



Rebuilding your relationship with yourself

Guest: Richard

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Anna Duschinsky - [00:00:15]

So hello everybody, and welcome to this next one in the series of our recovery story interviews. I'm here with Richard, who has been a client of mine for a little while. And so we know each other quite well don't we Richard?

And Richard just had really quite an amazing recovery journey. I know for you at points, Richard, really challenging. But a bit like Alex, for you this started when you were very young. So you were what 14, I think, when you first got ill?

Richard

I was, yes. Yeah, and interestingly, I got ill, my dad got ill and my friend at school got ill. We found out 12 years later that we'd all had brucellosis, which is a crazy amount of time to not know what's going on.

Anna Duschinsky

Yeah absolutely. But I know for them it took a long time to recover as well. But nothing like the time frame that it took for you. So for them, what was their recovery?

Richard

They took 6 to 9 months to recover. And it was a very gradual, being able to do a little more, a little more, having setbacks and eventually they got fully recovered. It was probably a couple of years before they were properly free of it.

Anna Duschinsky

Really, ok. But for you, what, obviously that wasn't your process.

Richard

No.

Anna Duschinsky

So what happened for you? Obviously, and I know that you kind of improved and then got worse a couple of times, but yeah, what was the overall picture for you?

Richard

The overall picture was I was following a similar trajectory to my dad and my friend, we were having good days, bad days, but I tried far too hard. So, I wouldn't just do a half day if I could, I would blast

through a full day and a couple of times I almost recovered. And it's so frustrating.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:02:17]

Retrospectively, right?

Richard

Yeah. Looking back on that time, I was like, if I just done this, I'd have just got better.

Anna Duschinsky

But for you obviously there was that achiever pattern running then, and I know it would've been coming up to GCSE year for you and that was quite a big thing for you, right?

Richard

Yeah. So that hugely plugged into it. And it's interestingly, it wasn't about achievement, it was about perfection. So I didn't care if what I was doing was late, didn't matter in any way. It wasn't about achieving anything, it was literally about everything has to be perfect. So if I do work experience, it's got to be perfect. I've got to turn up every day, do a full day's work for two weeks.

Anna Duschinsky

Even though you're still recovering from this.

Richard

Yeah. Over the Easter holidays when I was supposed to be, you know. And it was completely pointless.

Anna Duschinsky

Retrospectively. But at the time...

Richard

Yeah, there was no reason to do it at all. It would have made no difference to my life. But yeah, I was at that point, this was about 6 months after I got initially ill. And I was doing 4 or 5 days a week at school, I was really close to being back at school full time and I thought, right, this is a big test. This is my challenge. I'm going to do 2 weeks of work experience. And I got to the point where I could barely speak at the end of it. I'm sure they thought I was a complete idiot because I literally, I could barely string a sentence together.

Anna Duschinsky

You really, really pushed and that was the kind of pattern wasn't it?

Richard

Yeah, way beyond what was even remotely sensible.

Anna Duschinsky

And so what happened from that point? You kept pushing, you almost recovered a couple of times but obviously didn't. And where did that end up in your mid to late teens?

Richard - [00:04:14]

Well, that ended up with me just being stuck and really set the ME in progress, really.

I pushed again to get my GCSEs, but much more sensibly, I think, because I did get my GCSEs, I was quite well afterwards. But then I tried to do my A-levels and at the time, three A-levels was normal, so I did four. One of them was a different site, one of them was further maths, and there were two people in the entire school doing further maths, and one of them was after school. So ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous.

You're getting the idea. I lasted a month.

And then beyond that I was just very sick, I was at home, I had nothing to do, so I bought a guitar and learned to play guitar really badly, tried to be perfect.

Anna Duschinsky

So you were pushing through school but life apart from that was hard and it was causing you to feel really ill. And I'm guessing or I know, because obviously we've worked together, that there was no kind of real mention of what this was about, of what was really going on. There was no understanding at that point or clarity.

Richard

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I mean, like I said, it was 12 years before we worked out that it was brucellosis, that had caused it. So yeah, just completely lost. What do I do? No idea.

Anna Duschinsky

And the net effect of that for you, I know, was real anxiety.

