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**Speakers:**

**Speaker 1**

**Speaker 2**

## Speaker 1

For me, the meaning of of life is to do what? What? Whatever I can with what I've got, I was taught. I was taught by my mother, really very early to always be grateful at the end of the day, That that what I what I had and what we have and I. I just remember, however whatever she suffered, and my mother suffered a huge amount given what she went through with losing her husband and managing. eight children. I mean, she worked as a nurse at night and. God knows how she did it, but she always at the end of the day, she always said thankyou... and she always encouraged us to say thank you, So, I am just constantly. Delighted with the fact that I'm alive.

## Speaker 2

Hi, my name is Frances Lynch and welcome to the Living with purpose interviews. In this episode I'm talking with Maria Harries, who's been a social worker, academic writer, activist and a leader of many community sector boards. Welcome, Maria. Thanks for joining me on the living with Purpose podcast. I'm looking forward to having your conversation with you about how purpose plays out in your life. Can I start off just by asking, how do you introduce yourself to people?

## Speaker 1

Well, usually I'm introduced. I'm just introduced myself as Maria. And when I'm introduced, I think it's probably more interesting people call me various things and I just usually say no, I just would rather be called Maria.

Speaker 2

And do you think that that's changed over time? Are there people who know you for a long time, who that hasn't changed, but as you've lived your life, there are other people who? See you in terms of what you do.

Speaker 1

Oh, I think so. I find it really. I find it really awkward and interesting. What images? People may have of me and they sometimes share cause it's I've just become chair of a of an A national organisation and. And I'm very aware that I'm seen by that organisation as somebody who can assist them. It's a very difficult time and yes, I still find that the struggle to think of myself as anybody other than. Somebody who just puts her best foot forward and does what I can for whoever is hanging around me, really or not hanging around.

Speaker 2

you have done a lot in your life and you know you've got a lot of honorifics and your CV I'm sure is very long and if it was a detailed one would be very long but. Do you see the narrative of that in your life? Do you do you think that? That tells a story. About you or is it really just a like how how do you see that?

Speaker 1

Yeah, it look, it's really interesting. I've thought about this and I don't know how I'm going to answer it. Somebody gave me a bracelet a young man gave me a bracelet a couple of years ago and it had on it. She did it because she thought she should and he said, in fact what I mean. you did it because you knew you could. So we had this conversation. This young man is a young man, I've. Kind of looked after in many ways. He was in care most of his life and he's had an awful life. So that told me a story then, and we had this

## Speaker 1

conversation then and. And I think it's true. I I just do what I do partly because I think I can sometimes I don't think I can I do it anyway. But really, really because it feels like I was brought up this way, it feels like and it's a. It's a term that's used in the Catholic Church a lot. What you're called to do. I've always had a sense that I'm not on my own journey. I'm on, I'm and I'm. And I'm not saying I want somebody else's journey. I'm on a journey that's in which I'm called to do whatever I can in the moment. And so that's what I do. Which is why I said yes to Sheila Shaw all those years ago sharing mercy care. It just felt like it's something that. I had to do terrible, terrible. I mean it. Well, it it's it sounds like it sounds like my life isn't in my hands and it's not. I've never had a 10 year plan or a 5year plan or even a year plan.

Speaker 2

But, but you make decisions as they come to.

Speaker 1

You I think I think seriously about them. And I do say no at times. But if I understand, I try to understand the moment and I do talk about it with, I have a couple of people I've always shared thoughts with. And so I don't do everything I'm asked to do, but I do tend to go in various down. Various rabbit holes really. Hmm.

Speaker 2

And is there something like if you look back? To your younger self. Is that how you started off in terms of, you know when you were were young? Young woman and and making your way. Is that saying yes to things? Is that how you've sort of come to be? Where you are.

