

The Wellbeing Conversation

With Dylan Alcott, Brad McEwan and special guests

Chapter 2: Flexible working and the new normal with Gerard Florian, Dominic Price and Georgia Murch

Brad McEwan: Welcome. It's great to have you here. And we look forward to you joining us throughout the wellbeing conversation, which is also a collection of stories, a lot of stories. Our aim to share stories from experts, from well-known individuals, from ANZ people to present unique, inspiring and practical insights to help you navigate through this challenging period. It is great to be here. And it's wonderful again to welcome our recurring panelist, ANZ Ambassador Dylan Alcott.

Dylan Alcott: G'day Brad. Great to be here mate. I've got to say, I absolutely loved episode one. I thought it was going to be tough to top but we have three cracking people coming up on today's episode. So make sure you stick around. You and I were easily the worst to perform in the first episode. And I think you and I will be the worst to perform again.

Brad McEwan: Thanks for instilling that confidence in us. But we'll get there.

Now, we've got a lot to talk about today because we're talking about flexible working and the new normal. We've got three special guests today. First of all, we welcome ANZ Group Executive Technology, Gerard Florian. Gerard, great to have you with us.

Gerard Florian: Hey Brad, thank you very much. Great to be here and looking forward to the conversation.

Brad McEwan: As are we. Also joining us today, feedback expert, expert and author. We'll talk about the book Flawsome in a moment. Georgia Murch. Good day, Georgia.

Georgia Murch: G'day Brad it's nice to see you again darling. Thanks for having me.

Brad McEwan: You know this is going to be a great chat when somebody refers to you as darling.

Georgia Murch: Ok. Babe, darling, love, chick.

Brad McEwan: Well, extending those very friendly and easygoing personalities.

Also joining us is Dominic Dom, Dom Price, work futurist at Atlassian. G'day Dom.

Dom Price: How are you doing? I am looking forward to this. I appreciate the fact that Georgia can give a hug using words. When she says the word darling is like someone just giving you a little tight squeeze. It's brilliant.

Brad McEwan: I agree. This is going to be a lot of fun. And as I mentioned, we've got a lot to get through. So let's get into it.

We are going to start off with... I've never done this before, a quote from Dr. Seuss and Gerard, I read this in a piece that you posted on bluenotes recently, just enlighten us about that quote.

Gerard Florian: Sure Brad. So I mean the quote pretty simply, is that bad things are going to happen, it's a fact of life. And when bad things happen, we've got one of three choices. We can let it destroy us. We can let it define us. Or we can use it to make us stronger.

And certainly, as we went into this period back in February, I found this quote particularly useful for me from a leadership point of view and from my team because we thought about what are we going to do? How are we going to respond? How are we going to act?

Brad McEwan: So early days, there Gerard, which of the three do you think it is, because it's been peaks and troughs?

Gerard Florian: Well, certainly. I mean, it's obviously a very terrible time, with a lot of very, very bad things happening across the globe. We don't for one minute want to miss that. But at the same time, it is a chance to get stronger.

Now, I started talking to my team early on about this gift and people thought I was a little bit weird, but it was a gift to say what are we going to do? We've got a chance to step up and do some things differently. And as a result of that, I think through March, April, May, we set about doing a whole range of things, which we can go into a bit later.

But I think it is about a headspace to say these things, they're sent to try us they happen. Goodness knows we don't want them to happen. But now that they have what we do next counts the most. So for us, it's all about making us stronger.

Brad McEwan: And Georgia what's the feedback you are getting from people? Are they working their way through this? Are they being positive and coming up with strategies to cope?

Georgia Murch: I agree with Gerard in that I think the universe is asking something of us now whether we're aware of it or not.

And people are many people forced into change. And I see working with teams and leadership teams at the moment, the ones that are making the most of it are choosing the mindset shift, which is what Gerard's talking about, which is, what if this is happening for us, not to us.

