

Accelerating Change, S1, E3: Grounding in change with Andrew Browning

Paul Browning: Change is inevitable, but we've now entered the period in human history that the rate of change is accelerating. What happens when the rate of change exceeds our capacity to adapt? Have we already reached, or perhaps past that point or in the language that we already use it, simple school. What is an education worth having in a world that is changing so quickly, welcome to accelerating change a conversation about the future. I'm Paul Browning, headmaster of some school. And today I'm speaking to somebody who has a similar last name to me. He and I grew up together and shared a room, which is a bit odd that you'd say that you share a room with somebody, but back in the day, when houses were a lot smaller, you did share a room with your sibling. And back in the day, it was a time when going out for dinner was a real treat. And you only really went out for dinner with your parents and on their birthdays. And you went to the local Chinese restaurant. So with me this morning, I'm speaking to my brother, Andrew Browning, who is the world leading fistula surgeon. So good morning, Andrew

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[00:01:00] Andrew Browning: Morning, Paul. And, um, we can still share a room if we wanted to. Well, we probably

Paul Browning: Could, but I'm not sure whether they'd go down too well with our wives. But anyways, Andrew, I'm speaking to you and you're in quarantine at the moment, which is a bit of an odd thing to do.

Andrew Browning: It's definitely not self quarantined. This is my third time in quarantine now, and I've just returned from Africa. So I've been a missionary doctor. My entire career has been as a missionary doctor serving in Africa and we moved back to Australia three years ago. And since moving back to Australia, I'm still running our hospitals now charities back in Africa and have to travel regularly. So I've just returned from Africa, from another trip and sitting in quarantine for the two weeks. So lucky you, your, your

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Paul Browning: Room is pretty small and you're, you're doing some exercises around your room. I stepped through world oil. You said, so how many times a day you're racking up? Yeah,

Andrew Browning: So, um, my room here is probably smaller than the room we shared when we were boys. The, um, and I do go for a run each day and it's eight steps from one side of the room to the other. Um, I can't pick up any speed. Otherwise I end up running into the, the door, the wall and hurting herself. So I do many laps just to stress my legs each day, many laps of the room.

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Paul Browning: Now I'm talking to you today about accelerating change because you come from an interesting sort of perspective where you go in and out and you have lived for a long time in a developing country, and then returning to, in a sense, the Western world and have observed significant changes. And perhaps I've observed that accelerating rate change. But before we kind of get to questions about that, how did you end up being a missionary doctor in Africa?

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Andrew Browning: Yeah, it's um, I always thought I would be a missionary doctor at the age of six. We went to Sunday school together. And, um, I don't know if you remember doc Thompson coming to visit us in Sunday school. And when I was six, when she came to visit us, she was a missionary from Tanzania. And I was sitting at her feet in our little church hall and barrel and listening to all her stories about Africa and the adventures that she had and

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[00:03:00] serving God there. And from that moment, I had it in the back of my mind that I would be a missionary doctor when I grew up and see her. I here I am on grown up waist. I hope so. And I'm on a missionary doctor. So it's been steps along the way. You don't really make, um, informed decisions when you're six years old, but as my life developed and I committed my life to Christ when I was 14, it became obvious that I should become a missionary doctor, at least in my heart. And so I spent 17 years in Africa, 10 years, full time in Ethiopia, and then seven years in Tanzania. And I would do what what's called fistula surgery. I've become an obstetric fistula surgeon.

Paul So tell us a bit about what is obstetric fistula surgery.

Browning:

Andrew It's, um, quite a specialized surgery. We w we don't see it in Australia. So I've, I've learned to wear my surgical skills that are supplied to fistula overseas on the job. Um, but it might be easier if I tell you the story of a patient, um, because the life the, for

Browning:

[00:04:00] these patients, is there a different to the lives of living here in Australia. And the experience of through childbirth is very different to here in Australia. So I'll tell you the story of Angolo. And she was one of my last patients I treated in Tanzania before we returned to Australia on Golo was young. When she got married, she was about 15. She didn't know her, right? Cause they really do know her age, their age, but she thinks she was about 15 when she was married. She, as soon after became pregnant. And because she lived in a remote, rural area, she did what all the other women in her area did when they go into labor.