## Speaker 1

Look, I think I have thought a lot about where how I came to be, what I am and I was brought up in Africa, born in Africa and brought up. By my my father was a A medica. My mum was a nurse, but they were really medical missionaries with the. With the Catholic Church in both converts to Catholicism. And so I was brought. But really in a sense, the most important person in my early life was Clara, who was a a nanny who looked who she she was, what was what was called, I think, may still be called the Cape Coloured. But she but the whole the IT was a mixture of Catholicism, which really was not about the hierarchical church it was about. we're all made in God's image and so there is no one is better than anyone else. That was the kind of philosophy, and my parents were very involved in fighting against racism in Africa. But the other bit of it was the African



## Speaker 1

philosophy of Ubuntu, which was very powerful and still is very powerful for me, and it's a it's an extraordinary humanitarian kind of view of, of, of life, communitarian, I guess. Strictly speaking, I think it means something like I am because you are. but it's much broader than that. It's, you know, we all share a common humanity. And for me it's this, the spiritual side of what my parents taught me, which is that if we're all, we're all. Made of the same flesh. So that's kind of where I I've always been. And clearly, clearly it was in my DNA to end up being what I am. See my my I've got to come from a large family. And my siblings. got seven siblings were six still alive, but they're all. All of them, I think deeply into ecology, into the ecological world and. And I I think it's the same. And very much working not just for, you know, the the world, but also for the indigenous world. So

speaker 1

the for me there is strong links between my upbringing and the now indigenous world is spirituality which I think is so. So important for our Australian. sense of being, let alone for the future of our indigenous peoples. That's a long answer.

Speaker 2

No, no, no. It was really interesting to hear. I I didn't understand that about you. And so when you came back to Australia, what what what age were you?

Speaker 1

Now we went from Africa and my parents were thrown out of Africa and we went to the UK, which is where they originally come from. And then we came to Australia. I think I was about 13. I've never actually I must check that.

Speaker 2

OK.

Speaker 1

And we went to Tasmania, where West Coast of Tasmania, which is where we then were.

Speaker 2

I know part of your history is the sort of the social work coming into being in that sort of world. Of you know, academic and practice. And what's that mean for you in terms of the way that your life's been lived over the last large number of years? Is that is that an important part of who? You see yourself as.

Speaker 1

I'm really a gardener at. Heart and I had to toss up when I did my first degree. Whether I did medicine or herbotany or psychology and for some reason I found myself in psychology in politics. And then came to W.A.

## Speaker 1

I've always been a bit of a an agitated practitioner, it wasn't till I came to W.A. that West Australia. 30 years ago, actually that I could have settled into what was meant to be an academic role. But as you say, I've I've never been a until more recently.

Interestingly, I've never been a true academic. I don't think and and that's partly because teaching because I taught in social work school at UW University of WA, it was all consuming. It's all consuming. I had no time. I I had little time. To be a proper academic who spent most of the time researching and writing, because I just, it was the teaching was so demanding and the other bit of me that kept me. I kept being called to do, which was to be and to do the work. I straddled that a lot. So I did a lot of consulting work. And a lot of, as you know, government work and work with organisations whose work I valued.

Speaker 1

So I was never totally successful academic. I say that because in the last few years I've been an honouree at the University of W.A. and I have thoroughly enjoyed not teaching, although I do like teaching. but just supervising research students and being involved in research. And finally, being able to write.

Speaker 2

But you've always written though.

Speaker 1

Not as much. Not at not as much as I've not as much as I would have liked to have, and certainly not as much as I. Plan to do I'm still not writing as much as I should. Yeah, I love it.

Speaker 2

Can I ask in terms? Of teaching, like who? Who have been your biggest teachers?

