



## **Acts of Kindness**

### Holding Their Pain

“One of my great loves is having deep and fulfilling conversations. So I plan to continue unpacking people’s lives with them, and sharing that with as many people as possible because as we turn more inward and feel more fractured, being reminded we’re all kind of the same, that we’re all here for a similar reason – to survive, to connect, to live and celebrate living – any opportunity to do that in a joyful way, I want to take.” Zan Rowe, *Take 5*.

I would have liked to have claimed I said what Zan Rowe has said here. To me, sharing in those conversations with someone who allows you to ‘see’ them, is one of the most rewarding activities I can partake in. In the role of a coach – which to me is a heightened extension of the supporting, listening approach I choose to take in a deep and fulfilling conversation – I am in the privileged situation of sharing the insights that this person has made about the life they are living and the world we live in.

This type of sharing is the antidote to what Rowe labels, the ‘inward’ and ‘fractured’ existence that our lives in these current times may feel like. When pain, transition, or decision break through one’s shell and forces or allows the vulnerability of our deeply felt emotions and stories to emerge, this is when we feel closest to the other in the conversation.

Not having an answer to the problem the speaker is revealing, requires a humility that is worth finding, however. It is in that state that we are able to listen most intently. It is in that state that we hear how the other is travelling and coping with the ‘mountain’ they are climbing. The communion felt – I am with you in this moment in your time of need, I am listening although I do not know how to proceed either — is what I can bring.

To return to Rowe’s reasons that we’re all here for: ‘to survive, to connect, to live and celebrate living’, with both sides of the exchange, the listener and the sharer are sustained by the conversation. The minimalist reason – to survive – is in itself enough reason for the conversation. Without each other, we will not survive, because in the deepest recesses of the soul, we need each other to live. To live apart, physically, or emotionally, on a continuous basis, is to die, to lose our *raison d’être*.

My act of kindness?

Listening to a deeply fulfilling conversation, experiencing the pain too – currently all-consuming – while holding the space with them.