And it just throws you out of victim space and throws you into learning opportunities. And it's those organisations, those individuals that actually can thrive that can do really well in these times. But at the moment, it's a head game. Once you get this right. Everything else comes along.

Brad McEwan: Absolutely, and, Dom, I mean, you guys are always looking for different ways to do things. What's been the impact at Atlassian you've seen?

Dom Price: In so many regards there was no impacts because like one of the examples, three years ago we acquired Trello they had a rule that if one person dialed into a call, everyone dialed in. So even if five of you in the office, we always dialing separately so it saves you having to empathize. You just have a level playing field.

And so we've been doing that forever. Anyway, so none of our meetings changed that much. It's just the same. I'm just working from home and you're imposing in my lounge and on my life.

I think from that regard, what we realised was the technology's been available for flexible working for a long time. The mindset hasn't. And when I say mindset, let's call it what it is. It's trust. Right. For many senior leaders, they've had this view that line of sight equals productivity, equals people working.

And so they hoarded people around desks not because they thought it was optimal, because they didn't interest their people to not work anywhere else. And so I think that's the honest conversation we're having. And the danger here is because this is to some extent that has happened to us.

I've had the fortune or misfortune to be with a whole lot of senior leaders outside of like, here's the change we're driving now. And I'm not sure you can pat yourself on the back for a pandemic. I'm not sure you can put yourself on the back of that that you've delivered on these things because they did happen to use a forcing function. And so I think we need a rebalance of reflection of saying why didn't we do it earlier? Because the technology was there.

What are the human to human practices we need to put into place to actually make this work? And how do we make sure we take everyone along? Because whilst people say the great thing about COVID is we're all the same boat. We're all in very different boats.

I know some people that are struggling a huge amount. And I consider myself very fortunate. I live by myself. This isn't even my apartment. I've just walked into a neighbour's place. But I have the comfort of dialing in from anywhere and doing my job, and I feel extremely privileged doing that. But I know so many people that aren't. And so I think, you know, I like to say never let a crisis go to waste. But in doing that, I think we need to double click and go, who are the people we might accidentally leave behind? And how do we make sure we don't? Because equality right now have isn't there in this environment for me.

Dylan Alcott: Well, said Dom, I think from my point of view, especially in terms of the importance of a positive mindset, it's definitely been something that I've had to personally practice my whole life.

It's quite funny when you are born with a disability like I was, I guess, on paper. I have a really tough life and a lot of people might feel sorry for me. It's always funny when my dad or my mum says 'I've got to go watch my son in the Paralympics'. What do you think the first thing people say is? They say, 'oh, I'm sorry, what happened?' Not, 'oh, my God, he's going to the Paralympic Games'.

And I think the importance of a positive perception, especially at a time like this, has never been more evident because people might, you know, look at me and say, I can't get up steps. He might live a tough life. I mean, I live a better life than anybody that I've ever met. I'm easily the luckiest person to be doing what I'm doing.

And I guess there was a stage in my life where it could have gone either way. I could have felt sorry for myself and looked at my brother and said, 'hey, I can't kick a footy like him. I

won't be able to go to the beach and run on the sand'. But I guess it's really important for me in my life to look at all the things that I can do, rather things that I can't.

And I think in the current pandemic, and I'm not trying to deny that it's so tough for all of us. It really is, and especially for people's mental health and things like that. But there are definitely silver linings and positive aspects of this and as you said then Dom the increase in flexible working space has been so critical to helping people, you know, not only striving for the economy to grow, but also maybe shining a light on some things that we didn't really think about.

I know as somebody with a disability, we've been crying out for flexible working forever. And so many people I know in my community have always said, look, I can get in the office for three days, but for one or two days I need to work from home because of my extra care needs, because I can't get in there because I don't have a carer. And employers previously have been like, 'that means you might not get the job because we can't see you doing work'.

How long have people had a bit of a sniffle and they've forced themselves to go to work when they haven't been productive as opposed to being trusted from working from home and contributing to that organisation.

