

I'M PRO-CHOICE. I'M PROLIFE.

A conversation about abortion.

with Simon Camilleri & Maureen Mulholland

Simon: Hi everyone, thanks for tuning in, my name is Simon Camilleri.

Maureen: And I'm Maureen Mulholland, hi Simon.

Simon: Maureen and I have been wanting to do this for a long time, actually. I'm pro-life, and Maureen is pro-choice - although we can discuss whether we like those labels and what they mean - and I have helped organize the March for the Babies, and, Maureen...?

Maureen: Oh, I run a project called Common Ground, where I just think about ways to have conversations with opposing views, where you learn more than what you come out of, and you learn about yourself, you learn about others, and it's enjoyable, it's not a mudslinging fight. And it's not about yes, trying to win and lose and make the other side look bad, but also, you know, just to learn, you know, what is conflict and, is there any point in talking to your direct opposition, and what do you get out of it?

Simon: It's great.

Maureen: Yes, this is a great issue, because it makes people upset, but they don't really talk about it, I mean, I do, you know, watch hours and hours of YouTube videos of protests, and I just see those little minutes where people have a conversation out in the... wherever they are.

Simon: Yes, where the two sides - well, that's sort of how we met - because I was attending the March for the Babies, and you're attending the counter-rally that was happening at the same time, and online, there was sort of discussion about can we actually have any conversations between these two groups or between these two sides? And both you and I felt passionate that it was possible, or should be possible, that it's at least important?

Maureen: Yes, so we met just before that, and then we arranged to meet, so yes, I started feeling anxious, like, I don't know, you know what it's going to be like, and they were going to be police there, and it was just so much more angry, and so, I think we just met there and just hung out.

Simon: Yes, it was good, and...

Maureen: Rather than let anyone know what we were doing, because if we were, you know, at this protest, and counter-protest, and I thought, I'll bring a couple of chairs, and we'll invite people, but the pro-choice side just separated themselves into a group and were just sort of screaming through megaphones. And to me, I guess that they are getting not the wrong idea, but they are, you know, when you separate yourself into a group, you build up the other side as much worse than what they are, so there's no, you know if we tried to sit down, and I mean, it would have been good, but my anxiety at that rally was too high, but well, I think that was two years ago, was it?

Simon: Yes, yes, the rallies are really helpful places to have that dialogue are they? Instead of, yes, the two groups are separated by barriers, and really, does make the impression that there isn't any, as your group hasn't, you know, there is no common ground because we're so separated. But when we've caught up face to face, we've not found that to be the case, so we've been able to chat and disagree or agree and find that space as well.

Maureen: And I guess the group that represents pro-choice at the counter-protest, they don't, to me represent everyone in Society there. And I never really felt part of that group anyway, I went, because I was interested in conflict, and I do identify as I mean, I guess if you're going to pick a side, that's the side, I would choose, but like you said, about, you know, do like the terms, yes I don't think... I'm starting to dislike left and right, even though you sort of need to pick, you know, just where you belong, just so that people know where you're coming from, I guess.

Simon: Sometimes, when people try and go, well, you're clearly this, I've had people say, well, you're a lefty, obviously, and other people say, well, you're clearly on the far right, it's just because if you give a nuanced picture of something, they sometimes see it, oh, well, that's different to me, so, therefore, you must be completely on the other end of the spectrum. And so we both encourage you if you're watching, and you're a bit of an internet warrior, to actually have a conversation with someone who disagrees with you, on any topic, try to have a face to face conversation with them, you know, share your both views and try to not let it descend to mudslinging, and insults and all that sort of stuff.

Maureen: Yes, and I think you can simplify it, just to take an interest in what they have to say without - I don't know what the fear is - but it seems like if you listen to your opposition, maybe they're going to change, you know, they're going to brainwash you, or I don't know what... I don't know that, but it's just like, you can't let them have their say, because you're so angry at them, and I've definitely been like that for a long time, and something just sparked my interest in getting past that. And yes, it did start with my friend Perry, you know, he was coming over and my husband said, oh, you've got to be gentle with him, I know that you're these big feminist, you're going to... if you tell him off, you'll just destroy him.

And I think that just clicked like, you know, why would I hurt another human being? I think it's like some loyalty to the group that they demand that you belong to and support and, you know, if you're a feminist, you have to support them, whoever they are, you know, there's so many different branches of feminism and part of it for me is going to Uni finally, and learning, you know, what is feminist theory and what's, you know, these theories that are just, you know, people...they're pretty, you know, very intelligent people, and they know a lot, but they are just writing theories, rather than living in real society and having real experiences.

So I guess like, abortion is so difficult, because it's about experiences, and, you know, I guess the things, you know, that we should bring out in the open is like, you know, I guess we've had discussions about some pro-life people, just outright, you know, don't want to discuss this, you know, need to ban it and ban it now, and I probably haven't considered - I think you were saying you'd like pro-life people to think more about what they're talking about - you know when they go to the match, or when they talk to their relatives.

Simon: Actually I think as much as there's that group think, with, like you were expressing it within the groups that you've been in, I definitely experienced that there's definitely a group thinking in pro-life circles in some church circles and, it's really important that we make sure we're not just speaking into an echo chamber, and that we are hearing our own things bounce back to us and patting ourselves on the back, that we have conversations that will actually help us be nuanced, even if fundamentally we don't change our position, because sometimes our positions are based on certain convictions that are at a sort of a fundamental level, but may change how we express those convictions, and how we actually are implementing them. Like, we may agree on quite a lot of things about what needs to be done to support pregnant women you know, or there's a whole range of things we might agree in terms of how we actually care for people, even if we disagree on some other things, so.

Maureen: So, should we talk about what we personally believe?

Simon: Yes, yes, I think so.

Maureen: And then kind of, then we can move on to what we...

Simon: Yes, I want to definitely say that anything I express is my own opinion, I don't represent March for the Babies as an organization, and even the March for the Babies is more of a meeting place of pro-life people in Victoria, who have issues with the Victorian law as it currently stands. It's not just one, sort of person or one exact thought about, you know, what, you think about the issues and how what needs to be done. So, yes, I'm just expressing my views, and, you know, and...

Maureen: Yes, I guess my side of it is, I mean, I am just expressing my own views, but I guess I promote free thought and making mistakes and even changing my mind and...

Simon: Yes, definitely, I hope...

Maureen: Yes, I'm not...I don't, ever want my group to be, you know, some kind of...definitely not, you know, paying any money to join. Definitely not, I mean, yes, who knows what the future would bring, but yes.

Simon: Cool.

Maureen: I think I always represent myself, and I sort of sit on the margins anyway, so yes.

Simon: Yes, I understand it, cool, alright. Well, shall we...how about we just start with those big labels? Then, you know, I'm pro-choice, I'm pro-life, what does that mean, to you? Do you like that? You don't like that label? Yes, what do you think it means when people say, I'm pro-choice, or what do you mean, by it?

