



QUESTIONS

for your real life journey

Episode 26: Major Diana MacDonald

How do we face change?

1. WILLINGNESS AND WILLPOWER (8:37)

Diana explains: 'Well, I'm open to change, actually – and with that mindset it becomes a little easier to accept and face changing circumstances. It's never easy: it takes time and all the energy. But it's not impossible to face it. Having willingness and willpower is the key.'

How do you think someone with the willingness but not the willpower to face change might experience life? What about someone with the willpower but not the willingness? Which do you think is more important when facing change? Which do you more often lack?

2. BIG CHANGES (14:58)

Diana and her husband have twice moved from their native Pakistan to the UK, and twice moved back from the UK to Pakistan. She reflects, 'It was a bigger shift, and it took more time, to come back and settle into your own culture.'

Why do you think it was harder for them to go back to a culture they had grown up with, and (by comparison) easier to adapt to a new culture?

How do we move through suffering?

3. BY GOD'S GRACE ONLY (16:16)

Diana's experience is that she moves through suffering 'by God's grace only. Otherwise, it is impossible to move through it. Personally, I have the capacity to absorb suffering, challenges and disappointments. I completely depend on his grace and he has just never failed me.'

Do you think the capacity to absorb suffering, challenges and disappointments is only present in some individuals? Have you experienced God's grace in ways that made it possible for you to move through suffering? How might you receive God's grace?

4. WITH OTHERS' SUPPORT (19:59)

Diana says the support they received in the UK from retired officers helped them. 'They were our mentors. Their support restored our strength. Everyone needs some kind of shoulder.'

Who mentors you in faith? Whose support restores your strength? Who are the shoulders you cry on or rest your head against when it all gets too much?



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How do we receive joy?

5. KEEPING THE CANDLE BURNING (26:25)

Diana explains, 'there is a difference between being happy and joyful. Happiness is temporary and can come and go – but joy lasts forever, as is felt from within. There may be circumstances that make me unhappy in my life, but being around friends, family, nature, and a continuous eagerness to walk with God keeps that candle of joy burning inside of me. And it keeps lit even during the darkest time of my life.'

'I experienced that when I lost my mother in 2014. I wasn't happy, but still there was joy in my heart that she was with the Lord.'

Have you ever experienced joy despite not being happy? When? What is it about friends, family and nature that can bring so many of us joy? What would you say a 'continuous eagerness to walk with God' looks like for you?

How do we mature in service?

7. ACTIVE SERVICE (36:36)

Diana says she has matured 'with experience and age, by seeing real life experiences of people around me – whether they were officers, or soldiers or even non-Christians – and by reading books and Scripture itself with a different view than usual.'

'And additionally, I think working continuously has kept my 'muscles' stronger: physically, socially, and emotionally. I feel being idle can have a very negative impact on my life. Instead of maturing, I start to decline. So I'm always doing something to make myself active. Whether it's my ministry, my home or wherever I am, I'm always doing something.'

How have non-Christians in your life helped you to mature in service as a Christian? Do you agree that looking for opportunities to be active and avoid idleness helps you to grow? How?

8. RESPONDING AND LISTENING (39:24, 41:02)

Matt asks Diana to reflect on how her service has changed as she has got older. She offers two reflections: first, that now 'I'm not reacting to situations, I'm responding.'

Second, she 'I have become a good listener. I give more time to listening than talking. But there was a time in my childhood and in my youth that I wasn't so good at doing that!'

How do we train ourselves to respond, rather than react, to situations? How do we make sure we listen more than talk? Do you think these two pieces of advice are connected?