## Speaker 1

Yeah. Look, that's a that's a lovely question. And I've and I've said it so. I've said this so often, my greatest teachers have really been the people I've worked with, and I mean the men and women and children who. Have taught me how to be. To be I. Think humble is not the word to continually question my assumptions. I mean, I've worked with one of my greatest teachers at the moment is an extraordinary Aboriginal woman who. And it a long time ago. We travelled through an awful, awful, awful life journey. And she's she's come out the other end and she's just taking the world by storm at the moment. And I just keep, she says to me recently. And I've learned a lot and I said no. I've learned far more from. You. So that's who my that's one the other for me. The other teachers. I'm a frustrated philosopher as well as a frustrated gardener. Other than the philosophical

Speaker 1

thinkers of today. So my passion really is reading, reading contemporary philosophy rather than rather than. Classical philosophy. But I don't know who my teachers are. That anyone I can learn from you is at the moment.

Speaker 2

It's like it's. So some of the people that you have. I mean it the language here is so constraining because you talked about somebody you work with and there's this whole language of power around. Is it somebody who I'm supporting? Is it somebody I'm helping is it somebody who's a client? You know, there's. All this stuff but. It seems as though really what you're saying is, is the people who you've had the opportunity to. Walk alongside to work with to journey alongside. Yeah. Has that been a consistent

Speaker 2

thing? Is that something that you've learned more over time or is it?

Speaker 1

Gosh, it's interesting to be asked these questions. The I I wasn't, I I wasn't brought up. With a silver spoon in, I wasn't brought up to believe that anybody was any worse or better than there we were all the same, so that my introduction to classes at the university always I used to for the time I had the students on the day one, and I would say to them. The most important lesson I just want you to share with you is that there is no them in US. There was just that there was just us. And so, you know, when my father died when leaving a mum. My mother is a widower in a new country with eight children and. And you know, we were, we were significantly poor. In fact, we lived in one of the poorest suburbs of Tasmania.



## Speaker 1

know I'd. I've never seen the people I work with is anything other than people who are sharing a journey with. Me now, that doesn't mean I break the boundaries. All the time.

I'm very aware of the boundary. You know, I have always been aware of bounds, and you have to have some regardless but. We share a common humanity. I'll go back to my ground. You know, we share a common humanity. So they are my teachers and I am their teacher.

Lovely man. By the name of Jim Barbour.

Professor Jim Barber was a colleague of mine in Adelaide. He wrote a book called Beyond Casework. And it was a philosophy here and I shared. He just retired as the. From one of the universities in the eastern seaboard, a company which one? But then that's one of the the lessons I learned from from a book he wrote is that. Something I've always done, which is to say this is my role at the moment

speaker 1

when I'm working with someone and. This is a job I've got to do and This may or may not help you, but in what we're doing together you will be you will. I will be getting wisdom from you too.

Speaker 2

It reminds me it reminds me of a quote which is often attributed to Leela Watson. Where you know the Aboriginal activist from Queensland who you know said it would come to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Speaker 1

Oh, I like that. And I don't know that quote, but I think I'll. I'll write it down. That's lovely, Neela Watson.

Speaker 2

I'll send you.

Speaker 1

Do please do. I feel that very strongly. Very strongly.

Speaker 2

Well, it came to.

Mind in in listening to what you were saying. Because really I I. Absolutely understand where you're coming from with that. But I'm not sure that that's always within the the community, but I think within the helping professions, that's not always the perspective that. People have.

## Speaker 1

Look, it's it definitely isn't, and it's a struggle. I think it's a struggle with that. All professions circle, you know, professions have. You do. There's clearly a a need for boundaries. And I think you, we grow into the capacity to. Hold boundaries at the same time as we share our common humanity. It's not. I know people from all professions who are able to. To actually and still cross the boundaries to stay within that their shared humanity, a very quick story. I am was, meeting up with a medical friend of mine and he had his arm around a young man and a man who was in his early 20s like the early 20s. And this young man had been in care, With the States and statutory care all his life as a child, and he was, he was at this stage a very serious heroin user. And he was coming for treatment at a clinic and I was introduced to this young man and he he reeled back when I was

## Speaker 1

introduced as a social worker. I wasn't working with that group at the time. I was just visiting and he looked at me and he was the most honest statements. That was just one of those statements that threw me. He looked at me and he said he said I I've been in care all my. Life, and this is the first person who's put his arm around me. Talking about that medical practitioner, he said none of the social workers in all those years ever touched me. And it was, it was, you know, his craving for connection had never been met. And he this this particular Medicare does it all the time. He doesn't. People think he may cross the boundaries, but he is deeply humane and there are lots of. There are lots of people who can do that who can hold. The professionalism as well as their humanity. Without, without relegating people to the

speaker 1

other, which is what we so easily do in professional practice. Long story.

