study of the Catholic kids, who they thought were the most vulnerable and quite a lot of them coped extremely well, which I thought was very interesting. And I've recently read a lot of Seamus Heaney and he thinks it's because of the culture they came from, where you retain the dreaming of your youth. Now it's easy for him to say that because that's what he does. But I wonder whether you've, as you've traveled around, thought that some cultures do this a lot better than others, and while they might, and I'll give you just one example I always find it much more comfortable traveling in Canada than I do in the United States, because it seems like it's people just talk easily

Anne Deveson (00:42:41):

In Canada.

Speaker 5 (00:42:43):

And I'm wondering whether you've developed a feeling about that, the kinds of cultures that cultivate what you're talking about.

Anne Deveson (00:42:51):

I find that experience similar to yours. I find in Italy I have a younger brother who lives in Italy and we took our children for a year when they were aged about four and nine and 13. We, we S we got long service leave from the ABC. And two interesting personal things happen there, or three. The first one was that I got very worried about their schooling, the older ones, and I rang the school of the air. And I got a wonderful woman who sounded like who was an English actress, who was can't remember her name. Anyway. She sounded like an English actress. And she said, my dear, she said, why do you want to bother with those stupid Cuisenaire rods and, and books and things, when you can breathe the air of the, of the Coliseum and you can walk where Caesar walked, she said, throw them all away and enjoy yourself and pen with exactly what we did.

Anne Deveson (00:43:58):

And we went, we'd, we'd gone there at a time when my husband was getting very stressed as work and quite crabby to be with a new, he was being crabby. And so we did, we, all we did was enjoyable, breathe the air of the Coliseum and walk where sees a walk, but we were on a farm. And so the kids could go out and, and and just enjoy themselves there. And we had, they had they had a diary that they kept that they kept. And if anyone wanted to go on working, otherwise we to work maybe an hour, a day, an hour a day. So they would just, they were, they wrote their diaries, but it was probably the best thing I think we did certainly for our marriage because my husband had been very twitchy and didn't sleep and so on. And so on became so relaxed. It was like a different person. So I find Italy having some for me for some of that grace, I think, and acceptance. And I, whenever I can afford it, I go back there. I'm planning to go this year. I hope I do.

Speaker 5 (00:45:13):

If I can just add one little comment, I identify with that because I found Florence like that. I really just loved it and relaxed. And curiously enough, I found Rome a bit like that a little bit, but we all seem to find it a bit mad. I sort of, I suppose it is mad actually, but it's, they're very different kinds of cultures to what you were describing in England.

Anne Deveson (00:45:33):

Oh, he is completely different and that there is a joy then in, in all sorts of things, there's a joy in eating. Isn't the way you can go. And David lived in the old part of Rome trust every, and he, we used to go to a restaurant to eat where they may make us join in the cooking so he could see what was happening. There's another one, Rob G of being a good audience. Fantastic feedback. What have we got?

Speaker 7 (00:46:06):

And thank you. I I'm prompted to speak because the spiritual aspect was raised and I'm glad that it's come into the conversation simply because it's such an unfashionable idea these days. But first I wanted

to acknowledge the innate resilience that varies among the population. I think we can readily see it with a physical constitution that some are stronger than others. And I dare say it's the same with a psyche as well, but in terms of building resilience, which is perhaps the most important practical, psychological question for us three things come to mind for me, one being self-esteem, and that's obviously something we can convey to people, a message of their worth a message that they are loved a message that they can love themselves and look after themselves. And secondly a sense of responsibility to not responsibility for one's whole destiny, because we're presented with all sorts of unpredictable adversity in our environment, but certainly responsibility for responding to adversity, the things that happened to us.

Speaker 7 (00:47:13):

And it seems to me, that's a message that we can give people that the way you respond to the stuff that happens is entirely yours. You're not just a victim floating in the current, and then thirdly, the ingredient of hope. And it seems to me that this is where a spiritual framework can be useful hope, of course not necessarily derived from that. It might be just a cold calculation that I do have a mathematical chance of getting out of this. And I hope that will be the case, or it might be a hope reliant on pop psychology. And we hear people say all the time things are it'll turn out right in the end or everything happens for a reason, even, even from individuals who don't have a philosophical or religious underpinning for that. And then there's a spiritual framework itself. And this is my point that the, the most wonderful thing about it is that it allows one to make sense of everything that happens. Not not in a simplistic way, but even where there's a sense of mystery. One at least has a framework for placing everything within that framework even adversity. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (00:48:28):

And we've got we've probably got time for just two more questions. We've actually got one, two, and actually three people waiting. So if we can keep the questions really quick, that would be great. Thank you. The first ladies over here, if you could just pop your hand up, please. Thank

Speaker 8 (00:48:44):