Maureen: Yes, I guess I dislike it because it's fairly black and white. It's, do you think if a woman needs or wants an abortion, I guess there are different levels of that, and to me having an unwanted pregnancy, I mean when I listen to pro-life reasoning, it makes sense. But then I still, I guess, I think about my own gender and even a couple of experiences I've had of abortion, and, you know, being young, I guess, you know, people always talk about, you know, what about when you're raped, even girls that have been raped want to keep their children, that sort of individual, but yeah, should the law exist? Yes, and I've thought about the reasons why, you know, one day, maybe there shouldn't be abortion, but realistically, maybe there'll always be a need. for it, it seems, if society doesn't get it together to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

You know, as a woman, and it's, you know our natural body, does something and, you know, and in a man's body, it doesn't happen to them. So, and then, you know, animals are a certain way, they live in a cycle of their nature, they don't really think, the same way humans do and humans have conquered nature to a certain degree. I'm sort of getting this from the latest feminists that I really like, she is considered an outcast, Camille, Puglia. She says, you know, we're humans, we've transcended nature, you know, so this is sort of women's way of you know, having power over their body, and because we're not able to do it in another way, this is all we have.

So I guess, for now, you know, that feels you know, in a simple answer, that's why I have to be pro-choice because the alternative is to, you know, allow women that get pregnant for different reasons. And I could say a lot of it is that a lot, you know, a lot of young girls get talked into sex, and, you know, I know that's not always true, but, you know, in the 80s, and 90s, that felt like a thing that happened a lot that, you know, you fall in love, or you think you're in love or a boy, sort of talks you into it, you know, today, they would call that rape.

But, you know, a lot of the times, girls are naive, and they end up pregnant and but then, yes, I don't want to keep going on, but yes, I guess, I really feel that because it's so difficult-I have put off having this conversation, because I've thought, I agree that abortion is...I wouldn't say I mean, you know, you're saying murder, is it in the same way men doing philosophy? It's this idea of what is the world? What is reality? Who are we, when you're born, you know, I have been a Christian for a long time, it felt very much easier, I guess, to just think, yes, you know, every life is sacred, and now I don't really, I'm not an atheist, but I think philosophy drives you a bit mad because you start asking, why are we here?

And the answer is, we don't know, we are just here, realities as our, you know, we exist, and then we just die, and it's, it's either over or, well, there is a God. So you know, you're just thrown into this crazy...so yes, we are like animals when we at that level of sex and pregnancy. And I sent you that link about Jordan Peterson, that summed up probably what how I feel as well, that it is the wrong thing to do, but it's all we have at the moment because we haven't worked out what to do with them, you know.

Simon: So, yes, I guess there are two questions that don't often get separated, which are, is abortion, moral or ethical, in certain circumstances, and in every, or only in certain? Yes, so that whole question, which is maybe the principal side of it, and then there's like, the practical side of it, should it be illegal, should it be regulated, should it be restricted in any way? And then sometimes we lump in these conversations I find online, is they get lumped together, and some people can have quite nuanced views, they could have a view that actually I think it's immoral, but I don't think the law should enforce morality, say, or they think that they could be pro-life principally, but pro-choice, practically.

And people will know, the only way you have, you know, the reason why it should be legal, is because principally, it's moral in all circumstances, no matter what, and then you'd have the other side be, it's immoral, and therefore, it should be illegal, you know and then there is...

Maureen: They are the two polar opposites?

Simon: Yes, yes, and then you could also say it like, it's immoral in all circumstances, or it's immoral in some circumstances, and, you know, so yes, I find those difficult. So, where do you think because you've talked a bit about that, you don't necessarily think it's right, or that it would be better if we lived in a world where we didn't have an abortion, but that there's a necessity. So that's sort of the practical side of things, there's a necessity for abortion. Is that where you think you sit, do you think that abortion is ever immoral?

Maureen: I could only really sit there by reading because I guess now you know, I only started Uni at 35, so I've become more of an intellectual thinker more than a, or emotionally or based on my experience and what opinions people have. So there is only two or three feminists that have this opinion, and the other one is Naomi Wolf, she's quite a well-known feminist, otherwise, I think all the feminists will say there's nothing immoral about it.

And I think that there's just it has to be just sort of fear, that if they step over the line and say that it's moral in any way, and I guess moral, yes, we do have universal ethics or morals as a society, western society even, other nonwesterns, yes, well we all think what's ethical or moral. I guess they say, you know, a woman's body whatever is contained inside it, is her body maybe. Yes, I would call myself a pro-choice, but I haven't taken much interest in...as soon as I kind of hear that you know, when it goes into biology and how it's a woman's body, it becomes an opinion, I mean, how can you really say...and the scientifically, I was having an argument, in another issue and just saying, I've learned about science, I think it's called scientific materialism, where you believe science is going to...

Simon: Solve everything.

Maureen: Proves everything, and it's like, there's a point where you've got the data and the scientific data, and then you've just got to sit down and talk about it. So I think this came from Pro-lifers, but now that you can see inside the womb, and you can see the baby, you know exactly what they look like, you get the best video quality, and that made a big difference, I think. An interesting year, what's happening in America with the new is it Supreme Court judge could...yes because the people I've talked to that are pro-choice, they assume, oh, they are just going to make abortion illegal, but they're not aware of all the different stages of law like they've got the heartbeat law, and then other ones about...because they've got all these different states would have different law, one if you requiring an ultrasound.

Simon: It'd be different in America like the different states can have a lot more jurisdiction, whereas, in Australia, it's much more of a system where one law, like the different states, do have, different positions or different laws on abortion, but there's a lot more general things that are across the board.

Maureen: I mean, yes, it was only the other day, was it at Adelaide, about protesting out the front, so it's not sort of, I mean, I wouldn't even know what to think of that.

Simon: Yes, your safety, well, they define them as, like safe access zones, as they call them. So 150 meters, if you're watching, and you don't know about that, but there's a law in Victoria, that 150 meters around an abortion clinic, basically you can't express anything about abortion, or communicate anything. So you can't be there protesting, you can't peacefully protest, you can't sit there and pray, as some want to do. And the one that I think is hardest is you can't be there even passively offering assistance to women who might not have found assistance anywhere, other than when they're coming to that place, and they think they're alone, and they are not part of any community or anything like that, and that's sort of the last opportunity for them to maybe find assistance. And now that's illegal, so 150 meters, there can't be any of that near.

Maureen: You see, that seems like something that both of us would have a very different view, because when I think of it, I'd probably think of my experience or if I was bringing a woman in, a friend who needed, you know, I'd probably go well, that's good that you know, we're not going to have protesters.

Simon: Yes, people harassing you as you're going in, yes and I understand that you know, you'd want if you're going for that procedure you'd want no one around you, you don't want anyone there, I do understand.

Maureen: Yes, and I think that's what makes them very angry, yes, I guess what I'm trying to...yes I guess I want to hear more conflict, I suppose, but yes, I'm getting to like, a pro-choicer would get very angry at that point, because they would assume probably, you know, a lot of pro-life people don't think about what's going on in the mind of the woman and, a lot of pro-choice people, which I've used to be surprised about, they would say, you don't know how hard it is to get an abortion. So they're admitting that it is hard and painful, and so it's sort of I guess, so they get angry, like, oh, yes, you don't think about how hard...

Simon: The experiences?

Maureen: Yes, in another breath, I guess other people could say, well, I had an abortion It was nothing you know, I didn't care at all. But, they could just be sort of political points, but I think, yes, it is something that upsets a lot of women, is that if they didn't need to do it, that would be a good thing, and is it necessary?