Speaker 2

No, no, no. It's interesting. The essence, I suppose, of what you're speaking about in that story. But also before that, just in terms of being in that space with people. Has that influenced your decisions? About what to say yes to and what to allocate your time and your energy to.

Speaker 1

I'm not sure. I would hope so. I'm assuming that sits behind, assuming it sits behind what I try to do. It's just. I just feel so strongly that we just share a common humanity and. That there isn't a of them and an US. And we all go and it is so fundamental to it's so fundamental to where we need to go into the future. I think, you know, we're sitting today

Speaker 1

at this watershed time. Yet another watershed time in the world as we await the outcomes of the American election. And and I I really do have a sense that.

We we need.

With this this healing, this healing everywhere that is required. But we're not going to be able to heal if we sit in these diadic worlds. You know. This diadic world of good and bad. black and white. And I mean that literally so. Yeah. I just think acknowledging our shared humanity is fundamental to moving forward.

Speaker 2

And I know I asked you before about who are some of the significant teachers are there are there, are there other people who really influenced how you've come to understand the world. I know through that experience. You know, being with somebody and

Speaker2

hearing stories and being able to see and learn from that, but are there other people who've really influenced your perspective in? Terms of how. How you come to be now?

Speaker 1

Going back my one of my early heroes was my first professor of psychology, who was Jim Cartner in the University of Tasmania, who was a basis. A psychologist and a philosopher. Deeply psychoanalytic. So he he was A and his wife. Kath was a social worker, actually an extraordinary woman. They were probably two people who. Had a huge impact on me, but I don't know that I can't name I really. Fundamentally, you know it wasn't with all of the practice world I was involved in. And the academic world wasn't, and I hadn't thought about this till recently. It wasn't until I went I accepted that role at Mercy Care as chair, and I was invited by the Sisters of Mercy to do



## Speaker 1

that role. Funnily enough, one of the reasons I said yes is. There was an inevitability about it because one of the sisters had been a student in a master's class of mine and she had she. She had taught me sister and told me. Had taught me so much in that in the time I was her lecturer in the master's class, I've learned so much from her and it really wasn't until I joined Mercy Care. That a I came back to a deep a deep connection with my own faith, but also I was aware of a philosophical way of being. as a worker in the world which the mercy story was about. So for me it was such a powerful connection. And it has stayed with me that stayed with me. So I think they have been my greatest teachers and sister and told me is still one of my great teachers by the. we still have lots of contact.

## Speaker 2

You know, I was at mercy care at the time when you were on the board and. I think my experience, not just at Mercy Care but of other organisations as well is, is that when a. A really strong origin story. If I can put it that way, you know. Like a like a way a. Story that really makes. A reason why the organization exists, you know, really does have an amazing opportunity of creating meaning for the people in the organization and can create an energy in that organization and certainly I have experienced that within mercy care and some other organizations and. Yeah. I think really most organizations within the Community do need to have some version of that story, some way of creating opportunity for meaning and bringing people together. You you've mentioned philosophy two or three Times Now, so you know you were talking about reading at the moment and and

## Speaker 2

some modern philosophers weren't. I mean, philosophy is such an interesting sort of sphere in the sense that most people. Even if they were reading something that was philosophical wouldn't necessarily identify it as such or so. So what? What does that really mean to you? Like what? When you say philosophical or? The philosophy writers that you're reading at. The moment what? What draws you to?