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Andrew And they, she stayed in her hut with her mother-in-law to deliver her baby. And that's because most women in the world don't have access to hospitals, to midwives, to doctors. Most women in the world deliver their babies in their homes without access to any sort of medical care. So when Gullah did that and she stayed in labor for a day and she still hadn't delivered her child, she had got into what's called obstructed labor and structured labor happens to about 5% of women all around the world here in Australia, in Tanzania, Ethiopia, England, wherever 5% of women will have difficulty in labor because the baby's either too big or the mother's pelvis is too small or the baby's coming out the wrong way. So the baby gets stuck. So here in Australia, that's diagnosed by a midwife. She calls the doctor. The doctor comes in, does this is Erin, and everything's fine.

Browning:

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Andrew But in Gallo miles from any sort of medical health, no transport, no road, no money. She Browning: had no option, but to stay in her village another day passed. And after two days of labor, she still hadn't delivered her child. Her husband by now was beside himself and wanted to try and help her. But he was a, he'd never been to school, but he had the idea. If he boiled a basin of water and put her feet into the boiling water, it might stimulate a uterus to contract. He did this for two more days and after four days of labor and they still hadn't delivered her child, she was now unconscious. And on the fifth day, I have labor unconscious she's delivered a dead child. The babies simply cannot survive such a long labor. It took her two days to regain consciousness, but when she did regain [00:06:00] consciousness, she found that she was leaking uncontrollably from her bladder and also her bow, because she'd been in labor for so long, the baby's heads pressed against the mother's pelvis and all the tissues between the tissues.

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Andrew Browning: The Beth can have bladder, bowel and birth canal all has this blood supply cut off. So all those tissues die. Those dead tissues come away. After that, she delivers the stillborn child and she's left with a big fistula or a hole between the bladder outside world rectum outside board. So she leaves gingerly husband divorces her because she smells. She goes to live with her family and her family don't want you in the house. They put her on a little mud hut at the edge of the family compound. And so she's so ashamed that she doesn't want to go out and meet anyone. So she stays in that little hut leaking waste every minute of every day. And she stays in there for 18 months. She's found by missionary and brought to the nearest hospital to her, which is 120 kilometers away.

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[00:07:30] The Susan's there don't really know how to help.

Andrew Browning: And they operate on her three times and she's still not cured. She's eventually found by our outreach worker and brought to me in Northern Tanzania a couple of years ago. And we operate on her. We operate on the spine line of Cedric, which means a needle in the back. So you're numb from the waist down. So they're awake during the operation. And Paul and gala was so given up hope that she can ever be cure, that she just sobs uncontrollably throughout the operation. I've met over 12,000 women who have similar stories, just like in gold and gold. His story is not unusual. And so we've been building hospitals, not only to treat obstetric fistula, and I've been the primary surgeon for 7,000 of those 12,000 ladies. And that we also tried to prevent them by making women building hospitals that, uh, women can get to have free obstetric care so they can deliver in a hospital and have a safe delivery and not run the risk of dying that baby dying.

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Andrew Browning: And some areas where we work one in 12 women die in their lifetime from having a baby. Um, so we saved their lives, but also try and prevent fistula. So each year we deliver up to about 15,000 women, uh, for free in our network of hospitals. Um, so that's what a septic Pfister is. It's an awful condition. There's about 2 million women in the world, still waiting for treatment. So we've got a lot of work to do, but after two weeks of having the catheter and healing inside, um, in Gawler, she, we removed the catheter and she was completely cured. She was restored and continent again, and she was so delighted. She was completely transformed from someone who's being someone's sobbing throughout the operation for being overjoyed, racing, wanting to race back home, to rejoin her family. She had a smile from ear to ear and she said, look, I never want to meet another man. Again, I never want to be married again. And I want to go to school back in my village and start a new life. So I did catch up with her about a year ago and she's back in her village, going to school, not married, and I'm starting a new life. That's what we do.