Richard

The net effect was yeah I gradually lost touch with all of my friends. Then they all went off to uni. And that was the end of my social life, really at that point. It was very limited up to then but then it was completely gone. And just, really just drifted into, I call it a wilderness years, just slowly drifted into depression, anxiety, almost never left the house.

Anna Duschinsky

A really tough place to be I know for you for many years. And that just wasn't 6 months or a year that was quite a few years for you wasn't it?

Richard

It was a long time, yeah. And that really started when I was 17, my parents moved me away from where we were living, which was near town. So on a good day, I could cycle a short way into town, maybe buy a CD, when we actually bought CDs.

Anna Duschinsky

In those days, yeah.

Richard

Yeah back in the dark ages. And I had a friend who lived next door who I've known for years, and then we moved to the countryside and I never cried or showed emotion or got upset or anything, and I just burst into tears when my parents told me we were moving. To this day they do not understand why. That it was 5 miles from the local village and I was 17 and completely isolated, and they said, well, it's

fine, we'll drive you wherever you want to go. But this is two people who work full time and had four children.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:07:43]

And you don't want to be reliant at 17 do you?

Richard

No exactly, at 17 you need to be building your independence, in theory. So that was really tough.

Anna Duschinsky

A little bit like Alex has described, I think, in a lot of his interviews as well. I mean it's this real loss of your teenage years, isn't it? That your teenage years were really marked by, marred by this experience of anxiety, illness, not understanding what was happening to you or why you were so different to your friends as they went off to uni and had social lives and you, by the sounds of it, became more and more isolated.

Richard

Absolutely. And what's more is I didn't feel I deserved anything different.

Anna Duschinsky

Well, so let's talk about that. I mean, if we look at, because I mean, we can paint lots of different, I mean obviously a very difficult situation full stop. You didn't know what was happening, no one was giving you clarity, you're sick all the time, you can't keep up with your friends and the life that you had. That's difficult for anybody. But of course, the way that we deal with it is going to be shaped and formed by what we've learnt historically by the kind of model of the world that we have up to that point.

So, and I know a lot of this is stuff that you've pieced together retrospectively in more recent years, but looking back on it, the level of anxiety, the depression, the sense of, as you say, of not quite deserving, what do you think some of that was about?

Richard

I think it came from my parents being very, very hard on themselves. My parents both had difficult childhoods in very different ways. And in some ways, they gave us a spectacular childhood. You know, I had a sailing boat, I used to go sailing and I had a little motorbike when I was 9. I have the scar on my elbow.

Anna Duschinsky

To prove it, yeah.

Richard

I was flying down a track on it and fell off. So, you know, we really didn't want for anything as children but my parents were very driven people. To the point that I don't know how they did it, I don't know how they did as much as they did. And, I have no idea, none of us can keep up with them and they're in their 60s now, they're still way ahead of us. It's ridiculous.

Anna Duschinsky

So a model of lots of doing and pushing was something that you grew up with?

Richard - [00:10:22]

Absolutely. And somehow my parents achieved a lot. They were very much in that model, Not university type stuff, but my dad is a plasterer, but made a massive success of his business, so I'm not quite sure how I ended up skewing to, almost avoiding achievement, but making everything perfect. It was, I'm not, I still don't know how that happened.

Anna Duschinsky

Yeah, but for you obviously, you were a very sensitive, having talked to you, you were a very sensitive kid in that environment, you were the only boy, weren't you, with sisters, and it sounds like, you know, having talked to you and worked with you through some of this, that there was a great deal of great stuff there, but not a lot of time and maybe emotional energy.

Richard

Absolutely. Yeah, I think that's it. You know, you think, oh well I must have had a great childhood, I had all this stuff.

I have to correct you actually, I have a brother.

Anna Duschinsky

Oh sorry.

Richard

If he ever sees this he'll be mortally offended that he was cut out!

Anna Duschinsky

I'm really sorry!

Richard

But my youngest brother and sister are quite a lot younger than me. So it was mostly my two sisters who I was competing with. If that makes sense.

Anna Duschinsky

It makes sense, yeah.

Richard

So I can't actually remember what we were talking about now. What was it?

Anna Duschinsky

That's ok. So there was a lot of good stuff and you had boats and wonderful things. But in terms of the emotional modeling there wasn't a lot of that.