So, I mean, obviously, there are so many negative things going on, but I think hopefully, you know, as it continues, because unfortunately it's probably not going away any time soon. That shift in our mindset to finding out ways that this can benefit all of us and our organisations is so important and even having conversations like this.

Brad McEwan: Gerard, can I ask at one stage there, I think ANZ had about 95 per cent of your workforce working remotely. Through what you've seen over the past few months in regards to working remotely, how has it been?

Gerard Florian: So I think a couple of comments that the team have made already. It's been a very different experience for lots of people. Ninety five percent of our workforce from India to New Zealand. So you got to think that through as well, it's not just different states in Australia. The experience in New Zealand has obviously been quite different to people in Manila, for example, or our team Bengaluru or even Chengdu who were our, I guess our front line, the first people to experience this back in January.

So the difference - positives, negatives - we've learnt a lot. I keep coming back to, I don't think that there are a lot of brand new trends through it, but I think it's accelerated a whole bunch of things that were coming at our way, at us anyway, whether that's around sort of the flexible work agreements, sorts of things that Dylan mentioned earlier or even just the sheer focus within corporates around the importance of wellbeing, the importance of awareness, the roles that leaders play. All of that just is getting amplified.

And we're finding that in this short period of time. You know if I just use a really simple example, the role of leaders to make meetings more engaging. Think about how do we do that differently, doing it remotely, you've got to go through a whole different process and mix it up a bit and have a little bit of fun. And it's just about the team drinks on Friday, people are doing that. But it's for example, Monday mornings - it's such a mood day Monday. We check in and see how people are feeling either what's happened well? What are they grateful for, or maybe what are they looking forward to this week? Little things that we're trying to ask our leaders to think about to make a difference.

Brad McEwan: Georgia, how are the relationships happening now remotely? Because as Gerard touched on, we still need to connect. We still need to communicate. We still need to give feedback. We still need to work it's same. But it's different.

Georgia Murch: It is really different. And whilst there are so many opportunities in terms of remote workforces and flexibility, what we're really lacking now is we're lacking physical connection. And that's actually part of how we're wired as humans. I miss hugs like I, I seriously miss them. And people actually just miss the energy of being with each other. And there are conversations about introverts and extroverts. But that's not, we're actually wired to be with each other.

And some of the things that are coming up in conversations that I'm having and programs that I'm doing is that I'm seeing a lot of leaders actually a question themselves and question whether - so Dom's nodding - and questioning whether they can play this empathy role and can play the role of actually, I don't know that I know how to check in with people and I don't know how to show that I care.

And I think that's a really cool conversation for people to be having with each other without or with themselves without shame. Like it's okay if you actually love doing the technical stuff more than you love doing the people's stuff. It's okay if you don't feel comfortable doing those components. But what I feel like we need to give ourselves permission to do at the moment more is actually just hold space to be exactly where we're at.

And yes, the mood meetings and all those sort of things - but we don't have to solve stuff or we're in such a workforce at the moment where you know, it's like I can hear my mum and dad say 'don't come to me with a problem, come to me with a solution'. You know, I'm calling B.S. on that because I just think we need to actually create time to be with each other.

But what we really need to do is actually just know where each other is at. And I last week was in struggle town, like I was really in struggle town. My dad passed away 12 days ago and while he was sick, he actually just dropped dead really suddenly. And it was, you know, it was really traumatic for all of us.

And I felt like and this was my first, you know, going back into doing client work. And I was really shaky. And I just thought, actually, Georgia, you need to practice what you preach. So I just started with this is where I'm at and I got upset and I was shaking and I just thought, I'm not going to do this pretense of pretending that everything's okay anymore because I'm in Melbourne, I can't even grieve with people like it's stuffed up.