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Paul Browning: Well, there you go. So you started your career in Ethiopia with a lady by the name of Katherine Hamlin, which listeners might have heard of the book hospital by the river and, and her work there. She started that. And I think in the sixties was that right?

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Andrew Browning: Uh, 59, her and her husband moved to TTF in 59, but they started doing fistula work in the sixties and open the official hospital in 1974. So you,

Paul You moved across to Ethiopia in 2000 and I

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Browning:

Andrew
Browning: First went there in 96 and started doing fistula work work there last century and was backwards and forwards. Or I did my obstetrics training in Australia and then moved there to live in 2001.

Paul
Browning: [00:10:30] And Ethiopia is kind of not the destination that you go to live. Uh, and certainly not the destination. You go for a tourist trip either. And I remember coming across for your wedding, I think in 2003 and the tourist, the travel agent was quite surprised, cause she'd never booked someone to get to Ethiopia as well. So Ethiopia is, is, is quite a different country. I think then it was the fifth poorest country in the world or rated around about that, that level. Is that right? Yeah.

Andrew
Browning: Yeah. It's always hovering down the bottom 10. So you

Paul
Browning: [00:11:00] Were there for 17 years living in Ethiopia and then moved to Tanzania at some point. Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, my interest in talking to you apart from the great work they actually do is you've got a unique position where you can observe the changes between, you know, the developing world and the Western world, but you can also observe the, the rate of change and how that's increasing in the Western world as well. So pat is a bit of a picture, first of all, what, what life is like in Ethiopia, because most people who are listening probably have never, ever been there and, and perhaps have no real concept of what life is like in a developing countries, such as Ethiopia.

Andrew
Browning: [00:11:30] Well, life for us was a lot different from, from, um, the life of the average patient. We taught, we had electricity probably about half the time in our house, um, in Northern Ethiopia where we lived. And so we had five years and after seven, the Capitol, but I'll talk about where we lived in Northern Ethiopia, because that's a bit more, more different. Um, yeah, so we'd have, uh, maybe three or four days a week of electricity in the house. So we'd have water coming into a tank at night, most nights, but regularly we'd out of water and you can do about electricity. That's quite easy. But to do about water is impossible. Um, no, no society is about water. So when you don't have water in your house, you're always anxious about how you're going to get water, um, which adds extra stress to your life.

Andrew
Browning: [00:12:30] And operating a hospital is difficult to about water or reliable water or electricity. You become very resourceful and you realize that you don't need much, um, to, to run a successful hospital. You don't need all the gadgets that we have here today in Australia. Um, you just need the basics and you can develop a very good reliable health system just with the basics. Um, but life for us, um, yes, the market, we could buy cabbage and carrots and potatoes. So I'm a bit tired of cold, small, um, and you, there was no bushes. You had to buy meat alive and bring it home to the culture. There is you have to kill the animal, where are you going to eat it? So you bring it home. The fact that up on our little bit of lawn at the back. So we have, our son would get quite attached to the sheep as he was getting fat.

Andrew
Browning: [00:13:00] And then he said would come off. And so the first time for William, our son saw that. He said, look, I don't like the shape with his head off, put his head back on, which I do do surgery, but I drew the line of that. So, um, yeah, life was perhaps a little bit different to,

[00:13:30] to life in Australia, but we had, we, our life was much better than the average ETA and average GTA, maybe eat once a day. Uh, really have meat. Of course wouldn't have electricity in their homes, uh, in the cities, the towns of Barada at a silver bar. It's much more developed these days and there's a developing middle class, but the people in the rural areas still are living massive. They have done for thousands of years. Uh, so there's been very little change, um, compared to the rate of change that we see in Australia.

Andrew Browning: [00:14:00] And actually Ethiopian is still a story about themselves. They say that God created Africa and he created all the people need through them down over Africa. And he went away for a while and came back and said, oh gee, where are the Nigerians everything's changed? I can't recognize where I put the Nigerians or where are the Egyptians everything's changed so much. I can't recognize them. Then he went to Ethiopia. I said, ah, there's the Ethiopians nothing's changed. So they tell them, they're very proud of their culture. They're very resistant to changing their culture, which there's something comforting and beautiful about that. And, and, uh, that the pride that they take in their culture. So you've lived

Paul Browning: [00:14:30] In a culture where there's basically been no change for thousands of years. And then you've come back in and out of Western culture coming back to Australia from time to time for, I think once every three years, just to, to visit, to catch up with family and to, you know, share what you're doing with people and raise funds. What are you doing? What did you observe when you came back each time to, to Australia? What did you find?

