

Coffee with Phil. 36. Invest Into Life Giving Connections

Introduction.

Well, g'day, g'day, g'day, welcome to the podcast again, welcome to coffee with Phil, and I hope you're having a good day and enjoy a coffee wherever you are. I got home this afternoon and made myself a coffee. I'm pleased to report that my coffee roaster has been fixed, repaired, and is like new. And a big shout out to the team at Kaffellogic, who are the manufacturers of my coffee roaster, and have repaired my coffee roaster at no cost to me. So, look, I just feel like I need to do a shoutout, if you're looking for a coffee roaster that's affordable, in the context of coffee roasters that is, then we'll put the link in the notes, in the description below, to Kaffellogic, and a big shout out to them. You can be happy that my sanity has returned because I have freshly roasted, home roasted, coffee in the house. However, had my coffee, had a catch up with Kathy, and now it's quite a bit later in the day, and so I'm in my office with the licorice tea, if that interests you at all, I'm not sure if it does.

Hey, today I want to speak about some personal stories. Going to be a little bit open here, and I'm going to talk about some of my friendships, and how much they mean to me, and why they mean so much to me. And my goal in doing this is really to encourage you to invest into life giving connections, and so this is Coffee with Phil episode 36 and the title of this podcast is, invest into the life-giving connections and what I'm talking about is deep friendship, and I wanna speak about that.

By way of introduction though, you might think of, and I'm gonna do the same, contrast the people in your life that you love to hang out with. And contrast them with the people that you avoid. And what's the difference? You know for me, I find there's certain people, acquaintances, people I know that are draining, and that's not that I don't spend time with them, it's not that I don't want to be with them, it's not that they're not friends. But sometimes, you know, there's a bit of a take, take, take, and no give. And we're all supposed to have friendships like that, and I have plenty. But, you know when you're thinking about it, who are those people that you really seek out? You love to hang out with? You're like, oh my gosh, this is just, this is filling my soul, my heart is full, I feel like I can be myself, I can be genuine, I can just hang out, no problems at all. And as I'm thinking of this, and I hope you are too, you know, I'm thinking about those people and I've got situations written down in front of me, and I'm using situations rather than people's names. Those of you that are very, very close to me will have a go, I'm sure, at guessing who I'm talking about, and those that are family, or are incredibly close to me, we'll probably find themselves in here.

But look, my point with doing this is really, what I'm trying to do is point you to something, and challenge you to do something about it, for your own benefit and the benefit of others. And so, as I always do, you can be expecting at the end of the podcast for me to point the finger back at you, and I've written down three challenging questions that I'll give you. So you're welcome, no problems, I'm happy to do that for you.

So, I want you to think about, why do these people come to mind? That are life giving? And also why do these people come to mind, who are draining? And maybe you, if you wanted to, I haven't done this, but you could even make a list. You could have two sides of a piece of paper, and you could write names on

each side, but then start to think about what is it about this relationship that really pours back into my life? And how can I be investing into that friendship?

I've shared a podcast previously, if I was very clever I'd be able to tell you what it is, here it is, it's on my phone, Coffee with Phil episode 31, I talked about setting safe boundaries, and in that podcast I've been pretty clear on how I do that, and given you some examples. So, you might want to go back and look at Coffee with Phil episode 31 called Safe Boundaries if you're trying to be healthy in how you manage your personal space, and who is in that personal space. So anyway, that's all by way of introduction.

Situation A.

I want to talk to you about Situation A. Situation A, this friendship is one of the closest and dearest friendships we have, it's a very, very long-term friendship, one of the things I love about this friendship is that it's mutually loving, and mutually giving. And what I mean by that, it's just such a two-way street. You know, like we love each other. We give into each other. We encourage each other. We celebrate each other. We cry with each other. We talk about our journeys. We talk about our, the journey of our kids, and we talk about the bigger picture. We talk about financial challenges and successes. And we've done that for a very, very long time. Personally, one of the things that I love about this and what makes it such a life-giving connection for me, because you know it's all about me, is that this also has a lot of focus on good food and good wine, and I'm a foodie. I love, I appreciate food. I love preparing food. I love exploring food, and I definitely love eating food, and so we've done many degustation meals together. We've done wine matching, and food, and whiskey tasting. It all things that you can think of relating to food. I've cooked banquets, multi-course meals and these guys have sat at that table and we've had some laughs and we've had some tears and you know, to be fair, there's been some challenging times we've gone through, and one of the phrases I learned from another good friend of mine that's also on this list somewhere on the page, he said to me once, he says, the relationships that really count in our lives are those that are forged in fire. And what he meant by that, and I could apply this to situation A is, you know, when friendships are tested, when things aren't going well, but you choose to press through, to love unconditionally through challenges, what you get on the other side of it is a friendship that is much stronger. It can stand the test of time, and it's not dependent on the benefits. You know, I'm going to talk about it in a minute, about a different situation and why these friendships come to mind for me is that they're not conditional. They don't, well if you do this for me, then I'm gonna give you that. I mean those are shallow friendships. We've all got friends like that, but these aren't life giving connections. So ,what I'm talking about today, in what I'm encouraging you to do is invest into life-giving connections.