Simon: Well, the thing that made me maybe feel more heartbroken about the fact that, that it's not allowed, is when I hear of stories of women who were going for abortions, feeling exceptionally alone, but because of the people who were reaching out to them, the surrounding the abortion clinic, they then connected with them, and then found help, so that they could not have the abortion, and in the end, they are so grateful for that. So the stories of that which is much more of a common story in the States because of freedom of speech, they're allowed to have people, but they're...

Maureen: Argument, so, they never stop...

Simon: Yes, I don't think they've got those sorts of access zones issues, whereas in Australia, we haven't got, technically we haven't got freedom of speech as enshrined in our Constitution, and so they can make those excess zones. But generally, the people I know who want to be there are not people who want to protest abortion, but who want to offer another option, and not wanting to harass you know, or shame women who are going in for abortions, but wanting that sort of last, you know, wanting to offer assistance, if anyone wanted it.

But yeah, there might be people who just want to stand there and yell but I actually don't think that's as common, that's maybe how it was painted, but if you've had an experience.

Maureen: Of any of those things, other than in the media or movies where you know, and well, YouTube, yes, America, so they probably as radical as they can get, you know, big photos of aborted babies to make the woman feel

Simon: Terrible about it

Maureen: Then there was a movie called Juno. Did you watch that?

Simon: Yes.

Maureen: That was very interesting. She was portrayed as a very open, tough thinking girl. So she made her own decision to keep the baby but yes, the decision was kind of made because there was that protester who said, your baby has fingernails, and she went, oh really fingernails, but then she still went in, so yes, I can actually remember why she decided not to, well I mean, it's such complicated reasons. So yes, you were talking about individual stories that happen, and I guess I would only think about how protesters are just going to make things worse when you're already suffering.

But each story is different and maybe they could have made it so that you...yes, because then they wanted to just have people with silent prayer, and then that was shut down as well, so I guess maybe they'd have to have people regulating and making sure that people are only praying.

Simon: Yes, I would agree, I would support a law that banned aggression, or things that were there to shame or you know-and that becomes a nuanced thing of what exactly shames people because to some degree, the truth can shame us. Like if the truth is that, it is a baby, or it is a human being, it is something that's valuable. So, I was talking with a Melbourne, Sonographer, who was telling me that a lot of the women who were planning to abort, never want to see the scan, they don't want to see the scan, because the scan humanizes the child or the scan doesn't actually humanize the child, it's whether the child is human or not, and the scan reveals the humanity of the child.

And so they say, don't show it to me, and I guess that's the thing that, you know, it's that last moment of going in, is like a hope of...it is a confronting thing to change people's view that this isn't just a pregnancy as a nonhuman concept, it's a human being. And I don't, want to speak at all, for all women who are going into that experience, but I know there'd be many who would, well I would believe they've been sold this picture, that it's not a baby yet, or it's not a human being yet or it's not alive yet-and, maybe we could discuss where we both stand on that issue, but I would say yes, it is a human being, I'd say it is alive, I'd say it is valuable, it is as valuable as a child that is out of the womb, and it is deserving of your protection and, and human rights, and those sort of things. But that reality maybe is obscured by the language.

Maureen: Indeed, very interesting. Yes, because a lot of I mean, well, right now, I want to know the truth about everything. So, I thought, you know, I've had my children and I'm, like thanking God and science and everything, to be able to have my tubes tied, tubal ligation, because I don't have to take the pill, you know, I was having natural cycles, and the doctor even said, women come at me and they say, something's wrong, I'm bleeding and he said, you're just having a natural, your body's doing what's natural.

And so yes, what I'm saying is, if I got pregnant now, I would think that I would want to see this sonogram and I probably can't imagine choosing an abortion, but you know, I mean, I can't think that is a 45-year-old or, I mean, I had the tubal ligation at 38, that was enough for me and so yes, to not see the sonogram. So you have to admit, when you are saying I don't want to see it, I don't want to humanize it, you know, in the back of your mind that there is something human about, you know, this being and for me to understand why we still say abortion is okay.

I feel like I had to read especially Jordan Peterson, he had a great take on it. And I don't even think he, he doesn't say whether he's pro-choice or pro-life, but he's very practical, so he would just say, we haven't solved this, so we have to have this and he's very upfront about evil and death, and you know, he eats only meat, because I've thought, you know, it's the same as just killing and eating animals, or maybe it is I don't know. I think I've had this conversation with you before that most or all pro-lifers are religious, and I think you were like, oh, no, not at all, or maybe it is someone else.

Simon: Yes, there is definitely a perception of that, possibly because...

Maureen: It's what you believe.

Simon: ... Yes a lot of prominent pro-lifers are religious or, you know, that the reason why they stand for protecting the life in the womb is partly that their religious convictions prompt them to say that all lives are valuable, no matter what age or stage and things like that. But there's a whole bunch of people who aren't religious, who acknowledge, that truth as well. So there's a great if people could look it up, it's a great group called Secular Pro-Lifers, on Facebook and other places, and they're great, and they, are so frustrated by people who have that perception that it's just a religious question. There's no, you know, sort of ethical, humanitarian question or whereas I think...

Maureen: So, they just see human life as...so, what are the basic points of that, like about?

Simon: Yes, well, the basic point would be that, by the way, any of you could look up their Facebook page to maybe get to hear it from their mouth, but that killing a human being is wrong, you killing an innocent human being is wrong, and so it's actually very...and from a scientific perspective, there is no doubt that a child in the womb is a human being, a member of the human race. And if we say, why do we say that it's wrong for me to kill this person down?

Yes, like whether you're religious or not, you generally agree that it's not ethical to kill someone who's just in your way, you know, that they have rights and those rights are not based on how clever they are, or how attractive they are, or how, whether they're able or disabled, whether they're, you know, white or black, whether they're a man or a woman, their sexuality, the reason why they shouldn't be killed is because of their humanity, which is the thing that unites all human beings.

And that's the one reason why you don't go well we can kill this subset category of humanity, and so that just extend that and I would too, to the difference between a human being in the womb out of the womb is, arbitrary in the sense...not arbitrary to the mother, obviously, it's very significant, whether it's in the womb or out of the womb. But in terms of, to the human being itself, that difference is quite arbitrary. So, a child couldn't be...my daughter was, she didn't want to get out of the womb, she was in there for an extra two weeks, and then we had to induce after 41 or 42 weeks. Whereas children have been removed from the womb at 24 weeks and survived, and they can do surgery where they remove a fetus from the womb, do surgery on it, and then put it in the womb.

Maureen: Are you serious, wow.

Simon: Yes, and so you sort of go, well, what was the status of that child? You know, did it become a human being and then lost its humanity again, when it went back in the womb? Yes, I think the continuation of what, of the humanity of the fetus, you know, from zygote, fetus, newborn, toddler, it's just a stage of development. And some of them are in the womb, and some are out of the womb, and so if we consider that it's unethical to kill a child out of the womb, then you've got to argue what makes the child within the womb, what makes it lose its human rights, what makes a loss of humanity.

And the natural discussion then plays to the effect that has the difference between a child in and out of the womb is the effect it has on the woman herself. That's where my body my choice comes, the bodily autonomy arguments. And I think they're really good, I think they're really important, and I think pro-lifers need to actually grapple with those realities, potentially more than they do.

Maureen: Yes, because I think your points are very good, and right, so, yes, but I feel like we can get deeper, like, because it's interesting to me because there are still questions, I don't know. like, if you're arguing with a pro-choice person, and they're saying, well, what if, you know, if, or if it was me, saying what if abortion was illegal, and well, I guess, you know, the argument is that we return to backyard abortions, but...