Richard

So I think when you have a childhood like that, you think well I've got all of this great stuff, you know, it must have been great. So to then contemplate that you might need other things, that you might need emotional support that you might be worthy of that is a challenge. It was a completely foreign concept to me that I might have any kind of needs at all.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:12:35]

Yes, and I know that we talked a lot about the fact that you, the anxiety to some degree, and I see this a lot, for me, actually, anxiety is not an emotion it's almost an absence of emotion, it's what we have going on when we're very disconnected emotionally to our self.

Richard

Absolutely. Absolutely. I remember some of our early sessions together, and I don't know how you didn't laugh because you'd say to me, oh, you know, so how was it when you were getting ill and everything was falling apart? Oh, it was terrible. It was awful. And how did you feel about that? Oh it was fine, you know it was fine. And when you almost got better and crashed, that must have been terrible? Yeah. Yeah, it was awful. So bad. It was awful. How do you feel about it? Oh it's fine. It's fine. I don't know how you didn't laugh because it was going on for months. Because I needed to see it for myself. And literally month after month after month you'd say, so how was this? Oh it was fine, it was fine. Then eventually I was like oh, I see what you're doing.

Anna Duschinsky

It clicked.

Richard

Oh I get it. And then yeah, it's a massive moment of realization. Oh I'm suppressing all of my emotions and then I could feel this like plug pressing down on my emotions in my chest and just very slowly unwinding that. That was a long, long process.

Anna Duschinsky

It was a process for you, I know. And I think, as you say, it's that combination isn't it, of maybe there wasn't a lot of emotional vocabulary in your childhood because your parents were doing and that was the focus.

Richard

My parents were always fine. Even when dad had brucellosis he was still fine. He carried on working. He used to sleep for an hour at work, at lunch. And somehow carried on.

Anna Duschinsky

So that kind of "fine" model is what you grew up in. And so when everything did fall apart, you didn't really know anything other than to just be fine and of course, it really wasn't fine.

Richard

No, everything had always been fine. So what was going on?

Anna Duschinsky

Right. And so I know in your late 20s it was all coming through that wilderness period, first off you got a diagnosis, you realized what it was that you had, there was a name for it, chronic fatigue. And I know that you became kind of, you got involved in some of the ME groups.

Richard

Yeah, that was the first step of, you know, I'd moved to the countryside, I'd had a couple of years of just feeling awful. Probably a bit more than that actually. The only positive out of that time was I realized I was a celiac, so I was starting to play with nutrition and see what was going on. And I have a thing called gluten ataxia. So if I eat gluten, I'm paralyzed for about an hour and I can just about

wiggle my finger a bit, but otherwise I lie on the floor and can't move. So it became pretty obvious that I was a celiac.

But that was the only step forwards really. And then I got to about 20, I think, and just thought I've got to change this, I can't stay as I am. So I got myself a little motorbike, so that I would be mobile, joined the local ME group and it didn't necessarily get me better, but I started to do something.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:16:06]

Yes. And I guess there must have been some relief in recognizing that you weren't alone, that there were other people who have this condition and what it was, right? There's some kind of relief in that in itself isn't there?

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. And for someone who literally had no friends at that point, I didn't speak to anyone for several years I think. It seems like a different person looking back. It's amazing really.

Yeah, I made some fantastic friends at the ME group and to see people in the same situation, it really helped it really did. And it's hard to remember how that felt, but just to get out, and I remember how nerve wracking it was going to a meeting, knocking on a stranger's door, and that stranger became a very good friend. And I went to her wedding and we're still really good friends to this day.

Anna Duschinsky

So it was a real lifeline for you at that point in time, to find some people and to have that connection. And it almost became your world, your social world as well.

Richard

It did. It did.

Anna Duschinsky

But physically I think, we have to fast forward a few years, really still, before, certainly before you came to clinic, The Optimum Health Clinic and then began to actually make some real physical progress, I think, right?

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. I tried lots of things over the years, so acupuncture, which didn't do anything.

Anna Duschinsky

Richard has a long list of things that didn't do anything. I remember that from one of the first conversations we had, all these things that you tried. And I know that you tried various kind of methodologies and interventions but nothing quite fitted.