In situation A, this first friendship I'm talking about, this friendship goes deep into family. So, we invest in each other's children and that's been happening for a long time, since the kids were little, and then they became teenagers. Well, now. My kids are adults and yet I see a deep family connection on both sides, and like, my parents aren't alive anymore, but on the other side of it, there are parents involved and you know we are willing to be part of that circle with that family. And so you know what helps you to develop a life-giving connection is a multi-generational connection, and as I'm saying that I'm thinking of my kids and some of the friendships they've got, and of course, now that they're adults, I'm seeing

them build connections with the parents of their friends. Those deep friendships that they have, go multiple generations, and I would suggest to you that that's a key thing for lifegiving connections.

So let me keep moving cause I wanna give you a broad series of examples today, there's five situations here, and I just want to share them with you because I figure that across the board, they're going to mean something to you in some way, and again, when I get to the challenge at the end of it, you'll understand why.

Situation B.

Situation. B. The second group of friends that I'm talking about, but as I started to think about the characteristics of this friendship, I then started expanding it, or layering it, and realising that there were a number of different couples that fit the situation exactly, and the stories are slightly different, but the key principles are definitely the same.

So in this situation, I would say for these friends, again, it's long term like there's over 20 years of friendship going on here, Now if you're a young person and you're only 18 years old, then this is gonna be hard for you to have, but even my kids in their mid 20s, early 20s, they've got friends that fit into this category, so it's not impossible to have friendships where there's 20 years or more of friendship, and I think playing the long game is something that's really important here, and the two to three situations I'm thinking of in this regards, this actually includes a period of time where we worked together, and we spent a lot of time together, and we travelled together, and we took risks together, and we had successes and failures, and we had long nights where we talked about some of those challenges, and that just builds.

If you think about a savings account, those kind of situations are just like money in the bank, over a long period of time with this relationship there's just, you're making deposits, you're making deposits, you're making deposits, you're making deposits, and so I want you to think about life-giving friendships that you've invested into is exactly like your retirement fund. The retirement debit comes out of your pay packet every fortnight, or whenever you get paid, you invest into a long-term fund and deposit, deposit, deposit, accumulates over the long term, interest is added, and you get your retirement savings. Friendships are like that.

These kinds of friendships that I think that I'm thinking of, we don't actually see each other very often these days, but whenever we do see each other, it's like instantly picking it back up again. There was an event that I was part of earlier this year where I got to meet a lot of friends from previous seasons, and one of these couples was there, and we just hit it off instantly, we stayed late, we told stories, and we laughed, and we remembered the old days, and I got in the car and I said to Kathy, I said to her, that was just so life-giving for me, that connection, the stories, and sharing the past together, and celebrating the past, was just life giving for me and I felt like a million bucks as a result of it, and so that's the kind of connections that we want to be building in our lives.

These connections here that I'm thinking about, like if one of those guys rang me tomorrow, I would drop everything instantly and I would respond to whatever their need was. It doesn't matter where in the world they were, it doesn't matter what their need was, it doesn't matter what I was doing at the

time. Such is the connection that's been forged there, is my commitment to be responsive to their needs, it's a real life giving connection.

I'd have to say for a couple of them that fit in this category, Kathy, I invested significant levels in the early days, and some of it was financial, and some of it was in other forms of investment, relational and family, and in some cases property related, and I'm looking at that now, so long ago, and I'm thinking it was like treating that friendship, like planting an acorn seed in the ground, and an acorn seed obviously is what grows not an acorn tree, an oak tree, and it's a long term, but you've got to have the wisdom to plant the seed in the beginning. And so, I want you to think about who is around you that would be that kind of friend that you would treat like an acorn seed. You would invest heavily into each other, because you want to play the long game. You know, and I can tell you right now that my life is richer every time I meet these people, it's like life and joy and energy, it just pours back into me because of it.

Situation C.

Let me talk about Situation C. Look, I apologise, I don't mean to be crude about labelling these ABCDE, but I'm really just trying to be a little bit discrete, and look, some of you will read through my code very easily but, Situation C.