## Speaker 1

But I've just, yeah, they're absolutely spot on. My favourite podcast at the moment is the minefield. With Willie, Delly and. Gosh, what's his name? Scott Stevens. And it's really, it's a weekly podcast on the ABC Exploring the meaning and meaning of issues in modern life. That's what it's about. And they have. They I don't know that they're both philosophers. I think Scott is will lead. Ellie is

## Speaker 1

naturally a philosopher. For me, it is just exploring the meaning of modern life. That's what what is? What is it actually about? And so one of one of the most extraordinary books I've read more. Recently is Sasha Sagan's book. And she's the daughter of Carl Sagan, who was in fact an atheist. But a man who was always. I used to listen to when I was young. He was probably somebody who was an inspiration to me. who was always inspired by the extraordinary mystery of the universe. He didn't attribute the mystery to God to a God, but he attributed he in that it was the mystery, the mystery of the universe itself was sufficient to keep him excited in life and. And his daughter Sasha has. Had written a book about where she is now and what she has capitalised on in her father's story is the importance of valuing and experiencing that mystery and celebrating that mystery and

speaker 1

celebrating life. So that's the sort of kind of. Indigenous history. What do you what do you say about the origin story is really significant for me in terms of indigenous storytelling, the power and the importance and the power, what how much we can learn from that. an Aboriginal friend of mine. Said to me years ago, he he was having trouble with his son and he said he said to his son. How do you want when you are an ancestor? How do you want the future generation to remember you? What is the story you want them to tell about you? and it was such a powerful one for me. I used it with my son. It didn't work, but. It's. There's something about the stories that we are all part of the story and the mercy certainly have a powerful origin story. But so do we. So do we all. Good and good and bad, and hold it. And that's something that Sasha Sagan talks about. The significance of stories.

Speaker 2

This podcast is called living with purpose and I always get around at some point to asking. What? What do you see or how do you see purpose? But I think meaning. Is part of this. As well. So for you, how? How do you? Describe meaning and purpose in your life now.

Speaker 1

Well, I've got a new grandson. He's not so new. He's two, and he reminds me all the time of. How important it is we live our lives to the full because you can see the imprint on him. I think I'll go back right back to the beginning of. Of this Francis, and that is that. For me, the meaning of life is to do what? What? Whatever I can with what I've got and I am. So I'm I I was taught I was taught by my mother, really very early to always be grateful at the end of the day that. That what I what I had and what we have and I. I just remember,

## Speaker 1

however whatever she suffered, and my mother suffered a huge amount given what she went through with losing her husband and managing. eight children. I mean, she worked as a nurse at night and. God knows how she did it, but she always at the end of the day, she. Always said thank you. And she always encouraged us to say thank you so. I am just constantly. Delighted with the fact that I'm alive. Yeah, and if you engage with individuals or collectivities, whether it's neighbours or whatever in that kind of world of gratitude, I just think life is great. So that my purpose is to keep living. I don't really want to die slowly. I want to die quickly, but I just hope that. I'm. I'm gracious in whatever in whatever way I go.

Speaker 2

it sounds from the. Way that you spoke about that. The relationships with people are really important as part of that. Each relationship is important. There's no value in one more than the other.

Speaker 1

I don't see relationships as transactional or instrumental for me. They are just what they are. Relating in the moment so. By that I've never been somebody who. Who? Who has friendships because of what they. Can give to me. I just don't. I just don't think of life that way. So I'm just enormously grateful for the friends I've got and the people I've. That are in my life. Somehow I've chosen this fantastic bunch of human beings from around the world who are good human beings, even a couple of them are Trump supporters, but they're still good human beings.



Speaker 2

But isn't that interesting because whether or not somebody is a good human being often has little to do with what they do or what they believe or what they talk. You know their politics and yet we're in this world, which is really, you know, polarized around some of those attributes. that we see in people.

Speaker 1

I think fundamentally, I believe I you see, probably I, naive Pollyanna, whatever I am, I really do believe that most people are inherently kind. Jacinta Ardern this, oh, by the way, she is Jacinto Ardern is one of my heroes at the moment. And when she was elected, I remember seeing the interview when she was elected, and she was. In the car going to Parliament House or wherever she was going and she was asked by the reporter what she would like to see in New Zealand, what would be her? And her hope for New Zealand.