You. My question is about our indigenous population and you were talking before about, you know, do you see cultural trends in resilience? And I'm very interested in the concept of building resilience amongst indigenous children. And I'm thinking of a situation that I'm very aware of where a family, a large indigenous family of about my generation, half of whom are incredibly successful in all aspects of their lives, you know, in their, in their personal life and in their professional life and the other half who are dead or and died very young ages, you know, due to fairly self destructive behavior, I guess, both all of them having had the same upbringing. I I'm just interested in, if you could, if you think there are things that we can be doing as educators of indigenous children or of, of all disadvantaged children. Cause I think a lot of the things we've been talking about are very middle-class issues of, you know, management and things like that. Whereas we have a whole group of people in our society that are so vulnerable and I'd just be interested in

Anne Deveson (00:50:07):

There was a very good film that I remember seeing documentary film about a husband and wife and they were, he was a scout master and she was the principal of the school. And they had taken on the headship of a school that was many, many I feel with indigenous children and they seem like an unlikely couple to be thrown into an environment about which they knew very little, but what emerged from the

film was their ability to look and see what, what these kids enjoyed, what they responded to and what made them feel good. And they recognize they were suburb. They were terrific on horses. So they, they, they asked around the neighborhood, if anyone could lend any ponies or horses for these kids to ride. And then they started teaching the maths on horseback. And I can't remember quite how it worked, but know they went round in a circle for a note and they did a across and then then they hit the, the, the wife, the headmaster's wife decided she'd make uniforms for them, but she'd asked them first if they wanted uniforms and they did.

Anne Deveson (00:51:20):

And they wanted to plan the uniforms themselves. They wanted to decide the colors. So it was giving back to these children a sense of worth, which was hugely important. And also it was giving them choice, which it seemed to me from a not insufficient experience with indigenous people. But I was on a Royal commission once where we went a lot up into the Northern territory and talked, but we never, we very rarely ask. We just impose, you know, we impose plans here and reports there, and there are reports that were written when the intervention strategy happened. There'd already been a significant report from Aboriginal women that was completely overlooked, I think. So I think, I think for me, my lesson there was, has always been to stop imposing, but, and, and to give joy to people people respond hugely to joy.

Speaker 1 (00:52:24):

The next lady, thank you.

Speaker 4 (00:52:27):

Hello. Hello. I just come from Australia for six months. So I I don't know, my

Speaker 1 (00:52:35):

English is good enough to,

Speaker 4 (00:52:39):

But I, it's very interesting for me because my father has a stress schizophrenia for like 40 years. And you know when I was a teenager I had a quite big trauma of him, like mentally and physically abuse me. And so after that, I know he had schizophrenia but our family, you know, it's always put this like a secret and my father I didn't, I don't even know now if he know he has the six sickness or now, or no, but I know you have a son who has a schizophrenia and for my point of view in the, in a point because after this trauma I've suffered from relapsed depression for like every two, three years when that similar situation trig trigger and B. And so you know, I am now a mother and it's just for me, like my family like my mother, how she, you know, deal with my, sorry.

Anne Deveson (00:54:09):

You need to know how she dealt with it.

Speaker 4 (00:54:12):

Yeah. I just want to ask you yeah. How you, you deal with it because many people think if people has schizophrenia later on some of them, maybe they don't even know they have the disease, but I am, you know, I'm a person who always want to tell the twos, but I'm seems to me, I'm the only one who, you

know, want really, you know, at a point that I really want to talk to my father and tell him, you know, and that him be responsible also, not because he has the sickness and he, you know, he just kind of, it doesn't even grow up and my mother just covered everything and just, you know, gave him Madison secretly or, but it's just,

Anne Deveson (00:55:14):

It's hard when you get, I'll be quick because we wanted to get, you've been very patient. I think it's hard when you've got a divided family. Particularly if your mother has the responsibility, but I think it's very important. You talk to her and you tell how, where, how you're feeling. If you have a doctor or a counselor, I would ask them about telling your father, because I think it's something that you need to know what you're doing, you know, very clearly, but I certainly would cling to your own or give space to your own awareness of what's happening. I think that's important. And to your siblings I wish I could continue this one because it's important, but we're apparently very only got about that much time.

Speaker 1 (00:56:07):

We just got to a very last question with the gentlemen, Dan. Yeah. Thank you. Microphone needed. She's coming. She's

Anne Deveson (00:56:15):

Coming. Thank you for your patience. Yes, it's coming.

Speaker 1 (00:56:24):

You

Speaker 9 (00:56:26):

Refer back to the previous question about cultural differences and the effects on resilience and in particular mentioned, was made of Northern Ireland. I want to emphasize I'm no the wrong green petty sector on the level of me. But I would find out that if you happen to believe in predestination and most proudest Sinclair will seem to have that orientation, then that might lead you to a state of warrior, the food, have a detrimental impact on your resilience and ability to cope. But if on the other hand, you believe that you can go to the confession and tell the of her drought or children doing. And as God's representative, he'll give you forgiveness so that when you walk off of that confessional, if you're dropped dead, then when you were alive at the family gets and pizza, we'll open the gate, invite you in and give you your rings. Of course it must have a positive effect on your resilience.