Andrew Browning: [00:15:00] And was there a difficult, um, it is much more difficult. Came back to Australia after adjusting to life in Ethiopia. And as I said, we, you said we came back every two to three are the biggest time I was away was four years. And we come back from maybe two, three months at the most, every, every three years or so. And so we'd see a little snapshot on Australia as it progressed over those 17 years. And it was often little things that would strike me, um, changes in the language. So when we first changed it, so the thing that I see here now is a lot of people end the sentence with, so, so the talking in that land listen to, so you're kind of hanging, what's the next thing you've said, so that there's nothing, nothing happens. So when you come back and you don't hear that language change or, or, um, the rising intonation, so you, um, you say I'm from Beryl, uh, rising intonation was quite different when we came back.

Andrew Browning: [00:15:30] So there's a little difference in the languages difference in phrases. Um, so too easy as a new phrase, that's come when, when we come back. And so we hear that sound was too easy. Um, I suppose giving me the drinkers too easy. So, um, um, yeah, so lots of differences in language and, and the, the occupation with coffee, um, that's been something new. So everyone seems to have their idea about coffee and, and seem to have a, uh, caffeine infusion with them. When they go, we've been around their cups of coffee. Uh, even water bottles of water is kind of a new thing to people. Everyone has, seems to carry around a bottle of water if they go for a walk or a drink. And that's the little things like that have been changed. But the big thing, um, that has changed is of course the social media and the mobile phones and the smartphone. So when I left, uh, in 2001 and I was in Ethiopia, part-time for five years prior to that mobile phones were just coming in. And, um, I certainly didn't have one and you probably had one cause you

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[00:16:30] were,

Paul Browning: You know, I stayed one, it was a fairly basic one. I think I got my first mobile phone when I was the founding principal of Berkman Anglicans in school in Canberra. And it was, uh, you know, you could play this worm game on it or ring people. And that was basically it.

Andrew Browning: Yes.

Paul Browning: Sorry I interrupted the Andrew, keep going.

Andrew Browning: Um, no, no, no. You're the big brother. That's what you do the, um, the, um, yeah, so the, the mobile phone. So I remember being very struck and I I'm using the word so too much now, too. So that's, it's kind of crept into my language as well. Um, the mobile phone, I was struck very, very, quite obviously one night when I was coming back to my home from, uh, from a public speaking engagement program in mid two thousands. So I'll meet you at two teams. Um, and I passed, uh, a bus stop and in Africa, bus stops are just places of interaction. There's just chaos. There's people talking. There's people laughing, there's activity. There's people selling chickens. There's people carrying things on their head trying to bargain review, or a scout is trying to sell your tickets. This everyone's, everyone's interacting, talking, laughing, and having a good time at the bus stop.

Andrew Browning: I passed in Australia. Everyone was in a neat line and no one's speaking to each other at all. And every single one of just looking at their mobile phone doing, doing something so dead, quiet, no activity, no, no laughing, no enjoyment, just everyone just staring at their mobile phone. I wanted to take a photo of it to show all my friends in Africa. They just would've laughed. It's offered. Yeah. And so that, that sort of enjoyment of life of simple things of catching a bus, um, it just isn't there in Australia and people seem, seem to be much more isolated. So coming back to Australia, the big difference in Australian culture to African culture is people seem to be much more alone in Australia. So you'll see people driving in a car by themselves. So you never see that in Africa, people rarely are in a car by themselves or they're walking.