And what that then facilitated with is 1) I had some breathing space because I could actually be real and human and not pretend that I'm not okay. And then it started this conversation where we threw people into, you know chats to talk about where they were really at. And the feedback at the end of that was that was the best bit. Not learning around how I problem solve better or what I do, the best bit was where everybody went yeah I'm a little bit stuffed too, or I'm a little bit struggling too.

Dylan Alcott: Georgia, I couldn't agree more. And I mean it's the vulnerability that is really relatable as well. And I've always been pretty stoic in the person that I am. And I've actually been struggling as well there you go. And I think as soon as I started saying that

out of my mouth that, you know, my career was cancelled and my life was turned upside down, just like everybody, God, I felt better and being able to talk about it.

And it's an important lesson from, as you said, from top tier leaders all the way down. You don't just because you are a captain of the team, a CEO or a director, whatever it is, doesn't mean you can't be vulnerable. And I think when people are, especially the teams that work with you can relate a lot better to you and they feel, I guess, create a safe space where they can talk about where they're at as well.

As, you know, we're talking about today this isn't just like a flash in the pan. This is the new normal for potentially a long time. So to develop those skills I think is so important.

Brad McEwan: Dom, Atlassian has been, you know, had a lot of people working remotely for a long time. I was watching an interview you did and I was fascinated when you revealed your third biggest office. So you guys, in a way of being sort of prepared to a degree for what we're experiencing.

Dom Price: Yeah. I mean, a couple of things, as I said like why that's the case. First of all, it is a conversation about remote versus distributed – one of the things that Gerard touched on - ANZ has locations all over the world. So the fact that you're in an ANZ office you're still distributed. You have to find different ways of connecting. Right. And travel isn't the answer to all of that. And so we've been finding ways of working these distributed teams around the world since we were born. Right, we've always been spread around the world.

What we then realise kind of to Dylan's point, you actually exclude a huge amount of the workforce, potential workforce. When you say 9-5, Monday to Friday, that desk. And the reality is we kind of sat there and we're like, there's no reason why that constitutes work if we're not running the production line. There is no correlation between your time at the desk and the genius you create. So why are we trying to force that and suddenly over time we start to experience it.

We honestly thought a few years ago we were really good. And then when we acquired Trello, we had that humble moment of going oh we're not actually really good. We're actually quite mediocre. And the great thing was that even though Atlassian was big and Trello was small, we have this rule that whenever we acquire a company, we're like, what can we learn from you? We don't want you to become us. We want to learn from you. And so Trello was over 70 per cent distributed and remote at the time. And so we learnt a huge amount about their practices their norms. But it's funny because whilst it gives you access to the talent, you have to find human to human ways of working typical of inclusivity. Otherwise, you draw people in and then you push them right out again. Right.

It's similar to back when I started work early on in my career and everything felt like a boys club. You could talk about diversity, but for every woman that you hired, one left the door because it wasn't a great place to work. So we talk about diversity is the invite to the party, inclusion is the permission to dance. And so what we've been doing as we've been practicing that remote work is saying, hey, what works, what doesn't, what works, what doesn't, what works, what doesn't. And the hard thing for leaders is saying when you first try remote work or remote leadership you're going to be crap at it. You're an amazing leader. You've got 25 years' experience but when you first try to build this new muscle, you'll be crap at it, accept that and get comfortable with it.

And that's the hard thing right now is as we're coming out of crisis. We've got to hold up people we've mentioned vulnerability we've mentioned empathy. They can say those words so easily, but damn they crap at it because it's not a natural skill for a lot of people. Vulnerability. Very easy to say. Very hard to do.

For a lot of people they talk about empathy. What I see is sympathy. Right. Dylan's example. We're going to see our son at the Paralympics. Oh, I feel for you what happened? You're like no empathise with me. It's a celebration of his success. You bloody idiot. We confuse those two "pathies" right - empathy and sympathy. And actually as leaders it's not just about being vulnerable and managing a distributed workforce. It's about doing it authentically and real.