Simon: Is that what you think?

Maureen: Yes, I guess what I'm asking is like, do you just hold that position about pro-life without having any answers about abortion? Like, because you know that's the right thing.

Simon: Yes, because that's practically so.

Maureen: And I'm, I'm thinking of my father right now because he was an advocate. And I was too young to think about these things, but I wonder if he was thinking...well, he was a Catholic, so they believe you know, sex isn't even for enjoyment, it's just for procreation. So I think and he was an old-fashioned guy, and there is nine of us.

Simon: I don't want to storm on all Catholics, I know, some Catholics who might disagree with that.

Maureen: Well I just know, yes when I'm arguing with him, that's what's in his mind. So, I know that when I'm discussing with someone, I'm trying to understand their mind. One thing I learn in philosophy is that every single person's brain is like a whole world in there. And, if I just take an interest in, but yes, then, you know, pro-life is a whole group, so you share what we should.

Simon: Yes but you're right, they are different. Sometimes it's just, you know, that pro-life can mean just focused on the issue of the child's rights and that abortion is wrong, and that abortion should be abolished. I love this threefold aspect to the issue, its talking about, I would like, to some degree abortion to be illegal. But more than that, I would like abortion to be unthinkable and I would like abortion to be unnecessary. So, unthinkable means that actually, that's a social change, that's, how do we relate to life? How do we relate to sex? How do we relate to, you know, our bodies? How do we relate to others? You know, how do we...

Maureen: If we just said, we're not going to treat sex like a commodity anymore, we're not going to have any sexualized, you know, and when I think about, you know, really conservative government doing that, I sort of go, hmm, you know, like, society is never that great, everything we try I mean, society is better than it's ever been, even though we're all...people are going crazy that, you know...

Simon: In some ways, it is definitely, I mean, otherwise, I might disagree.

Maureen: But, another view that was very interesting was, Ben Shapiro, I mean, he's someone that loves the truth. And even though I don't agree, because he's so conservative, you know, and I don't know if a lot of it's from what he believes as a Jewish man, but he said, he wants abortion to be illegal. And he doesn't mind you know, he's willing to accept that women are going to be forced to have babies because that's a better way to move our society towards valuing life-I just went oh, that's cold, like I was thinking, but then I thought, well, you have to play it out, that's what I don't know if you think that's what...if a pro-lifer thinks everything should be and for me as a pro-choice, I have to admit that it's killing a human being.

I mean, I guess I should say it's murder, and a lot of pro-choice, I know, they say it sarcastically, you know, they're full of anger, and I probably, you know, had a lot of horrible conversation or arguments, not debates, you know, and they are that angry that they just go yes, I want to kill and murder babies, you know, and, it really where, and I thought, well, at least, that's what I've had to play out, this side, you know, the pro-choice, that's their truth, and yes.

Simon: I think, the language of force is a really tough one, it's one that gets thrown at me a lot, in terms of why you want to force women to give birth to babies. And the challenge with any law, or the challenge with anything, is that there's, especially with the issue of abortion is, there is a force in both ways, right. So either we force women, you know, abortion forces, a child out of the womb, so, it uses force, it's an action, and it uses violent force against a child and preventing that uses force, right? So, the same thing, as if, you know, if I wanted to kill my five-year-old daughter, and then you wanted to stop me, I could accuse you of wanting to force me to be a father, you know, that you were forcing me, technically, whenever you prevent someone from harming another, you are forcing them to not harm them, right. So, there's an element of force on both sides. I definitely disagree that any woman should be forced to...

Maureen: I was going to ask that because you said that the pro-choice argument about women's autonomy, you think about that...

Simon: I think there is validity to the concept of autonomy, right? So, I don't think any woman should be forced to have a baby. But because of that, I disagree with rape, right. So, no woman should be forced to have a baby. But what happens is, once you're pregnant, you have a baby, right, the baby is there, the child is there. And now you have to go, well, what we do with that the natural progression of this, if we step stand back, the natural progression of this is that child is going to naturally develop and grow. And it will, get its way out, right? We don't even need to fortunately we have an intervention to make sure birth is safe in this country.

But, but you know, development and birth will happen like that's the natural progression of the child's existence. So, you don't actually have to force women to give birth or force women to continue their pregnancy, like that's going to happen naturally. The question is, should people be allowed to force this, the stopping of that natural process, and do it in such a way that a child is killed, or a human being - if we wanted to talk about the terms, you're a human being, the human being in the womb is killed in the process - And that's the part that I take objection to if there was a method of preventing the woman from, having to go through the whole pregnancy, because she doesn't want the child, and she does want to give birth. And there was a way of...I would be supportive of that any method that would at the same time, protect the child from being killed. So, I don't...

Maureen: So, have to change the way women own their children because then you would say, you know, as soon as you're pregnant, and this is a human being with rights, then and maybe we are seeing children like that, but now we don't punish children, the same way we used to, maybe its heading...

Simon: Yes I definitely think we can, and the idea of not being like...and the issue of adoption, adoption is still incredibly stigmatized in Australia. Not to be an adopted child, but the idea of giving up your child for adoption, is I think, still socially seen as a bad parent, but the idea of terminating your child is not.

Maureen: Yes, I never would have thought that I thought that you know you'd be, you know, you're heroin for going through it.

Simon: And then giving it up.

Maureen: Especially if you are young, yes, and then there is class, you know, if you're too poor, you're in a bad situation or drug-addicted.

Simon: Yes, and I'm very, very supportive, of any measures that would support women through to make that whole process easier. My wife and I looked into adoption, and we attended an information session with hundreds of other parents desiring to adopt. And we learned that that year, only 14 children up for adoption.

Maureen: Wow, that's amazing.

Simon: And they explained why and they say they are proud of the low numbers. And I said, because we, if it's a late pregnancy, and a mother approaches them saying they want to give their child up for adoption, they are been stigmatized, the idea of raising their child being a single mum, and they give them support, they say you can do it, and we can help you. And I think that's really good, that's really, really good.

Maureen: Encouraging them to keep the baby.

Simon: If it's a late-stage, but what they actually told us was that if it's not in the later stage of the pregnancy, then I'll actually advise them to terminate the child, to actually have an abortion. And they told me...

Maureen: So, who is this group?

Simon: This is the adoption Victoria, this is at this information session for adoption. They told this to this room of longing parents, who would just like, and you could just hear a pin drop. And there are always questions afterward, people going well, how many children are aborted instead of who could have been adopted and they shut down the conversation quickly, I think they realized they sort of stepped in it. But, you know, the fact that there are thousands upon thousands of abortions in Victoria, but only like 10 to 15 adoptions every year.

To me just shows an actual real social problem, that adoption is just seen, not encouraged as an option, and that abortion is so normalized, and so, seen as just a termination of pregnancy, rather than the termination of a human being. So part of my passion is not just gone, oh, yes, abortion should be illegal, because I actually think if that's all we did, that would be disastrous. I don't think that would be good for society if all we did was make abortion illegal, and stopped and did nothing, there would be...

Maureen: Is there a lot of people that think like that, it's because now it's really showing me that these two sides is very damaging. And that anyway through it is to start something new, where you step away from pro-life, pro-choice, and you start to do all these things...talk about adoption...

