



QUESTIONS

for your real life journey

Episode 16: Gavin McKenna

How do we face change?

1. CAUTIOUSLY ORDERING THE CHAOS (8:58)

Gavin says he faces change with difficulty: 'As an individual, I like routine. I like things to be structured. I like planning. I don't like surprises.'

'And I don't want to give reasons or excuses for that, but I believe it's something to do with the fact that I had such a chaotic childhood. So yeah, it takes me a while to adjust. And I know change can be really positive, but I'm not someone who embraces change, if I'm honest. Eventually I get there - but I'm very cautious.'

Do you like surprises? Is it necessarily a bad thing for someone to prefer routine, structure, and caution? What's good about those characteristics? What might be limiting about them?

2. CALCULATED, NOT DIVING IN (8:52/12:38)

Gavin explains why he thinks it's an advantage for him to be a cautious person, considering the ministry he has:

'It allows me to give young people the confidence that when we offer them change - whatever that looks like - it is calculated, well thought through, and not going to damage them.'

But he also suggests his cautious approach helps Reach Every Generation to avoid jumping into doing things that seem like good ideas but are more about making them look good than really making a difference.

If you're a young person, do you agree that cautiousness is a good characteristic for people who look after you (in whatever capacity) to have? If you're a leader, how does your ability (or lack of ability) in cautiously thinking things through impact the young people you lead? Both young people and leaders, do you think it's more important that the activities you do are fun, new, and current, or that they make a difference?



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How do we move through suffering?

3. WILLING TO LET GO (15:38/26:09)

Gavin talks about the fact that although he had found faith, got married and had children, as an adult he continued to carry with him the suffering he went through as a child.

'You're told Jesus will fix you... You hear all the time that "it will pass." But the individual has to be willing to let go of that suffering.'

If you're a Christian, did finding faith 'fix' you? If so, how? If not, what stops you from letting go of the things that still burden you? What do you think helps someone get to a place where they are ready to let go of their suffering?

4. LABELS AND LET-DOWNS (19:51)

Gavin explains that the teenager he became was the product of his environment. The negative experiences and suffering he went through as a child were intensified by the labels that were placed on him: 'ADHD', 'anger issues', 'no dad', 'bad kid'.

'And those that were meant to support me – school, mental health services, my mum – they all failed me. And so as a teenager I suffered a whole lot because I felt rejected and didn't really know who I was.'

Have you ever felt labelled by others, in a way that made you feel rejected, misunderstood or undervalued? How have the various support structures in your life impacted you positively or negatively? How, and from who, do we find out who we are?



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How do we receive joy?

5. THE SIMPLE THINGS (31:06)

Gavin says he reached a point where he told God that he was done with living his life 'at 110 miles per hour.' God replied, 'just do the simple things.'

'Joy for me,' he says, 'is when my wife and my kids are happy. You know what my daughter said to me this morning: are you taking me to nursery, Daddy? I love it when you take me to nursery.'

What are the 'simple things' in your life that you could focus on? What are the key relationships that bring you joy? How could you invest even more in those relationships?

6. THE GYM OF DAD (32:26)

Gavin says, 'A long time ago, I would have said that having a house, a wife and a family would have been joy enough for me. Now I realise: they're just things. Having a house is a thing. Having a marriage, having children are just things you have.'

'But *being* a homeowner, being a husband, being a father, day-to-day, they're things that require your full attention.'

'My job will end one day. But I'll still be a father and a husband. So let's not put emphasis on that which is fleeting. I'm always going to be a father and a husband. So therefore I'm always in "the gym of dad and husband". I'm always exercising, trying to be better.'

Do you agree that having things can't bring you joy, but being fully present in the roles you have can? What roles are important to you now (or do you hope you will have in the future)? What do you think about the idea that you should treat these roles as things that you should always be striving to train for and become better at?



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How do we mature in service?

7. CHAMPION TOILET CLEANER (39:24)

Gavin talks about the time he spent at Teen Challenge: 'You know who runs Teen Challenge? It's us. We're the cleaners, we're the cooks. We do the laundry.

'I served in that place for 18 months. I cleaned toilets, I cleaned floors, I cooked food, I washed people's clothes, and I made their beds. I did things that I thought I was above - *I'm too cool for this! I'm not going to clean a toilet!* - But I did it, bro. And by the end of it, I was the best at cleaning toilets.

'I served faithfully. And then my time came, and I'm here now. And I believe that my success or progress now has come from that place of service. What serving did was teach me a lot about myself and the heart of God.'

Imagine spending 18 months of your life serving other people in practical ways like Gavin did: how do you think you'd cope? Why do you think that serving taught Gavin so much about himself and the heart of God?

8. DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE (42:27)

Gavin concludes: 'Do what needs to be done, whether that's helping other people, going to church on Sunday, talking to your friend, cleaning the toilet, going away for 18 months, reading a book, stopping watching that program or stopping looking at that thing on the internet.

'Whatever it may be - do what you as an individual know needs to be done. And then you can allow God and His Holy Spirit to move in your life. And things will start to be mobile.'

Gavin suggests that each of us already knows what it is that needs to be done, so why do you think it can be so difficult to do it? What might allowing the Holy Spirit to move in your life look like? Does knowing that the Holy Spirit could move in your life motivate you to 'do what needs to be done'?



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Act: YOUR TEAM

Take a piece of paper and divide it into 8 (fold in half lengthways, then in half again twice in the other direction, then crease and unfold).

You're going to fill the eight areas you've created with eight people who fulfil a different role in your life. These will form a 'team' of people who can inspire, challenge, comfort and encourage you wherever you happen to be in your journey (ie change, suffering, joy or maturing).

For each person:

1. Write their name at the top, followed by 'the ____' Fill the blank with one word that represents the role they play in your life (eg Gemma the Wise, Raj the Challenger, Eli the Guardian). You may find it easier to do this after you've done step 3.
2. Draw a picture of them
3. At the bottom, answer the question as succinctly as you can!

<p>You</p> <p>Q: What role do you have that you want to do well (brother, friend, head girl)?</p>	<p>Someone living you'd take on your own hypothetical hike</p> <p>Q: What is it about this person that brings the best out in you?</p>	<p>Someone dead you'd take on your own hypothetical hike</p> <p>Q: What do you miss most about this person?</p>	<p>Someone fictional you'd take on your hypothetical hike</p> <p>Q: Why does this character resonate with you so much?</p>
<p>Someone who challenges you (<i>'You haven't done the work!'</i>)</p> <p>Q: How does this person make you a better human?</p>	<p>Someone (or a system) that has let you down</p> <p>Q: How could you turn that experience of being let down into a positive?</p>	<p>Someone older who is steady, cautious and looks out for you</p> <p>Q: What positive feelings does this person bring out in you?</p>	<p>Someone who irritates you or that you are envious of</p> <p>Q: What does this irritation or envy reveal about yourself?</p>