And so many leaders, unfortunately, walk around with invisible capes on and they think they need to be superheroes. And that is going to kill any ability we have to build the future together because we'll be so hell bent on being superheroes. We'll just copy, cut and paste the paste the past and that that's something we can't do. We have to we have to have that level of introspection and reflection and realise that the future's not built. It's not determined. It's not written. We get to build it every day without action or inaction. And inaction is as powerful as action sometimes.

Gerard Florian: With that just quickly picking up on that point, if I could. The irony is that my own experience in the last little while, there are things that I've been doing in the last three months felt really, really uncomfortable. They feel really different. I'm definitely crap at it but it is about trying. It's the age old thing of if I can actually build a muscle through practice, I'm going to practice on stage. I'm going to practice on court. There's not point practicing on my own. So practicing in front of other people with your teams and groups. Some things work well.

Also finding other people who are good at it and saying, well, hey, I like the way you did that, saying either can you come and help me or can I take a little bit of that and apply it? Because I certainly hear what you're saying Georgia, as far as we need to create space to have the conversations, I think also trying to provide an appropriate injection of ideas of things to try is also part of it - not to fix it, but to give things to think about maybe is part of what we've got to try and do as leaders.

Georgia Murch: It just reminds me, one of the organisations that I have loved watching grow is Vinomofu . And one of the things that I love about them is that the owners would celebrate the things that didn't work. They were just like actually we made this decision or we made this hire. It was wrong for these reasons. I made the wrong call. What I've learnt from this is X, and it increases risk and gives people permission to fail. But in actual fact, failure is not the problem anymore. It's the learning from it. That's actually the cool thing. And if you fail without learning now, you're the problem.

So it's recognising what you were just talking about, Gerard, is, you know, let's just make mistakes together. Let's stop making some high stakes, I get it, particularly in some of the decisions and roles that you're involved in, Gerard too but I think if we don't keep learning from it, we actually we keep people holding back from either poor decisions or mistakes that they've made, which accelerates problems down the track.

Brad McEwan: Can I tap into four really wise people here - and speaking on behalf of other people that are like me, which now I'm talking to you, Dom - other people that are like me, that really struggle in isolation. How do we combat that? What do we do?

Dylan Alcott: Well, I think one thing that that really struck me and I know it really hurt the community that I'm from, is even the term social distancing. So we were told to be separated from each other in terms of one point five meters apart but what that actually means in definition is socially, people were removed from connecting with each other as well.

The term physical distancing is obviously a lot better because we don't want to be physically connected in terms of how close we are. But socially, we 100 per cent have to stay connected.

And I know during the first lockdown, especially for people, you know, there are people that are most vulnerable in our communities, people that are immunocompromised, things like that, that have been in isolation since February and will continue to be in isolation for a very long period to come. And without that, as you said, that even that social connection Brad, it makes it so tough for so many people.

And I think it's so important that more so than ever, you know, it's always important to do this more so than ever, at the moment, to connect with people in whatever forms that you can, as simple as a text message, a phone call, a conversation like this. It's so important to chat to people because even by us four doing this right now, I feel better.

But in saying that, you know, I think it's okay to be sometimes as well and it's okay to feel down and it's okay to talk about that. You know, like I remember when it first came around, I was being a bit stoic and my beautiful partner Chantelle is like, are you alright? And I'm like I'm fine. I'm fine - you know what I mean, I actually had to talk about it and like, I had to be like, you know what? I'm supposed to be at Wimbledon today and it sucks that I'm not there. And as soon I said, things like that I felt better, I felt better communicating and talking about it.

Dom Price: There's probably a whole conversation there about the male use of the phrase I'm fine, meaning the exact opposite, because if there's one thing we should solve in the world right now, it's that No, I'm fine. OK. You're clearly not.

Brad McEwan: And I've been a mental health advocate for a long time. But if I can sense something and maybe I can see a difference in somebodies behaviour, I'll say to them, how are you going - really? How are you really? And even if they say, fine, I'll follow up and go. Really, are you really? And every single time they'll say thanks. I really appreciate you asking.