Simon: I think the pro-life movement gets painted as a, all we care about is birth. But that's for me within that community, that's not what I hear. I hear that there is incredible support for the crisis pregnancy centers, and helping women to not be in a circumstance where they feel like they have to have an abortion if they don't want one, incredible support for adoption there. You know, Christians are running adoption centers, and, you know, if you look at all the adoption centers or the official ones, it's all Anglicare, and it's all Christian organizations that are running these organizations, you know they care about doing that.

I'm not saying that non-Christians don't care about that, but or non-pro lifers don't necessarily, but I just don't hear pro choices, and you know, to use that label, I don't hear them going...I hear them saying women in those circumstances need abortions, right? If they, if they don't feel like they could raise the child, whereas my angle on that is, well, then why don't we do something about the fact that they don't feel like they could raise the child? Why don't we support them so that they either do feel like they could raise the child, or they do feel like their child could be raised, without them feeling needing that responsibility? That abortion seems like that's the only way, only option for women. Do you think it's painted that way, or?

Maureen: Well, the question I was thinking of was, these problems, like were these messages don't get through like, pro choices, say pro-lifers don't care about, they only care about your birth yes, so it seems like you can't get any of these ideas out because you are just pushed into one box, and then maybe a lot of people are just scared to talk, you know, if they, because there's a lot of people on the pro-choice side, but they would definitely agree with all the things that I agree with you, but they just, I think if I had a career in, you know, some job where if you know if I worked in some trendy cafe and I had any opinion against what they said, I'd be fired and mean that that kind of thing is big now, but just fear in general of being rejected.

Simon: Yes, so, it makes these sorts of conversations difficult to have when everyone's expected to toe the line.

Maureen: Yes, because I mean, I'll probably go away from this and then, you know, it just seem to drift back to when I hear pro choice, you know, even the hardliner speak, something in me just agrees, but I mean, maybe not, because I think about my own situation, I was young, you know, the first time I was under 18, and then the second time, I did feel bad about it, and then I got pregnant very soon after, you know, that's my first daughter, and I think that experience and having no counseling and having a little bit of, you know - I wouldn't say, manipulation from my partner - but yes, I mean, if you just heard thousands of stories from girls and women why they had abortions, a lot of them are grouped together, and, you know, mine was just, I was in a new relationship and, it's just so common, I guess, you know, you're in a relationship...and the kind of person I am or woman, you know, I just wasn't very, I didn't feel like I knew anything about myself and my boundaries, and my, you know, if we educated children, boys and girls to be strong in themselves and respect the bodies, and you know - people would go, you know, you put religion into it, you wouldn't even need any religious belief, to agree. I think in France, and some other European countries, they just look at sex education, from almost you know, kindergarten, they're not even talking about sex, they're talking about how they respect themselves. And if you're found pregnant, and you just don't have any of these life skills, this is what I feel was just me.

And then, the stigma, you know, my father was alive both times, and that was a big part of it because, you know, girls are very close to their dads, and, you know, a big part of it is just, you cannot tell your parents, and that there's just no way they're going to know. So you will do anything...so, I guess that's...we could look at all the different groups, of women that get pregnant, and that's what sort of makes sense to me, why they do.

Simon: You don't need to answer this, but I'm just curious, in your circumstance, you talked about there's sort of stigma and the idea of how it would affect your life and your life circumstances at the time. If there wasn't that social stigma, to the idea of either carrying the child to term, and you're adopting the child or raising the child, in whatever circumstances you had, and if there was actual support, like, you know, if the next door and you saw that there was a crisis pregnancy center, and you saw how they, you are sort of aware of that at the time. Do you think if those sorts of support networks, we're there, that were actually there walking with you through that, do you think that would have changed your decision?

Maureen: When I think about, it doesn't have to be a completely different culture, like, I'm thinking about, you know, it was near the end of high school, so, you know, and I'm extremely anxious, or, I did have anxiety, I was very self-conscious, very shy. So, it's just like, nothing beats how my peers and my parents and family view me and I guess, now I can look back and go, you know, that is, I guess, self-centeredness, or selfishness or whatever, and as a human.

And I study sociology, so, you know, looking at society, it's a completely meaty crazy place, and I don't, I don't really believe in good and evil, I could see how like, we suppress our morals because, you know, stigma and fear of rejection is just massive and...

Simon: It's very powerful.

Maureen: Yes, so, if our culture was different, but then I think it just wouldn't have happened because if our culture was different, I don't know you know like the first time I was not far off being a virgin, I remember thinking, I want to know what it is and how it feels. And but then beyond that, I didn't want to do it and I was quite under the thumb of the boy I was with. And that's just how it was, I had not been taught - I mean, I don't know how you're can grab every single child and teach them and have everyone just so healthy in their mind that they know their boundaries - I think kids today seem to know, like, my kids, I hope that if anyone, you know, put the finger anywhere near them physically, they seem to...because now you know, you can't smack children you can't, you know, they're a bit out of control, my kids are a bit naughty, but that's probably expected.

Simon: It's really good that the principle of consent is being taught to kids.

Maureen: But then sex is still, from what I hear sex with teenagers could be worse.

Simon: Yes well, that's probably maybe another conversation, but probably getting a generation being raised on pornography, just being the sex Ed teacher for a lot of a whole generation.

Maureen: Do you know the statistics of abortion, because I just assumed that it's young women, but I'm sure it's all ages and all backgrounds.

Simon: Yes, it is, there's a lot of young women who and the socio-economic factors are there, so the more educated women, I think, the better off they are, the less likely they are because they've got more access to education, sex education, and contraception, and potentially, the prospect of actually keeping the child they don't feel the circumstances, make it needed as much. But I do think there is a sense, a cultural attitude towards sex in general, that sex is recreational, and it shouldn't have any consequences, that it's not a powerful force that can create a life, and engage...

Maureen: [inaudible 01:06:31]

Simon: Yes, I've heard some people say, you know, if you're going to play the game, don't be surprised if you win, that life is a part of, it's not the only purpose of sex at all, but it's definitely biologically what sex is designed to do. I think, culturally, we don't...until you're in the stage, where you're wanting to have kids and you're finding it difficult, then yes, before that, sex is sort of recreation or seen that way.

And, and to keep that principle, maybe, or that value of how we treat sex, that abortion is some to some degree necessary or seen as necessary, because otherwise, sex has consequences, and those consequences are quite heavy and quite big and life-changing.

Maureen: What do you think of that, because it's making me think of, I think of the argument about, you know, the patriarchy, you know, I could almost say- I mean, I'm not gonna, you know, settle on this- but it does feel to me that, don't know, women go along with the needs of men in a way. I mean, I know, it's not true all the time, it's becoming less true, I think the more that abortion is just accepted that, you know, women, and I don't know, the new feminism, not been, you know, there's lots of different feminism, but, you know, the popular thing now is to embrace sex and be into it.

And I just sort of think, I don't know that many women and girls were into it as much as boys were, and maybe even the boys weren't, it might have been just a bravado thing, but it turned out that you know, it seemed like the boys were always chasing the girls. So that needs to end, you know if we are to change.

Simon: Defiantly, one of the things that abortion does, teaches men that there are no consequences. So, the idea that they can have these flippant sexual relationships, and that there has been no result to that, because abortion sort of takes care of that evidence or that consequence of that promiscuity, then, I think it breeds both for men and women that flippancy. It's often, I've heard it argued that for women to be equal, abortions necessary, because men can have sex and there'd be no consequences to them.