Richard

No, no. Rather unfortunately, I went to an eye watering expensive hospital, private hospital that treated chronic fatigue and that kind of thing. I'm horrified to say I spent £40,000 on treatments. I was on antibiotics for 3 years and intravenous antibiotics into veins so in hospital for 12 weeks. And after that, I became absolutely intolerant to almost all supplements. It trashed my digestion. And I wasn't any better I just couldn't take, I can't even take vitamin C to this day. If I take a vitamin C tablet, I will feel like I've got the flu.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:18:55]

OK.

Richard

So that didn't work.

Anna Duschinsky

It didn't work, yeah. You went through some really quite intense treatment.

Richard

Yeah, that was major. But the upshot of that was that I thought right, I have done the most expensive physical treatment I can possibly do for ME, here's the perfectionist thing again, I've done this, there's nothing better, I have done that now. Right, let's look at the psychology.

So initially I got some books on NLP and started reading those and that was really interesting. I started being able to play with how I felt. It wasn't really how I felt because at that point I didn't feel anything. But I was playing with where in my body thoughts were.

Anna Duschinsky

Your internal world.

Richard

My internal world. That's it, that's it. And I thought actually this is really quite interesting. This led me to the lightning process, which I did and that is interesting. It did lead to enormous progress initially and I did a parachute jump and you know, the things you do when you're slightly brainwashed shall we say?

But over the long run, what actually happened was I started to feel that it was my fault that I wasn't getting better because I wasn't doing the lightning process enough and I wasn't trying hard enough. And it just fed into that whole perfectionist thing that I'm not doing it right.

Anna Duschinsky

And it sounds like it still hadn't necessarily connected you into, you know, the emotional patterns there, feeling needs.

Richard

No, no, absolutely. It was almost the opposite. You know, your thoughts are what's driving everything, change your thoughts, everything will be fine.

Anna Duschinsky

And of course, there's a lot of truth to that but of course it's both isn't it? It's the recognition in all of it again.

Richard

Well, it's just a small part and without connecting into the emotional stuff. It's like trying to drive a car with a steering wheel, but no gear stick or, you know, you're only going to get so far, it's not going to work.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:21:21]

So then, again if we kind of fast forward a little bit and I think it was, was it a recommendation that you came to, that you found the clinic through?

Richard

Um, I think it was my friend from the ME group who was, she did a huge amount of research. So I used to just piggyback on whatever she was doing.

Anna Duschinsky

Whatever she's doing I'll do that.

Richard

Yeah, she did loads of research so I was like, well, I get a headache if I do that, so I just do whatever she's doing.

Anna Duschinsky

And when we first met I know how limited your world still was.

Richard

Oh, it was hugely so, yeah, absolutely. So at that point I was working I think 2 hours a week in Oxfam volunteering. And that was huge. That was sleep all morning, go in for 2 hours, sleep the next day. It was all I could do in a week.

And yes, so I looked into the Optimum Health Clinic post lightning process, process if you like. And that led me to have a conversation with yourself, which really kick started, that was the start of my full recovery, really.

Anna Duschinsky

And so through, I mean, obviously, I know I've been honored to be going through that process with you, and let's not kid ourselves it has not been a quick process.

Richard

No. I imagine I was quite hard to work with. I was so anxious.

Anna Duschinsky

There was huge amounts of anxiety wasn't there, and as you say, a real disconnection from your body.

Richard

So I had quite a strong, it was really hard to admit as well, I had quite a strong sort of, I can't think what the term is, sort of getting my needs met by throwing my toys out the pram. I can't think of how to term it.

Anna Duschinsky

And I guess because you hadn't learned any other way to acknowledge that, you hadn't learnt any other way to deal with what you were feeling.

Richard - 100:23:371

Exactly. Yeah, it was, I can't actually say what my needs are, so I'm just going to overreact massively and then get some response that way, which is a, must've been a challenge.

Anna Duschinsky

Well, I think actually a lot of it is, we're just doing whatever we learn, whatever works, whether or not it's the best way.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. I had such a narrow toolkit to work with, that yeah, I was coping I guess.