Dom Price: But there's a thread there that you pulled on and that Dylan pulled on which is you know - know thyself. Well, I think, yeah, I've always been an advocate of thriving right, of living the best life. And actually I've changed my bio in the last few months to surviving. But we're in crisis mode like thriving is a nice to have right now. The reality is survival. Right. Because the world has changed and all the foundations of that world have changed. And therefore, in survival I have to know myself and go what are the things that are essential to my survival? Right.

Apparently personality surveys tell me I'm an extrovert. So I get my energy from people. Right. Go figure. And so, cool, how do I either substitute or replicate that in this new world? Because there's nothing to be gained by me whinging about it. So how can I go find substitutes or alternatives? And then how can I embrace those even if I don't like them?

So we did an exercise as an exec team the other week. And I thought it's going to be absolutely rubbish. It was pinot and Picasso. So we got delivered wine. We got easels, canvases and paints and 20 execs with partners and children and aunties and uncles dialed in. And we did a painting class together. And I thought it was going to be cringe worthy and two and a half hours later, my stomach hurt from laughter, because I can tell you with all certainty, there is no correlation between IQ and artistic ability we were awful at it. The banter, the competitiveness, the, when we showed each other pictures people were like, oh, did you draw something different?

It was just a great reminder that for two hours we could just be human together and just laugh. And it was OK. Like it was it wasn't, cause a whole lot wasn't ok but you're like oh, for those two 1/2 hours it's just OK. It's OK to laugh and your build bonds and cohesion together and has nothing to productivity, kind of not anything to be specifically with wellness. It's just let's hang together and let's just do an activity.

Gerard Florian: So I've seen this come up a couple of times in conversations like this. People who apparently, according to the tests, are in the extrovert category. So I'll be the voice for the other half and sort of their little bit of wisdom for the group who actually like to disappear and go and sit on a mountain. Now is not the time to do that, particularly if you're leading a group, obviously, that's hard - right.

Because you can sort of actually feel quite comfortable. We joke a little bit in my team, there's a few of us who'll sit there and say, hey, this is awesome. No actually, it's not awesome. And how do I make sure that I'm aware of my own energy levels and the energy of the rest of the people in the virtual room, to Dom's point, that's a question I used to ask pre COVID, and I still try and find myself asking today as I start each day where are my levels at and what are the sessions I've got coming up? What's the energy of other people in the room so that we do check in and ask how are you going? And take a genuine interest - yes, we care. Some people manifest that differently.

Brad McEwan: Gerard, I know in the article that I referenced earlier, you pointed out that wellbeing - this is not something now to be driven by H.R. people and culture. This is to be driven by all leaders. Everyone.

Gerard Florian: It is, and I think that whole idea of this was something was coming at us anyway. If you go back to last year the year before mindfulness, awareness, all of those movements be getting I guess more support, and genuine support, not just sort of lip service. And then this happens and immediately, it just goes on steroids.

So I think, to me, that's the point here is to say from a leadership point of view, what is it that we do to build these skills and ourselves regardless of the tech, forget the tech. I was on a session the other day, which was supposed to be all about tech ended up all being about culture and people, because that's what it is. How are we going? Yes, we can use these tools as little hacks to help us. But how are we going to help support our teams through what is clearly going to be an extended period that has challenge? And somewhere in there is opportunity to Georgia's point the universe is throwing whatever it's throwing at us, and you know, it would be a shame to miss that opportunity in amongst all of the other challenges we've got.

And as leaders awareness, mindfulness, meditation, if you use an app, if you read a book or whatever it is, everyone's going to find a way. But it just comes down to some very basic

principles which they're not new in human history. But we probably lost our way a little bit over the last little while. And this has been a bit of a reset.