Speaker 1

And she didn't say, you know, I'd. Like to see. It develop development in GDP or well, she said. I would just like to see a lot. More kindness. And she has, she has. That's been her motto. So, for me, I see most people as being inherently kind. but really struggling with. As you said that the kind of the fear, the fears. The polarization that fears produce, which is what we see in the United States, I mean, we don't see a polarization of kind and unkind people. We see a polarization about fright for me that my understanding is people who are frightened. Variously frightened.

Speaker 2

There are a lot of. Ways that we can create fear you. You know for our.

Speaker 1

Absolutely, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Are you hopeful?

Speaker 1

I'm always hurtful. Somebody said to me recently, you can be hopeful without being optimistic, so I'm hopeful without being a Pollyanna, I think because I think we have to have hope and every day, you know, every day I experience it that you know the joy of people, kids. Just somebody picking up the the other day, somebody, you know, ran after this woman who dropped a, you know, a \$20 bill on the road. And this little boy just picked it up and ran after. Her and said Lady lady. And it was. Just you know those sort of things keep me. Going the inherent kindness and generosity. Decency and we've seen it through covid. I think.

Speaker 2

But it takes a like a particular mindset to be able to notice that. So. So obviously that is you're tuned in to being able to see that around you. Would that be fair to say?

Speaker 1

Yeah, I don't tune into nastiness. I don't even notice it. But I think I choose to be blind to it, which makes me naive at times.

Speaker 2

Have the particular things that you do to. Maintain your energy and to give you the. You know the energy to keep going at. What's? Important to you?

## Speaker 1

Look, I do what I said earlier, I think I don't know what I do consciously, but I do know that at the end of every day I reflect on. All of the good things that happened that day. I don't reflect. I don't reflect on the bad things, unless something really terrible has happened and I can't get it out of my mind. But mostly now I'm mostly I am very grateful for the fact that I was. I was taught very early the gratitude and just even having a shower, you know, even being able to have a hot shower. The majority of the people in the world don't have that. And yet we're not. I just. I find it mesmerising that we can't appreciate what we've got. So, but I'm lucky I was taught that.

## Speaker 2

And these days, we would. Say there's evidence to show that the gratitude practice is very helpful.

Speaker 1

Oh, great, really. Is there research evidence?

Speaker 2

I I think there is yes.

Speaker 1

I think I try as best I can to sustain the moment and not do it very well. But when I'm feeling down, I am a frustrated gardener. I my preference is to be gardening than writing at the moment. But. But I do think that gardening gives you an earthiness and a kind of a reengagement with what. Again, our aboriginal. Friends and colleagues talk about a lot. You know that mother Earth is actually where we are. It's mother earth is. Our feet are planted. And the energy comes from Mother Earth, and we better look after it. Pope Francis is an inspiration to me, by the way. Thank God for Pope Francis

Speaker 1

. Jacinda Ardern, Pat Francis, Angela Merkel.  
So gender neutral.

Speaker 2

You mentioned the podcast from Waleed Alley and the other person. I can't remember now but and the book by Carl Sagan's daughter. But is there anything else that's really meant something to you recently in terms of listening and reading?

Speaker 1

Ohh self search the minefield and the philosopher's and and my My daily podcast. I walk with the dog. I walk the dogs every morning and listen to one of those. Three, and probably the most powerful one. More recently was in fact a podcast with an Aboriginal theologian. Called Deverill, and he's written a book called Gondwana

Speaker 1

theology He's an Anglican priest somewhere in Victoria, I think, but he's a Tasmanian Aboriginal man. And then and the. So I'm a bit enchanted at the moment with the links between, indigenous spirituality. I've I'm. I'm doing it just. Interesting. Oh gosh, I'm doing this research which I've been involved in research over the last few years on school chaplaincy,

speaker 2

ok

Speaker 1

and we're doing an an evaluation of outcomes of school Chaplaincy, Nation nation. It's been difficult during COVID times.