Anna Duschinsky

And a lot of our work together, I think has been about you finding you really, finding your sense of self and building your connections, like neural pathways to all aspects of yourself. Although we have worked together for really quite a long time, actually we were talking about it, discussing this interview, how I mean, the exponential shift that you, in the last 5 to 8 years, I guess, has really bought in your life from working 2 days a week in Oxfam, sorry 2 hours a week a week in Oxfam.

Richard

2 hours.

Anna Duschinsky

2 hours and living with your parents and really very little else.

Richard

Yeah, I mean, I'm 39 at this point. I'm not 40, not yet.

Anna Duschinsky

I'm over 40 come on, it's not that bad.

Richard

I mean 10 years ago I was a virgin. I was living with my parents. I couldn't drive, I had my motorbike but I couldn't, it was a provisional license, I couldn't drive and I was working at Oxfam but I didn't have a career. I didn't have a job. And life was pretty, pretty bleak, really.

I started working with yourself. I think I just started working with you then. And, yeah, that shift has been enormous.

Anna Duschinsky

Today, tell everyone where you're at.

Richard

Today I own my own house with my fiancée.

Anna Duschinsky

Yes, congratulations.

Richard - [00:25:52]

Thank you very much. I have a dog. She's 3 years old, she was 3 years old last week. I'm a qualified gas engineer. I run a plumbing and heating company. What else is there?

Anna Duschinsky

Well that'll do, right. You have this full life, you're in a band.

Richard

I play in a band. That's the other one.

Anna Duschinsky

You do. Obviously other than this last year, right.

Richard

Yeah, there's no playing in bands at the moment. But I abandoned the guitar because I was not very good at it, but I started to play bass and it's amazing how you get these sort of connections from the people that you meet. So the manager of Oxfam said one day, Oh, Richie, you play guitar? Do you want to do a gig with us in two weeks playing the bass, which you've never played before and you don't own? I was like, yeah, why not. By this point I'd done enough work with Anna that I was like yeah, I can do this.

Anna Duschinsky

I remember that moment really well. I remember working with you towards that moment.

Richard

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Anna Duschinsky

So exponential shift in terms of your life and really it's been about building hasn't it. Building a sense of self, building a world for yourself which really was stripped away from you at 14 years old.

Richard

Yeah, just initially building a sense that I deserved some kind of life. And then working out what I was going to be and just how on earth to get from where I was, which was this sort of massively anxious, hiding from the world kid really, to being a grown up.

Anna Duschinsky

And it's exactly that. And I think in the case, you know, if things have almost blocked your ability to go through that normal teenage development program from a kid into an adult, and almost that's what had happened, isn't it? You were kind of stuck in that relationship to self, relationship to the world that had been kind of frozen, I suppose, at that point in time.

And then, of course, all the trauma of what you'd gone through with the illness and then chronic fatigue and those years. So it's really undoing, unpicking a lot of that and finding yourself through that.

Richard

Yeah. And I was a 30 year old kid. That was the truth of it, as I hadn't been through my teenage years, they'd been abandoned really. So, yeah, it was, there was some growing pains.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:28:30]

There were some growing pains, but you have obviously gone through amazing processes and some amazing journeys over the last few years.

Looking back on it, because it's been such an amazing journey, such a long journey as well for you in some ways, what would you say, particularly for anyone who's listening to this, I mean, clearly, we've talked a little bit about the fact that there was definitely this kind of massive perfectionism, that you hadn't learned that kind of emotion, vocabulary or to recognize your needs that you got very stuck in, reasonably stuck in that anxiety, what do you think have been the key pieces of unlocking some of that? It's a big question isn't it?

Richard

It's no, no, it's a good question. The key pieces, well obviously working with yourself.

Anna Duschinsky

Thank you, but I guess, I mean, like from your internal experience. What have you learnt? What have been the biggest learnings, do you think, through this? Through this journey?

Richard

I think the biggest thing that people said, but I didn't actually take on board, was that you don't have to be perfect. It's very hard to take that on board when you're trying to be perfect all the time. But I genuinely have been probably off course for at least 90 percent of the time.

Anna Duschinsky

OK, so the recovery process.

Richard

In the recovery process. Yeah, absolutely. You know, you really don't have to do it perfectly. And it's quite important to do the work on yourself and to process things as they come up and do all that stuff that you do and to look at nutrition. But then also to just live for a while so that it's not just an academic exercise. And you can see what happens, and it can be very uncomfortable doing that.