Dom Price: I've a firm view that like 50, 60 years ago in business, when a leader, if a leader said they were going to go for a run, everyone would be like, what are you running from? And then gyms became normal. I have to hope that mental health becomes the same kind of first class citizen. I think we're a weird time though where we've poured that accelerant on it through COVID. It doesn't necessarily mean we've got any better at it.

And so I think we need sort of like Georgia said, space you know, Gerard just talked about forgiveness. Like, how do we create this moment where it's OK to be not great at this yet. And the examples I've seen also was of a call with an organisation this week the senior leader did an amazing talk about we're people first we care about you and your family and you can do this, take time out. And we're going to give you extra holidays. All this stuff like it was heartwarming. And then in last moments smash defeat from the jaws of victory by saying, but don't forget to hit all your key four goals. You were doing so well for seven minutes. And then you ruined it.

And so we still finding this balance of how do we follow through on that. And that wasn't like, thankfully, if that leader wasn't polished it was a great teachable moment to go - how can we deliver that message and keep the people message centre and not distract with, you're allowed some time out as long as you've done everything else first.

Gerard Florian: We should underestimate the accelerant piece, I heard a little quote the other day and these things stick in my head anyway. When someone is drowning, it's a bad time to give them a swimming lesson. So, right now we've just got to be also mindful of everything else that's going on and finding sensible ways to inject, but not overwhelming.

Brad McEwan: Dom, you touched on people there before. I love your response when people say that you're, Atlassian is in the tech business.

Dom Price: Yeah, we're a people business. Like, I like all of our IP, our innovation, our creativity, our curiosity, it's all people. We happen to choose technology as a vehicle to deploy that both internally and then what we share with our customers.

But actually, and Gerard, is a great example of this, where our customers have come back and told us stories. They don't say, oh, I use this feature that did this thing. They're like here's how it helped evolve our culture or how our people work or it helps us achieve an outcome. We just happen to have chosen technology as a vehicle so that the people centricity for us has always been front and centre. And I think helps us not only build a growing culture and values over time, but scale those things effectively. Because we've had epic growth both geographically and in terms of numbers in that time so it's really easy to lose that spirit if you're not careful.

Brad McEwan: Can I ask everyone a phrase that I think we're probably all a little tired of, but it's part of the world that we're in.

Georgia Murch: Don't say pivot.

Brad McEwan: No I'm not going to say pivot. It's almost on the banned list, but - new normal, okay, new normal.

I know, I know, but it is it's something that we didn't consider previously. But my question to all of you is what is 'the new normal'? Really? I mean, you're a futurist, Dom. What is it? I don't know.

Dom Price: It's funny because every day is the new normal. Right. Like, I've been a futurist for years. And the thing I laugh about is people asking for predictions. I'm like no, no, no. I am not going to predict what I'm going to ask you to do is to take an action and measure yourself on the outcome of the impact that you have. You get to create your own future every single day when you wake up. Right.

And so the reality is, is that if you look at change of the last five, 10, 15 however period of time you look at this is has been building a new normal every single day, the most relevant businesses today - you look at Netflix as an example, bears very little resemblance to the original version of itself. They've evolved every single day.

And so we've been doing this - what's happened right now is, is we've taken whole of traditional businesses and said, oh, lots of things about your business model doesn't work and the like, oh, we need to build a new normal or the next normal or whatever.

And it's like, well, actually, maybe you don't, because I'm going to promise you you're not going to be able to predict it. So how about you just evolve a little bit every day? And that evolution will enable you to stay relevant.

So I think the superpowers of the great businesses right now is the ability to adapt, the ability to have high learning velocity, which Georgia talked about before. How do you take an insight and turn it into action and the ability to be nimble. Right.

If you can do those three things you stay relevant and actually the idea - a senior leader said to me - we need to build an 18 month plan for our new normal. And I don't think you get it, because three months ago COVID didn't exist so an 18 month plan is already a waste of time. Like there's no way of getting that right. So how do you break it down to more manageable chunks and actually reward and recognise progress over perfection?