Maureen: Yes.

Simon: But I actually think that's a bad thing. I think that that's a bad thing that men can think they can have sex and have no consequences. But that's a cultural change that needs to happen, where men relate to women much better, and they like to sex with more, much more responsibility. And that if a child is produced, that's their child, and they, you know, they need to step up, and to some degree, men should be protecting the women in their life, not seen as a threat or an aggressor, but as someone who could use whatever strength they have to protect them.

And yes- not to, say women are weakened, and can't protect themselves- but the aggression that men have, should be used as a force for good to protect rather than a force to harm and the idea that, you know, that this principle that men can just go in and have sex and then leave, and get away with it, as if that's something to be desired, like, that's a principle that women should aspire to, or that that's a sort of value, that we need abortion so that women can be like that, I think that we need to flip that on its head and say, actually, that's wrong, and men need to change.

You know, so that if a woman gets pregnant, that they're not left to fend for themselves, it's not going to harm them socioeconomically, that it's not going to leave them high and dry. And then where, the man doesn't do that, that's where I think society needs to step in. So I'm very much of the opinion, that, we should as a society, both through legislation, and through community groups, and things like that needs to take responsibility for the children that are, you know, our fellow human beings. So, no woman needs to go through pregnancy alone.

That no woman needs to face nine months of pregnancy, without support, without help, without financial help, you know, social help, emotional help, psychological help, whatever, you know, support that she needs that we need to be more like, you know, raised by the tribe sort of essence, you know, that when a child comes into existence in our community, that we care for that child. And, so that's why for me, going back to those three things, that the idea of abortion being illegal, but abortion being unthinkable is the change of attitude, but then abortion being unnecessary, where there's never a situation where a woman who wants to keep the child feels like her only option is abortion or a woman who might keep the child but feels like she can't.

And the vast majority of women who have abortions don't have it because the child is going to die, if they don't have the abortion, or they're going to die if they don't have the abortion, those cases are so ridiculously rare that the majority of you know so many abortions happen because it's not the right time or the effect it will have socio- they call it psychosocial reasons- you know, the effect upon the woman. And so I think as a society, we need to step up so that those reasons are not reasons to have an abortion for the women.

Maureen: So, that I think this brings up a point of divide because, and not even really about abortion, but about society and I feel like...I'm studying sociology, and I've been interested in sociology because I want to understand it, and I've really felt the need to come up with answers and control it, and what do we need to...and now I'm thinking, I don't think that sociologists should do anything, like our job should be just to observe because society does what it does.

But then when you said the legislation, that's such a powerful thing that changes, but then it only changes in one direction it can cause...so I guess, yes, the difference, what it feels like, between us is that I think of society as it's just happening, does its thing and you can only and, you know, people are never going to be, not never, but yes, to say, we should do this, I don't even know-how

these things can happen because there are so many sectors, you know, there's, like, to me, I look at lower-class people, I mean, it's a terrible term, but I think the class is, bigger than even, like, mean, I don't want to go into the, into race stuff that causes people to fight me, but I feel like we should only look at class for now.

And because, you know, there seems to be a whole forgotten, you know, millions of people that can't really survive financially, and they just act...when you have nothing, you just sort of live in a more sort of natural way you don't have any education you've had, your parents are trying to work just to keep you so you're left, this is kind of how I, it's not how I grew up, it was my circumstance because I was seventh out of nine children, and I just run a model with all the other kids in Dandenong that were left, you know, like, their parents were at work, or their parents were so strict that the kids had to run away because Dandenong was a great place, it was full of ethnicities and cultures.

And in the 90s, you were just somehow you're in these groups running the streets and doing what you want, and now you look back and you just sort of going well, society was just a certain way, you know, we had the recession, and there was a shift from very conservative values, I think 50s to the 60s, and then the 70s and 80s, were kind of I guess, economic. You know, people were into working and you know success, and in the 90s, it was sort of this, everyone was nihilistic again, and yes not that it seems to happen in a natural way. So yes, I guess what I'm saying is, you can only take like two to make the best you can, I would like to think that you can make society better, which I think, yes, because I do agree with you.

Simon: One thing I need to clarify, I don't think we should make that three-prong thing of illegal, unthinkable, and unnecessary. I don't think that if we have illegal, that will make it unthinkable, and that will make it unnecessary. I think that if we actually try to change our culture often interpersonally and, what sort of culture do we develop in our own communities, and how does that change lives around us and have it flow on from there rather than a top-down effect like we make the law because that will make people care about life. I don't think that is the case, I just think that it justified it.

But I hope for that social change, and maybe all I can do is make sure that I have that change in my own heart, and that I raise my children to respect life and to take responsibility and to and to treat sex with respect and to treat their own bodies with respect. And to see life from the very point of it's created or from the point of fertilization that that's to treat a human being as valuable all the way through and I can teach that to my child, and I can be part of creating a culture where that happens. But you can't enforce that you can't enforce values or morality. The question then comes up...

Maureen: But that's the way it's supposed to be, it's like a bit of a fantasy, I like the more realistic but I actually feel like I'm a bit more insane or a bit...

Simon: Well, yes, we got to be idealist, as philosophers, we have to, yes, we're always a bit idealistic. But the challenge is...

Maureen: I could say you can't change the society, but then I, go, why can't you change the society, you know, could easily change it like, we are supposed to be running around, I think, why don't they just go and buy, you know, 100 acres and start a socialist society, like you can make any reality you want, you just have to put in the work. And they just, you know they took over a town in Seattle, and try and have this utopia, and you can't just steal a town and make...

Simon: Yes, it's not a utopia for the people you steal it, from. I think racism is a great example, right. Where racism is a social evil, per se, and it takes us social change, but there is also legislation that needs to come alongside and anti-racist philosophy. So for example, the abolishment of slavery, right, slavery should be abolished, and it was abolished, even though there were still people who saw slaves or saw African Americans, as second-class citizens.

And legislation had to change to go, no, they are citizens. And then eventually they got the right to vote. And women got the right to vote, and those legislative changes gave rights to people due to realities, but it didn't change - yes and you can see it today - there is still people who are sexist, still people who are racist, and those legislative changes that you know, that said that black and white people can now eat in the same restaurants that didn't change people's values.

But irrelevant to that, those black people deserve the right to eat in those restaurants, and I would argue, in terms of legislation talking on that, just that topic, is that I can't wait until society starts to see children as human beings. Okay, once everyone agrees that the child in the womb, is a member of the human race, and we should love and care for them, and once all that setup, that's when we'll talk about whether we change the law to provide some protection for those children. I think those are some protections that would.

Maureen: Well, yes, I was just going to say, well, it's a different thing, isn't it? Like how we look at sex and then how we look at children. So, because I thought maybe culture will change, because here you're saying, like legislation about women to vote, I can't really speak that much about racism, but I just read the *Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, you're going to read the whole book, just people cherry-pick it, but what it showed me was that...and she does make parallels to race, but she says that women acted the way they were treated.

So she is saying, well, you know, there were only small groups of women that tried to get the vote, and most of the women didn't want it because they liked being, not you know, liked, they were comfortable in their role as housewives and mothers. And they probably weren't educated enough, and they weren't in public life, and they were treated as infants, and they acted like infants like this book is just very realistic about how things were and then she would say, black people were treated a certain way and they would act that way. It doesn't mean that they were you know, and people get the wrong idea of what she's saying, but I'll say as a woman, I mean, people would get too emotional.