Anna Duschinsky

Kind of taking it into the real world and trying it out basically.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. Don't make your whole life just about recovery. And don't worry about having days when you, oh I should have done EFT on that, and I didn't, it's fine. If you didn't do EFT on it, there was a reason you didn't do EFT on it.

Anna Duschinsky

Also, actually for you then massively obviously letting go the perfectionism. It has been a big part of what got you stuck but also that learning to release that, to be able to get it wrong has been a big part of your ability to find your way in recovery and make peace with.

Richard

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And just the value of emotions.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:31:08]

They're useful aren't they?

Richard

Taking care of yourself. Yeah they're really good.

Anna Duschinsky

That primal stuff, recognizing what we're feeling and our responses. And I know for you your needs recognize, that actually the massive suppression of that meant that you really weren't responding to your body or what you needed. You didn't know what that meant, really?

Richard

No, no, absolutely. I had no concept of that. It was interesting listening to Alex. And he had quite a similar experience. How do you feel? Well, this is what I think, I remember him saying that.

Anna Duschinsky

So I remember you even kind of recognizing that moment of, yeah, I'm thirsty, that means I need a drink, even those basic level connections of how to care for yourself at that most basic level.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. Even that wasn't there. It was quite extraordinary. And yeah, I would, I would almost do the exact opposite of what I needed to do. So, if I was thirsty, I wouldn't drink. If I was not thirsty, I would drink. Just absolutely ridiculous.

Anna Duschinsky

All kind of backwards. Back to front.

Richard

Everything got completely messed up. If I needed to go out for a walk, because that would, initially I used to crawl up and down the stairs so walking was not an issue. But you know, if it would do me good to get outside and get some fresh air, I would stay inside and not leave the house.

Anna Duschinsky

So really learning how to make those connections between your needs, and then, as you say, first off believing that you deserved to meet them, it was important to meet them, then going beyond that to actually meeting them as well.

Richard

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it was a very bumpy path. But, you know, I seem to have got my needs met enough to have a functioning life now.

Anna Duschinsky

Well, I was going to say, how are things now? What is it now? I know you work, not always, because I know that you're in control of it and you enjoy having that balance and that control, but if you are working and managing that, how is it different now to how you would've been before?

Richard - [00:33:21]

I think the difference is now that I make sure that I am in control of my schedule, of what I do. And being a gas engineer you sometimes, you get emergencies come up. Someone needs a boiler fitting now and it's going to take two days and you have to reschedule everything. But I make sure that I stay in control of that.

Anna Duschinsky

So I guess you're making sure that there's space, that there's time, because I know that you've learned that you need that to reconnect to tune back in and to have that space for yourself as well.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. It's so important to have time for yourself and to value that. Someone might need their boiler fixing urgently, but I need to take the dog for a walk right now, so that's what I'm going to do.

Anna Duschinsky

Right. Right. So, again, so recognizing your own needs and prioritizing them and finding ways to work that into your world as opposed to...

Richard

Yeah and it's a very, it's a very different approach. It sounds like pushing, but it's really not, it's taking care of your own needs and making sure you're in charge of what is happening.

Anna Duschinsky

And how to get them met, right?

Richard

Yeah, and if I start to feel uncomfortable now, I know that my schedule is maybe not optimal or there is something I need to resolve and I'll look at my diary and think, oh, yeah, that's what I'm worried about. I'm worried because...

Anna Duschinsky

Or you look inside, right? You're able now to connect in and tune into what it is internally.

Richard

What is it that I'm missing that I need? Oh, I need a drink. Oh, I'm fine now.

Anna Duschinsky

OK, well, keeping it simple, right. Is there anything else? So obviously it was a massive piece of learning to kind of find those connections, to reconnect, to find your emotions and begin to listen and to live that in the world as well, it's not just in the bubble of our own experience, but it's also living that, visibly the world around us and that's often been more challenging.

Is there anything else? I know, obviously nutrition, gluten for you has been key, anything else that you think has been really essential in your recovery?

Richard

I think connecting with people as well. You can't do this in a bubble, like you say. It's really

uncomfortable to start with. A lot of these things are really uncomfortable, and I want you to know that, it's not been an easy process.