Andrew Browning: Um, and the, the streets are just full of life in Africa. There's people all over the streets, animals, people talking, laughing, but you rarely see someone on the street here in Australia. And if they do they're walking by themselves or they're going for a job by themselves. Um, although they're walking along, looking at the phone, um, interacting with someone else, but, um, by themselves, which is a big, big gap contrast to, to Africa, to here, every Africa is much more of a community you're never alone. You're always with people. Um, everything is an event you can gain. So have a drink somewhere, have a coffee. As you speak to the person, you have a great conversation with the person you're buying a coffee from. And, um, there's,

Paul Browning: It's interesting because in Western culture now in particularly in the UK, and I think in Japan, they've appointed ministers in parliament or in government, they're the minister for loneliness because they see it. Yeah, they have. So they see it as a real epidemic.

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[00:19:30] That's occurring in our Western world to the point that they've actually appointed parliamentarians to take on a portfolio about loneliness. And I, I read, uh, an interesting book on the weekend. I can't remember the title of it, but, uh, it was saying that to people in the Western world are becoming so lonely that there's new businesses that are opening and one particular businesses, is it like a cuddle business? So instead of going in for a massage, you can actually go in and get a cuddle from somebody. And there's a cuddle menu. The types of cuddles, you might get you sort of the person who actually wrote the books went and tried it out. Thoughts. It sounds a bit bizarre to begin with, but it's all about that human connection. That's now missing in our Western world.

[00:20:00] And so if you don't get that connection, you can go and buy yourself a cuddle from a total stranger, which is quite bizarre. Yeah, no,

Andrew Browning: It's a very sad comments on, on Western culture and how we've developed our culture. Um, without looking at those basic human needs, I think there's much we can learn from Africa and the way they have their society and culture. You don't see loneliness, you don't see the anxiety or depression in Africa as you do here in Australia. And that's

[00:20:30] Paul Browning: An interesting comment too, because certainly in schools, uh, we're seeing, uh, an incredible increase in mental health issues, particularly around anxiety and the age of people who are, or children who are getting these mental health issues is getting younger as well. And we kind of wonder whether a lot of that is as a result of the parent's anxiety as well, being projected onto the children or whether it's just the fact that they don't have that social interaction that they used to have. Yeah. They're not outside playing on the weekend. They're actually indoors on their devices. They're not interacting in the same sorts of ways. Uh, it's really quite frightening. So can you give us a couple of observations between, uh, I guess the mental health of you and you did there a little bit, or people living in a developing country compared to Australia, but probably more on the line of their, their general state of happiness and wellbeing rather than middle health, you know, what do you see there? Australians happy people compared to people living in Ethiopia, you would think they would be could because of the standard of living is so much better, but what are you have you observed

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[00:21:30] Andrew Browning: I've observed the reverse, as you say. I think cam there has been surveys and saying who are the happiest people in the world and generally the Scandinavians, but some surveys, it looks at happiness and, and Connor tried to quantify happiness in different ways. And they found Nigerians were the happiest people in the world. I would certainly say that Tanzanians are extraordinarily happy. There was also living in one of the poorest materially, poorest countries in the world. Um, but their happiness is, um, I think greater than Australians, we don't see, as I said, the, the depression, the anxiety in Tanzania, although if you gave a Tanzania and the opportunity to come and live in a materially rich country like Australia, uh, they'd be jumping at the same. Yes. We want those flat screen TVs. We want the mobile phones, we want the cars, we want the nice houses, the holidays, uh, that you have in Australia.

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Andrew Browning: And we want the safety of an Australian society. Um, but that probably what they don't see is the, the anxiety that, um, that producers in Australia, I mean, Australia is now