Like, if you're suggesting that black people are acting less than human, it's because they've been treated that way. In her studies of psychology and biology and everything, she studied so much, I mean, you know, as women, I feel like it's definitely true. I was treated like sex object, and I acted that way. So I can say it's all men's fault and of the patriarchy, but women perpetuated by, you know, that's how we got attention if we were, you know, just happen to be...if we looked the way you know, and that's just by nature, how you're born you, and by my character as well, you know, I was a quiet, very agreeable person. So I got lots of attention from lots of people, and then you use that, so yeah, I think that's why in my 30s, I was only just started learning intellectually, at university because I just acted the way I was treated.

Simon: Yes, the culture...

Maureen: So, yes those three, legislation...

Simon: Yes, essentially legislation, it can change at least, it says these principles, and I think, you know- we are going into a whole another conversation- but part of the point of changing the marriage debate, and having same-sex marriage was, as a way of saying that these relationships are just as legitimate as, heterosexual relationships and that the law is a way, changing the law on this matter is a way of helping society agree with that or come to that, you know, or acknowledge that.

And, I think that the law, as it stands now, in terms of abortion, says that a child is not a human being until it gives its first breath. Like there are no protections whatsoever for children in the womb, there are none whatsoever, there's no anesthetic given for late-term abortions. There's no...if a pregnant woman is beaten up and her child dies, it's not a death, as recorded by...

Maureen: Absolutely, oh yes.

Simon: ...Yes, there's all these no acknowledgment of the child...

Maureen: I have heard that people say if a woman is shot and she's pregnant, that the person gets charged with murdering the baby, alone.

Simon: Not in Australia. So in America, there are states where- and I think it's hypocritical- that there are some states where if you shoot the child in the womb...

Maureen: Because that's a very life argument isn't to say, yes.

Simon: If you shoot the child and boom, you get down for the murder of the child, but if the mother chooses to have the child terminated, then it's not. But in Australia, if you shoot the child in the womb, it's not murder, it's harm to the mother alone. So something that I think needs to change is that there needs to be some, and I'm not sure, like, I'm willing to have a bigger conversation with what should the legislation actually be. But as it stands, at the moment, there are no protections, there's no acknowledgment of the humanity of the child, at any stage right up to the point of birth. And that allows for so much and generally, like, I don't know, whether, how you feel about that. Whether you think there should be some legislation that acknowledges the humanity of the child or provide some protections for the child at some stage.

Maureen: But when I went to listen to the speaker, the Pro-choicers shut that down- well that hardly ever happens- and then, you know, that was, I think it was five years ago, and now it's sort of resurfaced. And then you had all those myths about... is that your brother? Yes, that was a good conversation about whether the statistics are true or not, but I suppose like, what was the number of like, 500? And even if it's 10.

Simon: Three to four hundred a year, in Victoria.

Maureen: Even if it is a low number, yes, and then they want to shut it down as they are all abnormalities. So you were showing that no, it's not abnormalities. And, I really wanted to go and see the speaker and I wanted to see her, and you know, she was just a human being, her mother went to abort her, and one of the nurses, I think, went against what she was meant to do. And she provided care to the baby that they meant to just leave to die. So it's quite to me, it's a bizarre thing, and I feel very confident to move into this place and say, no, that's definitely wrong and should not happen. And I'm not going to and I don't need to be put in a box because it's happening in all these other issues that, you don't just put me into the, you're a pro-lifer and want to ban everything, no, that's just to make you get away with the idea that, a doctor can even reach in and kill the baby with their hands, you know and then pull out the babies. I think that's what the law in Australia is.

Simon: Like, with late-term abortions. It's, through dissecting the baby inside and removing it piece by piece. And our law doesn't even prevent partial-birth abortion, which is where the babies basically...

Maureen: [inaudible 01:30:36]

Simon: Yes, like, and a lot of people go, well, how often do these things happen? And, but for me, it's the issue of what does it say that the law provides no protections for children at all in the womb? What does it say about children? And does that change how...so I want to go from both sides, so, I want to go from, let's change the culture as we can, through conversation, through how we raise our kids, through our communities, but also, you can do all that, but when the legislation provides no protection whatsoever for children in the womb, then that says something powerful, especially if people aren't part of communities. If people are just walking through life alone, then that says something quite powerful to women and think about.

Maureen: I think I used to be very suspicious that five years ago, people were, the pro-life group were fighting to change that law that just came in about, you know, what was it called up until birth?

Simon: Yes.

Maureen: Well, my suspicion and I didn't think much, very freely about it, I just thought, oh, they just want to get this legislation through and then they can, then it's the beginning of the end of abortion rights. That's all I remember thinking, so, unlike now like...

Simon: Yes, the slippery slope argument.

Maureen: Yes, the slippery slope. And I think, I don't know if you're the first one. I mean, because there are people that are on the pro-life side, I don't know, but at that time, yes, I just immediately...it was interesting, I thought, yes, they shouldn't have this law, but they need it. I remember thinking this reasoning, you have to have full abortion rights, and if you start chipping away, then they're going to make the move.

So you know, it's these enemies, it's us against them mentality and they're probably not thinking about that idea that you're saying, you know, how we think about society, I guess, because, you know, it's a cold place, and when you, you know, you're sitting in because a lot of these people are sitting in the same classes that I have the gender class, and it's very negative. And you're talking about, you know, all the negative stuff about what men do to women and how it's just patriarchy. You can't really sit in classes and go, you know, is it? You know, to what degree? Students used to go and sit in the pub or the cafes and argue, and I just don't, I'm just like too scared or some of them are not just social anymore.

Simon: Yes, I remember back in high school and back in my uni days, that sort of vigorous discussion and stuff was really welcome, but it seems like it's not as much anymore. We're very tribal.

Maureen: Yes in the 90s, it was, I had few uni friends, but I just used to go to the parties and drink. But I was only not interested because I wasn't ready for any kind of intellect. So yes, I feel like I'd like to start that kind of thing again. And that's the kind of change maybe that needs to start, or I think it's happening naturally anyway, I sort of think social media you know...

Simon: I think people are getting sick of it.

Maureen: You know, America would probably have Trump again, because, you know, the left as a whole- simple label of the left- may basically kind of maybe don't believe in talking to the right and then the right is all, sort of open and discuss, and there's quite a mixed bag there that they're not afraid to talk, and I think that they will vote, Trump in again maybe

Simon: There will be people watching this after the election, so you guys know more than we do, as to how it all went down.

Maureen Reality is proof.

Simon: How about we talk in terms of pro-life and pro-choice, those sort of both the things that we care about, at least, throw the labels out the window, what things would you like to...I've talked about sort of this change of the things I'd like to see legislation wise, is really, where the humanity of the child is acknowledged, and protected, and there are certain predictions, and the reality of the child and the reality of the mother, we have to juggle as we do with all rights, we juggle against competing rights.