Anna Duschinsky - [00:35:59]

I think being able to sit with the discomfort and explore it.

Richard

That's it. My approach before would have been, oh, this is uncomfortable, I'm going to go and, you know, I'm going back to my room. I'm not having any part of this.

And yeah, just realizing that discomfort means you're making some sort of progress, you will learn something from this, no matter how uncomfortable it is.

Anna Duschinsky

That's a really important piece, isn't it, as you say.

Richard

It's so important. It's so important.

Anna Duschinsky

Because in testing those boundaries, those needs, those emotions in the world, then we're knocking up against people and situations where it can be challenged or it can be uncomfortable, like you say, but not [inaudible] and being able to sit with and work with the discomfort that comes up.

Richard

Absolutely. Because actually what happens then is you work out what is driving that. And it gives you something to work on. Because otherwise, if you're constantly in a safe bubble you don't know, you cannot figure it out in your own head. By definition you've got to be out in the world.

Anna Duschinsky

That's a very good line as well, it's very true. And also, it's not about our head a lot of times, is it?

Richard

Yeah absolutely.

Anna Duschinsky

And the body and the whole process.

Richard

Well, that's exactly why I said often it's not, the anxiety is often a byproduct of other stuff that's going on. It just tells you that there's something happening.

Anna Duschinsky

Right, absolutely. So the anxiety becomes a red flag, the discomfort becomes a red flag to pay attention to something like a calling to pay attention inside.

Richard - 100:37:361

Absolutely. Absolutely. You know, how am I feeling? What do I need? What is going on? It's not necessarily looking at the anxiety, why do I feel anxious? It's I feel anxious. Okay. What else is happening that's driving that anxiety?

Anna Duschinsky

And so it sounds like, well I know kind of having witnessed you living in the world in this way and obviously how beautiful your life is today, your lovely fiancée, the dog, the house.

Richard

I'm in the conservatory, right now, how good is that?

Anna Duschinsky

But obviously, what you've learnt through all of, I mean, all credit to you that how hard you worked, I guess, you know, how determined you were to work it through, but that what you had as a toolkit of how, a much bigger toolkit, of how to function in the world and how to deal with anything that comes up emotionally, practically, in any other way, not that they're no challenges, but that you have that toolkit now in terms of how to work with it.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I still do EFT to this day. It's a fantastic thing. And I remember the first time I tried it, I was like, oh, my God.

Anna Duschinsky

What are you getting me doing now?

Richard

Oh what is this? This is nonsense. And then I did EFT, I think it was on, my mom's really annoying me and I just felt the emotion shift and I was like, wow, this is, I like this. And yeah, I was, I don't want to say an addict, but I was convinced.

Anna Duschinsky

You're sold.

Richard

I think I literally did EFT once and I was like, wow, this is amazing.

Anna Duschinsky

So you have this toolkit now, you have this ability and everything else and yeah. I mean, so listen, Richard, thank you so much for sharing your story with us. As I say, from my perspective, it's an amazing story just because of I think when we have those real, when people have crashes as a teen and really live most of your teens and 20s, there can be a real rebuilding process to do. And as I say, all credit to you for your determination through all of it. And it's lovely to see you so happy now and enjoying your life and having such a full and rich life.

So thank you very much for sharing this with us today.

Richard - 100:39:57

Thank you very much, Anna. I feel you deserve a big chunk of the credit too, having been with me for I think it's going, is it over 10 years now? It's got to be about 10 years.

Anna Duschinsky

Yeah because I think we've carried on working even though you were living in the world and you had a job and you were making it and so you've recovered. I think for you what's been really lovely working with you, and not like we normally work for necessarily 10 years with people, is that you've been determined every time there's been something that's been a challenge or that's shown up in your world, not necessarily from a recovery perspective, but from a life perspective, you've wanted to engage with it.

Richard

Yeah, absolutely. And I think I was pretty broken and pretty difficult to work with, so I think it took as long as it needed to take.

Anna Duschinsky

Absolutely. And for you to get exactly where you need to be.

So, anyway, thank you so much for sharing today. I hope that's been useful for those out there. And yeah, speak soon.

Richard

Thanks very much.