Speaker 3 (00:57:54):

[Inaudible]

Speaker 1 (00:57:57):

Yeah. And have you got any closing comments?

Speaker 3 (00:58:05):

I haven't a wonderful comment.

Speaker 1 (00:58:08):

I want to make a comment if that's okay. It relates all the way back to the gentleman that was sitting at the top, and it was the comment about management. And so I'd like to comment as a manager. I've been a manager for very long time now, but I won't tell you how many years. Cause I like to tell people I'm 29. So as a manager, for me, people who show any vulnerability for me, demonstrate that they have the ability to grow. And for me, that's incredibly important with my staff and my role is to support them in that and to coach them in that and the way that I do that and the way that I believe all managers should do that. We need to provide an environment for them. That's safe. And if you've got an environment where people can actually come forward and say something to you, and and it may not be that maybe the personal side but the, from the professional side, if there are vulnerabilities around Anne Anne gave the example of, she didn't have management skills in certain areas, they're the sort of things that I'd want to know about straight away.

Speaker 1 (00:59:09):

And I, and I always encourage staff to tell me those things, because I should be able to provide an environment for them. Number one, where I can help them to grow through coaching, through training, whatever they need, but importantly, to be able to take risks and know that I'll support them through that. That's my firm belief about what managers should do, and that's the difference between a manager and a leader. So I hope that helps to answer your question. Thank you.

Anne Deveson (00:59:36):

I have a story it's just on telling, sorry. It's it's about a son of a friend of mine. Who's a psychotherapist and this boy had very bad schizophrenia. He never talked to anyone. He used to walk with a beanie, pulled down over his face. And he lived in, he wouldn't stay at home. He lived in a boarding house and life was pretty grim for him. He, his conversation was very small one day or once a year, they used to have a review of patients. It should have been more my friend remarked, and they had a new young psychiatrist who said, who wanted to ask how these kids were getting on? And he said, how's Dave getting on. And the social worker said, well, you know, he won a blues. He just won a blues. And boy, he stinks and a real trouble with Dave.

Anne Deveson (01:00:31):

And and somebody else talked about how, how terrible other things that they did or didn't do. And this new young psychiatrist bang the desk and he said, stop it. He said, we all know what Dave can't do. Let's hear what he can do, what he likes to do. And, and my friend, the therapist said, well, we're all a musical family. And every now and then he he'll pick up an instrument and start to play, but he won't actually take it any further. He puts it down. If we come in and somebody else said social worker, well, he likes looking over the wall at the pottery school and give him some lessons, or he said, get him a music teacher, give him some lessons. And so suddenly the world opened up for Dave for this boy in quite an extraordinary way. I used to go over there about every six months.

Anne Deveson (01:01:23):

And the next time I went, this boy no longer had his beanie pulled down here. He'd he was making, cooking little statues at the pottery place and selling them. So with the money, he was able to buy his own things. And and he was playing his Valin in the university orchestra rather badly, but nobody minded. But the difference was that this kid had never had any hope in his life and never any joy. And I think joy is the thing we so often overlooked that people have to feel that there is hope that there is fun, that there is love. And suddenly this, this boy had had independence, you know, and he was earning

money and he could play an instrument. And he still used his walk with the shuffle in his eyes don't cost, but you went and held out your hand. He agreed to, and it didn't cost really any money or very little money. And I think we often overlook that

Speaker 1 (01:02:31):

There is a wonderful quote. No one's running out the door at the moment.

Anne Deveson (01:02:40):

It's about resilience. And it's from an American woman who did a lot of research on resilience. The scientist, it may not be that resilience is elusive, but that it's invisible. What if it's something you feel, but you can't describe what if resilience is something that happens, but you can't see what is resilience is something that creates music in a life born, deaf, whatever resilience is, something that warms you in your thoughts, but there's no language to share it, share it. And what if resilience is the poetry of life? And we are now just learning the alphabet. I think that's a wonderful piece of work.

Speaker 1 (01:03:33):

And I'd like to take this opportunity on behalf of Anglicare and all the lovely people that have turned up today to say, thank you so much for coming and providing us with all of your personal insights your learnings your experiences. It's been an absolute treat for, for me, especially, but I can see that everybody else has been enjoying it. I'm sorry that it only went for an hour. Cause I feel that it could have gone on for quite a bit longer. And from my perspective, as far as resilience goes, as you know, you know, where I work and that is one of the things that we tried to build on all the time and your last story, your last example was about all that we try to do, which is build on people's existing strengths to improve their resilience. So thank you very, very much. Okay.