Over the period of time that Kathy and I have been married, we have been invited into situations with younger couples to provide what you would say would be pre-marriage advice or pre-marriage counselling, and I've gotta confess, I say this all the time, I hate doing it, you know, like, I'm like, look, you're so in love and you're all focused on the wedding, you don't really want to listen to any advice that I've got for you. But I say this, the moment you're married, and the moment you're living together, you are going to want to ring me up and come and sit down and ask for my help. So, I'm more interested in post-marriage support than pre-marriage counselling, which is kind of, a bit of my deal I suppose.

But look, there's a friendship that I'm thinking about that we've been involved in both, we journeyed before the marriage, we wrestled with some challenges, we had food together, we had laughs together, we celebrated the wedding day, oh, my gosh did we celebrate, and then we journeyed, we journeyed afterwards, and we continue to journey afterwards, because it's just so good together. We have regular meals together, we eat at each others homes. We pray with each other. We pray for each other. We have lots of laughs. We have lots of fun. We do other things together, and what I'd say about this, why it's so life-giving for me, is that it's just, there's like a genuineness to the care. There's nothing false about it. There's no pretense. There's no innuendos, there's no shadows, there's nothing hidden, like, it's so genuine, and it's two-way, and I think that's, I suppose a theme, that I'm seeing as I look across these five very, very different situations. Is it's just two-way love going on, and one of my favourite phrases that the theologian C. Baxter Kruger taught me, in his book *The Great Trinitarian Dance*, and *Speaking of the Holy Trinity*, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He used this phrase, other-centered love, and it's just 100% committed and devoted to the benefit and the joy of the other person, and that's what marriage should be. But that's what I'm talking about with these life-giving connections.

So, these are people that we believe in, these are people that we love deeply, these are people that we choose to invest in, these are people that we want to pray with, these are people that we have the

highest hope for their good and their outcome, just as we do for our own children. This is, these are people that we wanna journey into the future with, you know, on the long term, and so I'm saying that so that you would start to consider how you might have those friendships in your life also. And so these are another example of a situation where we, I just value this friendship so much, and I'm willing to invest into it, because it's life-giving for me as I pour into it, as I deposit into it, as I sow into it, I feel like I get so much back in return and that's what makes it life giving for me, I suppose.

Situation D.

Well, we're almost there, we're at situation D, and this one is very, very close to home. There's no doubt you'll work out what's happening here. I wanna speak to you about a family prayer night that happened as recently as last week. It was powerful. It was moving. It was incredibly rewarding as a parent. And the situation is that Kathy, my wife, had a, just a simple procedure, that she was undergoing, but she was a little bit nervous about it, and some of the, you know circumstances around it, we weren't too sure about, and so we got a text message, I got a text message during the day from a good friend of ours saying, friend slash family member, saying, hey look, I really feel we would like to get together and pray for Kathy tonight, will you be home at 6:30pm? And I was like, Yep, I'll be home by then. So, no problems. What resulted in that is what I want to speak about, and it really sparked me to prepare this podcast.

What happened was our daughters in-laws turned up for prayer, for Kathy, and so two families were present. But not just that, there was two generations presents, see it wasn't just the parents praying for each other, it was, the kids turned up, the children of each side of that family, which we now consider to be one family, and they got together and they prayed, and as we put Kathy in the hot seat in the middle, we said, hey, it's all about you, let's get that happening right now, and so around the circle we went and there was prayers of love, there was prayers of encouragement, there was prayers of identity, there was healing prayers spoken, there was prophetic words of encouragement, and pictures that were shared for the building up, the edification for the strengthening and encouragement of, in this case, of Kathy and this was so life-giving, you know this to me was the whole point of family. This to me was what you hope for when you're a young parent and you're raising your children in the ways of God as the Bible says to, and that you're invest in them for the long term, and you role model, and you demonstrate what it means to be a believer in Jesus and a faithful, committed Christian that cares about other people, and as I participated in that circle of love last week, I just thought, man, this is life-giving, this is what everybody should experience. This is what I believe church should be like. This is what I'm pretty sure heaven is going to be like, although we won't need to pray for healing, we'll be just doing life, and faith together, celebrating Jesus, and you know, I think Jesus is going to be in the hot seat, you know, well it's his throne, and we're gonna be around that throne, and we're gonna be just declaring his awesomeness for eternity.