Dylan Alcott: Yeah, well said Dom. I tell you the one thing that I'm finding abnormal that is affecting the new normal for me is not being able to hug my mum, you know what I mean, like I think the, I know we've talked about it on this call, but that that lack of connection with the people that you love, especially in a physical sense, I think that's why things like words and actions are going to be so important to create that connection that we don't normally have. And I think that's going to be a tough thing for the people to deal with for a long period of time. And it's okay to accept that and try and find other ways around it to do that.

But I think it's so important that people, unfortunately, stick to the rules and keep doing that. Otherwise, you know, this will drag on longer than it should. But also, if we don't, it will affect people that are vulnerable in our community in the worst possible way.

Georgia Murch: So well said Dylan, I actually think the pursuit of trying to find what's normal is something that's crippling us. Because one, it's something you can't define because there's no such thing. I never want to be normal. Ever. So let that go on the record.

But also if we're pursuing if one we've got to define it, and then when we get if we don't get there, it creates disappointment. And we're never going to get there anyway because there's going to be a whole different amount of perspectives around what that looks like. And so all the energy created into trying to create a vision of the future or a something that you think looks relatively okay to accept is actually the wrong amount of energy.

I think surrendering to what we're in right now and how we make the best of it business wise, personal wise is actually a much better process and journey to establish. And that's where we do get the kaizen effects, which is what you're talking about, Dom, which is ok what could be better? So what's one more thing that we can do to have a better day tomorrow, either personally or professionally or as an organisation? That's a much better distribution of energy than trying to define something that's actually nearly impossible.

Brad McEwan: Absolutely. Gerard moving forward. I imagine, like so many organisations, ANZ has maybe pondered over doing things differently for a long time. All of a sudden, you do them differently because you have to - you get thrown into the deep end. Some things work, which Dom touched on. You give it a go - if it doesn't work, you move on. Other things don't work. But it's about just trying different things because we're in an environment where we just have to adapt, don't we?

Gerard Florian: Yeah. I mean, we all talk about this idea of failing fast. We don't necessarily practice it. So, again, it comes back to this thing of being really honest with yourselves. We are trying some things. They're going to work some things that my work brilliantly for one group, but not for another group as well. So it's not just about *the thing*, it's about the context of that particular team where they are at their skills, their current position.

So it's just again, we keep come back to this thing of awareness and really being connected to your team, knowing where they're at, talking to them and then trying things together and celebrating the things that work well and talking pretty publicly about the things that don't go so well and what do I learn from it, back to Georgia's point, if I learn something and that's great I've picked up. Always make new mistakes. That's another little adage to try and throw it out there.

Brad McEwan: Everyone, thank you very much. We are going to pause for a moment because shortly we're about to wrap things up, or are we?

Brad McEwan: Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. It's been terrific. Gerard, I know that you've got to go. And I just want to put this out there to the others. Is, I think we have unfinished business. There's so much more to discuss and we're enjoying having a good old banter, chinwag, storytelling session. To the others, would you be okay if we kept going? Let's turn, let's turn this chapter into two chapters. What do you think?

Gerard Florian: Well, I'm really jealous that I can't say it's been a fantastic conversation. And I think to one of the comments earlier, I got a ton out of it just by sitting and listening. So I'm looking forward to hearing what Part two is, even if I can't be in it and really, really, really do appreciate the conversation with the team. So well done, guys and we'll speak soon. Stay well everyone. Take care.

Brad McEwan: Thanks very much, Gerard. Really appreciate your input. Dylan, Georgia and Dom – we'll be back in a moment with Part B. Thank you for watching. This is the wellbeing conversation.

Dylan Alcott: *Hey everyone Dylan Alcott again, now we touched on a few topics around mental health throughout that chat, now if that brought up anything for you make sure you reach out to [BeyondBlue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au) or their phone number is 1300 22 46 36. You can also hit up Lifeline on 13 11 14 or reach out to the people within your ANZ teams and they'll be able to help.*