So for example, when there's a mother who doesn't want her child anymore when like a pregnant mother, not a pregnant mother, with a newborn say, who then decides she doesn't want the child anymore, now they really relate to this competing rights, the health and well being of the mother that doesn't want this child anymore, and then the health and well being of the child, and we have this, our society juggles those rights. And I like to see, I think that has to happen on the issue of abortion, that we have to juggle does rights, rather than just go no, either is all just the child's right and the woman is insignificant, which I defiantly don't believe - and I don't think most pro-lifers believe - or we go the other extreme is, no it is only the woman's rights and the child is nothing until it is born, I like to see it both legally and socially get to a place where does the humanity of the mother and child are protected. What about for yourself, do you have any sort of where you would like these issues to get to eventually from your perspective?

Maureen: Well, I guess I kind of agree with the argument that if you know, pregnancies, you usually know, you're pregnant at around eight weeks. And I guess I mean, like, it was probably a bit more up in the air, but you could probably tell me what, at eight weeks that sounds like you know, there's not much going on and doesn't seem like you know that at that stage, you kind of go whoops, yeah, I've skipped my period, you know, maybe you're not really feeling anything and yes, I don't know. I mean, it seems like that's an okay thing to do to go and get an abortion but yes, I mean, with that is, in Australia, you get knocked out. And in America, you don't you're actually awake, having an abortion. I think that's just how it happens. So, that's why you know, you don't even feel that you're pregnant.

Simon: Yes, okay.

Maureen: Yes, so you'd have to leave that in place, but, if it goes above the point where they're... well, firstly, if they can survive outside the womb, I would definitely want to protect, you know, the child's life then because they are capable of living outside the womb. But then it brings, I guess have to, you know, think about all the consequences. Like, if a woman says you know, I'm not going to have an abortion, but I'm going to wait until 24 weeks and then you can take it in that seems unreasonable because then the baby has a low chance of surviving. So if you put rights, give rights to the baby, then, I don't know if that's going to work, but I guess that's the first stage. And, yes, I do believe in, you know, societal change where if you didn't have that law, so I mean, Australia must have had a law before the one that came out where you could only have an abortion, was it until 16 weeks I think?

Simon: Yes, I'm not sure.

Maureen: That sort of went up in stages. So we were obviously only willing to allow abortion at a certain stage, and then we got more aggressive or left or whatever, and just went up and up and up. So, it's hard to say, I guess, but it's not that I don't know, because I guess I still think it's necessary. And it's hard to think about it because I'll never - and I know that I am as a self-centered human - I think of it like oh, well, I'll never need one because I'm in this great, natural place where I had to take the pill for years, and now I don't and I'm older.

And the fact that I'm not fertile anymore is a strange feeling, but I've had that for eight years now, so...46? I don't know, yes that seems like to me, yes you are asking, what would I think? Well, I would, you know, I agree with what you're saying, but, you know, I have that view that society is a certain way, and it's not fair, you know, girls get pregnant for all these different reasons and it's just not fair to force them. And the original argument was, is that you're not going to force them, they're going to find a way. So we're not like we were in the 50s or whatever when they did have real backyard abortions, but you know, if it ever did become illegal in America, it seems like it's a high possibility, or I think that's what the fear is. I'm not sure if they're going to overturn...

Simon: Yes the biggest debate is whether they are going to

Maureen: Who knows it could be the new judge coming in,

Simon: That's right, I remember the last March for the Babies, there was rosewood and a few others standing on the side yelling.

Maureen: Back to the back yard?

Simon: That's right yes, yes. We're not going back, we're not going back, we're not going back. And I felt like...

Maureen: Going back to the backyard no way.

Simon: Yes, yes, and back to the back yard no way....

Maureen: They were holding a picture of a coat hanger and chanting like oh.

Simon: But to some degree, I want to like do it with them, and chanted it as well, because that's so the opposite of what I want to see happen, like, and that's why I don't feel like any legislation can just be passed without accompanying support. And, I would not, you know, obviously, as much as I, if you're pro-life, you have to be concerned about those things. And if you're not concerned about those things, you're not pro-life. If you're not concerned about the well-being of women who are facing crisis pregnancies, then you're not pro-life. And, you know, so,

Maureen: Are you just aware of who you are talking to them, they don't have a kind of a full picture. So I just, you know, a lot of people, they just don't go that far in their thinking, and yes it's hard to think about what other people are thinking, and that's all I seem to do.

Simon: Well, that's a great virtue.

Maureen: It's very negative, and now I'm using it as a positive I think, but yes it is one of those things driving me insane.

Simon: Yes, but we can stress too much about what other people think. Well, maybe that's a good place to...

Maureen: It's kind of hard to understand,

Simon: That might be a good note to end this sort of formal part of the discussion with that principle that...

Maureen: Yes, I think we go back to, I did open the front door, but the family think they, can't come in.

Simon: Oh they're being very kind, well, we'll let you go to them, and yes, that last night of that, we can just stand there and yell at each other, but actually, when we have the sort of dialogues, we find a lot of places of common ground and places where, yeah, I've really appreciated you sharing your story and your experience, and your thinking on these sort of things, it's very helpful for me to not, you know, be in my own echo chamber in my own bubble, so, thank you. Thank you, Maureen.

Maureen: Thank you, yes, I mean the same with you. I'm always shifting in my thinking, so, I mean, I have shifted, but it's not unusual. And, yes, I never want to be- well, it's more exciting to go, oh, I'm not going to change my stance on this- or, you know, like, being asked something that's very difficult and feels unreasonable- you know, it feels strange to answer, and I kind of know, it feels wrong to say, you know, like, I believe in abortion, but, you know, we've discussed yes things that need to change. So we kind of agree on a lot of things and found where we've, yes- kind of skewer off into different places a little bit- but yes, more to talk about, I think.

Simon: Yes, definitely, and I'm sure these people who are watching, who are furious, that one of us didn't bring up that killer point that would have destroyed the other side or stuff. But we care much more about hearing each other out I think that's what I appreciate about you, Maureen. So, those conversations, if people want to have conversations that bring up those points, we encourage you to do it, yourself. Catch up with someone who you disagree with, yes now we're all meeting on zoom anyway, and things like that, so take a breath, grab a tea even.

Maureen: Push your ego to the side a little bit, although not just egos, the need to have answers the need to control, you know, like, we learned the Serenity Prayer, it's also good for mental health is like, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. And that also goes for people that have severe anxiety. The psychologist uses dialectical therapy, which is, know the things you can change and know the things you can't change and learn what the difference is. So you can't change people, you can change your attitude, and you can relax and spend a bit of time understanding the other person's point of view and, going- well, I wasn't going to change them anyway- but I didn't get angry and scream and I've learned something, yes.

Simon: It's great. Great stuff Maureen, thank you. Well, also...

Maureen: Thanks, Simon.

Simon: ...off the air, we'll catch up again soon Marine, hopefully, and thanks, everyone [inaudible 01:48:00].

Maureen: Yes, I'm looking [inaudible 01:48:03] and yes, I'll get involved in your March for the Babies online. Is it a series of events or it's all happening on one day?

Simon: Is one event happening on the 10th? If you're watching this after October 10th, 2020, then we have it every year. But it's on October, the 10th of 2020. The website is MarchfortheBabies.org. If you want to find out more, and look up Common Ground on Facebook, you can find...

Maureen: I will start a group, or I'll find the group that I had and I didn't know, yet.

Simon: Yes, that's all good.

Maureen: Common Ground groups.

Simon: But yes, we need more of them, we need more of these conversations, I think. Okay bye-bye.

Maureen: Yes, okay thank you, Simon.

Simon: Cheers.