But on this earth, in this location, in this journey, you know life-giving connections are family connections that you build, with friends that become family, and it's multi-generational. And there was so much gold in that conversation, and I think it was, you know, like for me this is a really, I don't know if it's a bad analogy or not, but you know it's like you've planted some vegetables in the garden, and you've taken care of them, and you'd watered them, and you'd fertilise the garden, and then you got to

pick the crops, and you got to appreciate the fresh food, and the taste of food that you had come out of your garden, and that's what it was like. It was like, man, we have poured into this for so long, and to now receive from it, it's life-giving to us, and it was such a blessing, and you know, I would hope that we have other situations like that, more, and more, and more times, where we get together for family prayer nights, and we see God lifted up in the centre of our combined family.

Situation E.

The final situation that I want to share with you is situation E, and this situation, no, this friendship, is life-giving because, it's one of those friendships that I've been looking for, for a long time, that is like. One of the things that, one of the books that I've been working through recently, is, they say, one of the things you need is a friend who doesn't try to fix you, that just wants to hang out with you, that wants to laugh with you, sometimes tells inappropriate jokes, and is happy to do the journey with you, whether you're going through the good, the bad or the ugly. And when I went into lockdown one, in 2020, I really felt the Lord say to me that isolation was a risk, and that friendship was the key, and at the time I got my team together on zoom and we chatted about it and I said, look, every single one of us needs to protect ourselves from this isolation and the disconnection, and so, therefore, what we need to find is one person that can be our connection point, and I want it to be outside the team, and outside the circle. But you need to connect with them every week, and it's up to you what you do. I want you to try and be vulnerable. I want you to try and be supportive. I want it to be mutually beneficial, but build into that connection.

And I really asked the Lord who should I be connecting with, and I felt the Lord point me to someone who was a good friend, but we took that friendship to another level, and every week since then, for over three years, we've connected weekly, on phone, or video, or in person, and we have just shared how life is going. We've had some laughs, we've had some tears. We've had health challenges, we've had financial challenges, we've had celebrations in the family, we've had milestones that we've reached. We've done ministry together and we've just enjoyed life, and it's life-giving, because it's safe, and I think that's one of the things that I love about each of these situations I've shared with you that they're safe.

I don't have any concerns about what might come up in in this situation because I feel safe, and so, if, let's just say I did something really stupid, and my friend said to me, hey, you're an egg, you did something really stupid and I'm calling you out on it, and I'm gonna smack you around the head for it, and then I'm gonna love you, and we're gonna do something about this together. I'd be open to it, because I absolutely know that they don't want to condemn me. They don't wanna judge me. They don't want to cast me off. They don't reject me. You know, like, I've had friendships that have been really awesome, but then the moment there's a disagreement, that person just ditches me, and they disappear, and I was like, well, what kind of friendship was that, just because you don't agree with what I said you just ghosted me, man. And these friendships that I've talked about, each one of these situations, we've been through some tough times, and yet we can see past that, and that's what just makes me so proud to be able to say that these are life-giving connections for me, they pour into my life, and I just feel so rich because of it.

Close.

So, I've shared with you five different types of relationships circumstances. I've called them situation ABCD&E, and I again I apologise for the crassness of that, but think about them. Go back and consider your own life, what you're going to do to invest in life-giving connections.

And as I promised, and as you can expect from one of my podcasts, I am going to turn the attention back to you now. So, as I close, here's what I've got. I've got three sharp questions that I think I need to give you. The first one, and so I always go with the so what. You know, So what does this mean for me? Well, here it is, the three things.

What, number one, what is a key action you're gonna take as a result of listening to this podcast? What is your key action?

The second question I've got for you is, what is the big decision you're going to make as a result of this podcast? And I feel, I sense the Spirit of God saying that some of you need to make big decisions, bold decisions, to change something in your life, so that you can find those life-giving connections that God's got for you.

And finally, number three is, what are the bold prayers you're going to pray. I think some of you need to be praying bigger prayers, asking God to deliver a gift to you that is a life-giving connection. Life-long connection, I think, is really what the bold prayer is that you should be praying.

So firstly, what's the key action you're going to take? Some of you need to shift something. Secondly, what's the big decision you're gonna make? And I think that's a pivotal for a couple of you. And finally for all of us, what's the bold prayer we're gonna pray as a result?

Well, that was interesting. It was a good exercise for me, so thanks for listening, because I feel really good now, having gone through this, it was like my therapy session with myself, and you were privileged enough to listen to it. So may, look may God richly bless you with life-giving connections. I believe God's called us into covenant connections with other people that are far greater than whether we agree with each other, but they're life-giving because we sow God's love into each other, and it's mutually beneficial, and its life-giving ,you will be blessed as you find these life-giving connections.

So, all the best with that. And I look forward to spending time with you next time on coffee with Phil. Please remember to subscribe. Please remember to share this, other people need to hear this, and let's just get it out there so that people can enjoy a life of purpose on purpose. God bless you guys. I will see you soon.