## Speaker 1

But one of. Why it's been particularly interesting to me, has been the significance of spirituality for children, for young people, the concept of spirituality, not religion. But spirituality and kids talk about the meaning of life in many different ways. They don't talk about it in God's terms. They talk about it in meaning of life terms, and one of the most powerful bits of learning we did doing that was talking to Aboriginal leaders in the northwest of W.A. About what was important in they thought in terms of chaplaincy and the schools up there and for them. For the ones that rose me, my my research colleague talked to, it was the significance that that they couldn't understand how. Non Aboriginal people didn't realise the significance of spirituality in the lives of children. And so that for me has been an inspiring journey search and it's

speaker 1

taking me into indigenous spirituality in quite a significant way. So that book on Gondwana theology has only just been released, and I've only just bought it, but I'm looking forward to reading it because I think it does link back to. My African heritage and the whole notion of Ubuntu. Which isn't, which isn't earth based by the way, which is interesting. It's not Earth based, it's much more relational anyway.

Speaker 2

Oh, OK,.

Speaker 1

Early days, early days. Early days, I do remember saying to my mother, well, that's not true. I don't remember saying it to her, but I remember she told me. I said it to her that when I was about 10, I said to her, I'm

Speaker 1

looking forward to dying. Because when I die understand everything so.

Speaker 2

Oh wow.

Speaker 1

My my search I'm constantly excited by reading and that's where philosophy comes in I think.

Speaker 2

I noticed just I'm not sure if you know of Catherine Masson, but she's just released a book on the journey of. The Benedictines in New Norcia, so that really is the story of the Benedictine nuns and their engagement and sort of history with the Aboriginal people there. And yeah, I haven't had a chance to look at it, but yeah. It it really? It looks as though that also tells a bit of the story of the

Speaker 2

sort of spirituality that the the Aboriginal women brought into that experience, and how it changed the Benedictines to some degree as well so.

Speaker 1

Absolutely. And the Lucy told that story at the time in in the northern north of West Australia in Balga. How significantly, the mercies I met up there and this John of God's sisters, how much they were influenced by the women, the Aboriginal women and the strength and the spirituality of those women, yeah.

Speaker 2

Look, I'm. I'm coming to the end of of our conversation. And I'm just wondering if there's anything that's just sitting with you that you wanted to mention before we finish up.

Speaker 1

I think. OH no I don't know. I could. I could go on to. I like I don't. I like talking and answering questions. My mind goes down too many other rabbit holes, but I think the one the one thing that the one thing going back to Aristotelian thinking, I think. The drivers may still use the notion that we don't. We don't do enough to understand in our lives. The significance of. The the power we have or don't have or think we have or think others have. But it's almost like it it feels to me at the moment that we're we've gone so steadily down at capitalist and I'm not anti

## Speaker 1

capitalist by the. Way I'm not, I'm not. Just because I'm I'm critical, I'm critical of what capitalism in its current form is doing. But individualism, you know, extreme individualism and extreme capitalism ain't working no more and. But going down those those paths of competition acquisition.

Wealth greed, non-stop has actually stopped us thinking and this is going back to my interest in philosophy stopped us thinking.

About our ordinary everyday lives and what is important other than making money and being successful. So no, my only thoughts. I just keep going down a rabbit hole of philosophical thinking really.

Speaker 2

These these rabbit holes and and you know side paths are what makes life interesting, but certainly makes conversations interesting.

And look, I've appreciated your time in having a conversation with me. I certainly have learnt. A little more about who you are and and the way that you think and I really hope that the people who listen to this will appreciate that in you. And look, I really thank you for the time that you've given me today in having this conversation.

Speaker 1

My pleasure. Francis and I look forward to seeing you. Another time.

Speaker 1

Absolutely

Speaker 2

travel well.