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- [00:22:30] living in probably the safest society that's, um, we've ever lived in, um, uh, materially. We're probably the richest we've ever been. And in few goes throughout history. Um, then Kings didn't live like the way we lived. Um, just a couple of generations ago with a variety of foods. We have the, the quantity of foods, the size of our houses. Um, but people don't feel rich in Australia. They're always looking for, for that something more and consumerism seems to be, um, a drug, doesn't it? You can never really quite get
- [00:23:00] enough. Yes. And so in, uh, in Africa, people have learnt, I mean, you do big intention. There's that wonderful verse in the Bible where Paul's saying that he's learned to be content, whatever the circumstance, where the Wolf fed or hungry, whether living one's living in plenty, it can do be content.
- Andrew Browning: [00:23:30] And he does that through Christ who strengthens him. Um, and that's a great lesson to learn. It's something that, um, I think our African friends do much more easily than we do in Australia. Although they look at our Western lives and they see Stephanie and I are living in Tanzania or Ethiopia now, bigger house than they had. Um, although not a house that we would have here in Australia. Uh, and they, they covered that. They want that, but overall they're, they're more content and, um, their children are not so protected. I don't see the C w looking through through a children's eyes, seeing our sons come back to Australia, after living, growing up in Africa, they would just go outside into the street and they'd be surrounded by boys and likable and have fun. Uh, when we first came back to Australia, I said, I'll take the ball down to the park and, and kick about you because they wanted to meet other boys and, and make friends.
- [00:24:00]
- Andrew Browning: [00:24:30] So I said, you go down the park, kick a ball around. You'll have plenty of kids come down and play with you. So they did that for three days and not a single other child came to, came down to the park. Uh, they had one other group of children, came with an adult doing some structured activity that they weren't allowed to join in. And so they, they started to get depressed with that. And, um, I remember Christopher, um, I mean, in Africa, kids can have responsibility, do everything. And so we went to the petrol station, oh, if we went to the petrol station in Africa, he was always led to fill up from the age of seven or six or whatever. Uh, so we did that in Australia when he was eight or nine. And, um, I've got this announcement comes through that boom in the machine blocked down and someone over the loud, Hailer said that Charles not allowed to be filling up patches in the basil. And crystal was so upset. He said, oh, people in Australia think kids are
- [00:25:00] stupid. And, um, he was so upset with that. She could understand. Um, yeah, so maybe we were over protective of our children and not giving them enough freedom to develop their own. Um, decision-making their risk taking their resilience. Um, which if, if you don't develop that, I think that anxiety is the offshoot.
- [00:25:30] Paul Browning: So there's an interesting message for educators really it's, it's about developing their creativity, uh, respecting them as, as individual people. Who've got something to contribute to allowing them to make decisions. And you kind of hinted at it. How did you cope coming back from Africa to Australia? Did you S did you feel a bit of anxiety? I think you, you told me at one stage you're overwhelmed. For example, when you went to a supermarket with the amount of choice that you actually had in a supermarket compared to what you had in Africa, where you've just had your cabbage and your, and your sheep, uh, how did you, how did you find that track? You came back because your

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[00:26:00] boys had got to a high school age, and there was no real options there. And that's, that's why you've returned. And now you go back to Africa every couple of months to continue your work. But, uh, you know, what sorts of things did you go through in, in transitioning back to this Western culture? It's very

Andrew Browning: Hard, as I said, it was easier to go into Ethiopia and Tanzania than it is to come back. And they say that if you, um, live more than eight years in your adopted country or adopted culture, you start to feel more at home in your adopted culture than you do in your home culture. And that's certainly been the case for, for us coming back to Australia and, um, has been difficult. And yes, I was overwhelmed by the amounts of choice in Australia then, and the amount that people actually, and they had free trolleys and the supermarket videos fill up with stuff and wheel it. So you haven't been in Tanzania or Africa, you go to the market with a little straw, um, ask it and just fill out just as much as you can carry. And that's what you take home. Um, but here in Australia, people consume so much, they have a big trolley, they put it in the boot of their car and they drive a time.

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Andrew Browning: So the consumerism I have is, is difficult. We consume far more than we need. And the, um, lack of contentment with that in Australia, I find difficult. And in the loneliness, I find difficult, the, um, and coming backwards and forwards between Africa and Australia, as I'm doing now. Now during front of ours times, it's not so frequent. Um, it used to be five times a year before coronavirus, or just in the year before we were home before coronavirus started. And then, um, now this year is probably just going to be three times depending if I get permission from the government, but it's coming backwards and forwards between the cultures is, is difficult. And that, um, even though I've been doing it for 25 years, uh, even longer, I think, 30 years, perhaps, um, yeah, that, that contrast between cultures, um, never ceases to strike you as you try and settle in between the cultures. Uh, several times a year.

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[00:28:00] Paul Browning: This book is I shared with this before we started. Thank you for being late by Thomas Friedman. Uh, he makes a really interesting point, uh, that the rate of change is just accelerating, uh, and probably influenced primarily by the advances that we're seeing in, in technology or robotics, artificial intelligence. And one thing for certain is that the, the rate of change today will be the last time we actually see that rate of change. It will just get faster and things do get faster and faster, which is having a significant impact on our wellbeing. And you've kind of described that a little bit in terms of your observation between a developing world's culture and Western world's culture. But certainly when I, when I visited China, for example, and I go to China every now and again, or I did before coronavirus. And because we have a number of sister schools there, uh, the Chinese government, their rate of change is increasing remarkably.

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Paul Browning: So their economic growth figures was in double digits for a number of years, and they were trying to slow that growth down because they are observing the negative impact on people's wellbeing. The rate of change in China was so quick that it was having a terrible effect. Uh, and Thomas Friedman kind of makes the comment that we perhaps well past our ability as humans to adapt to the changes that we're seeing. And as a result, it is having an impact on our wellbeing, uh, mental health and all sorts of other

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[00:29:30] things within our society as well. I'm interested Andrew, cause we're obviously talking about education as well, and you've touched a little bit on creativity and the need for developing resilience. And we've spoken to previous guests on the show about those sorts of skills, but I'm thinking about the other side of the coin, how do we actually inoculate young people for a future that will just change again and again and again, and that that rate of change will increase. How do we give them the skills to survive in that world? And in a sense, thrive, you know, how do we, what do we do? We can't go backwards. We can't go back to how we lived in Africa. And unless of course there's a global calamity, but what could we actually do? Have you had any thoughts on that?

[00:30:00] Andrew Browning: I think we need to be grounded in something that's unchanging and have that as our rock, as our foundation. And for me as a Christian, um, I've granted my life into the unchanging word of God. It was interesting. I've got, um, I like collecting old things and seeing how things have changed pre science. I love science and science just tremendously excites me. I look at evolution and then discoveries in science, um, and just think, wow, that's how God did it. And it just gives me a glimpse into the creative mind of God. Um, by studying science, it's beautiful, but our study of science has changed so much. What we thought was fundamentally scientific truth 50 years ago, and now shown to be untrue. So even in science and our understanding of nature is always changing. But I mean, if we take the word of God, I mean, lots of the oldest book in the world is the book of job in the Bible.

[00:30:30] And, um, the lessons in job is unchanged. The lessons is that how it speaks to the human condition, human desire, human nature, um, all the, the, the wisdom literature and the old Testament. And Jesus is teaching the new Testament. If we look at the Bible, the copies of the Bible and the copies of the old Testament, even before Christ. And we look at out of the Bible, I've got mine on my disc over there. It's exactly the same it's unchanged. And it says in the Bible that God is unchanging, uh, says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. It's very reassuring. It's very, um, uh, stabilizing to, to have your faith in something that is unchanging. If you look at the what's written in the Bible just speaks so clearly to the human condition, human desire, the human foreigners, the need for God and how God's character. And it's still as clear as it was 3000 years ago, 4,000 years ago, 2000 years ago, as it is today. So having that grounding has helped me cope with change, um, because God's word is unchanging, but so having that rock gives me some stability to cope with change.

[00:31:00] Andrew Browning: And I would probably agree with you there because it gives me that stability as well. So having something to go back to that's constant and always the same can help you cope with the changes that are occurring all around you. So yeah, that grounding in something that is unchanging is incredibly important. And that really, I guess, points to what an education worth having should be like. It should be not just teaching a young people's minds and helping them to thrive intellectually, but helping them to thrive in their character and who they actually are. As we wrap up our conversation this morning, Andrew, as a parent yourself, you've got two boys who are at school and you've come from a different culture back into Australia. What sort of advice would you give to parents to help their kids to be future ready?

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Andrew Browning: Um, well I think that the most important thing is to give them a grounding in something that's unchanging. And that's the word of God. So as a family, we read the Bible together every night. Um, well, not while I'm in quarantine, but when we're together, I would read the Bible and pray every night. And, um, that gives them a grounding in something that's unchanging. And the stresses that the boys have been through in changing cultures has been, um, has, has been difficult for them. Um, but they've, um, developed that faith in something that's unchanging and that's the word of God, and it's giving them a stability and the strength and resilience to cope with the stresses that they have in changing cultures, especially when they look Australian, but they feel, think, and feel Africans and people expect them to be Australian, but they feel African.

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Andrew Browning: It would have been much easier for them to adapt to Australia, uh, if they were black, um, because that's how they think and feel. And people have reacted to them as if they're different because of that, because they look Australian. I don't think that they're thinking and feeling any different, but so that's been a challenge for them. But having that faith in Christ, um, has given them that foundation, but also let them be free and let them take risks. Even though, as a parent with technology, I'm worried about my child, but let them take that risk and, um, uh, climb that tree or make that thing that looks a bit unstable and climb on it and see it fall apart. So they learn, learn their lessons and maybe get a few grazes here and there, but they've learned their lessons to be stronger and, and do things a bit better next time. Uh, yeah, let them be free and explore their abilities, explore their boundaries, uh, and what they can and can't do. But within some sort of boundaries, of course, then climb a cliff without a high rope or something like that.

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Paul Browning: So do you reckon we should let our eight year old children fill up the car at the petrol station? Well,

Andrew Browning: I did. And, um, and he grew into that responsibility. He can do it, he can do it fine. And, uh, he does a lot of things, fixes things around the house and, um, he's a good little boy, the older, one's not so quite so practical, but, um, uh, he can certainly do things like that. He was out with a drill yesterday, fixing our gates and things. So, um, yeah, the, the, um, yes, give them more responsibility,

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Paul Browning: Give them more responsibility and allow them to take risks, allow them to fail and get a graze or two and, you know, give them a good grounding in something that is unchanging. Some great advice there. Andrew, Andrew, uh, I'll do a shameless plug for you. You're releasing a book, uh, about your story. The forward is, or introduction is written by princess Anne. How did you meet princess and very briefly. And why is she written the foreword to your book and not your book? Yeah, exactly. And not my book. So I'm a bit disappointed about that. I just had typical Stella, you had princess Anne. So

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Andrew Browning: We used to, there was no one left for me to have, so I had to ask printed sand. So first I met met prisoners and, um, some years ago in ETA and she visited our hospital and very briefly, um, I was incredibly nervous getting princess and, um, yeah, very, very nervous. And, uh, she could see that I was nervous and spit associates who speaking to me and says, you know, how was someone so young ending up living in UK? And I said, well, I first came here, uh, to, to work on my art, my Valerie and my aunts working in the

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desert to meet the proceeds being there for 40 years or so 50 years, um, lives like the IFR. She lives as a nomad. She's a tiny winery thing, very Fari. Anyway, the, um, the, the British ambassador was standing beside princess and he said, yes, he's got a very crazy art that lives here in Ethiopia.

Andrew Browning: [00:36:30] And I was mortified. I mean, I can say my dad's crazy, but the British ambassador that can't say that about my art in front of princess Anne. And so I was very mortified and British saying, I could see that. And she said, oh, don't worry. I've got two nephews. You think I'm crazy as well. So I thought good on it for I'm dispersing the situation. So ably. So I was thinking of someone who could write the introduction to the book and I thought, what about princess hands? So I wrote her a letter and reminded her of that story. And so she wrote back and said, sure. So, um, that was very nice. Yeah.

Paul Browning: [00:37:00]

And the book is called Andrew

Andrew Browning: And it's called a Doctor in Africa uninspiring title, but that's the title that, um, Pam McMillan, the publisher has a lot to do with it.

Paul Browning: I had a great photo of you on the front cover, Andrea. It was great speaking to you. A great pleasure to actually talk to you this morning about accelerating change and a different insight in terms of what's happening around us and how we should be preparing our young people for a future. That's going to be very different to the one that we know today. So Andrew, take care. Thank you. Thanks.