

Alyssa's second interview

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3 **Interviewer:** Alyssa Paige, just for a moment imagine that you have in front of
4 you on the table a copy of your autobiography.

5 **Alyssa:** Okay.

6 **Interviewer:** What title have you given it?

7 **Alyssa:** (long pause) *Daring to Dream and Achieve.*

8 **Interviewer:** That's excellent! Good. Would you like to reflect for a moment
9 on why you have given it this title?

10 **Alyssa:** Because (pause) a – a lot of my life, say for the last eight odd
11 years probably – um – I've known what I wanted – I've wanted to
12 do: be a journalist. So I think I've dared to dream, 'This will be
13 me in ten odd years.' Um – I haven't totally achieved my best,
14 but I hope to achieve eventually what I want – what I want to do
15 in the future, so I think it's just the whole thing of daring to
16 dream, y' know, knowing – knowing what you want, tryin' to work
17 to get what you want, achieving it, I think. Yeah.

18 **Interviewer:** Excellent! So, you open it up and you flip through it. And it tells
19 the story of your life. Obviously, there are chapters. So could
20 you imagine what some of those chapters could be?

21 **Alyssa:** (pause) Ah, the first few chapters would be my childhood
22 obviously, an' what I've done in my childhood an' stuff like that.
23 And' then, probably (pause) a whole chapter on moving from
24 Ireland to Australia, an' how I felt an' how my life was changed
25 an' stuff like that. An' then my high school years an' when I went
26 through them. An' then just whatever I've done afterwards.

27 **Interviewer:** Good. Okay. That chapter about moving from Ireland to
28 Australia: looking at the start of the chapter, what's the title of
29 the chapter?

30 **Alyssa:** (Sigh) (long pause) Um – (pause) Creating a new life (pause) for
31 everyone?

32 **Interviewer:** Why did you choose that title?

33 **Alyssa:** Because it was – it was changing our lives dramatically because
34 of – like, y' know, moving across the world to something you
35 don't know, so – um – (pause) just (pause) the whole thing of
36 changing an' creating a new life for ourselves in this new country
37 that, y' know, me an' my brother an' sister knew, like we didn't
38 know. We hadn't seen, y' know. We'd only seen pictures, we'd
39 only seen pictures of – of a lot of our relatives, so we didn't quite
40 know what to expect. It did change our lives because I think
41 we're better for it and we've done a lot – we done a lot more and
42 we've grown as people because of it. Mmm.

43 **Interviewer:** What was the biggest difference?

44 **Alyssa:** One day, right? – y’ have y’ family, y’ friends, what, y’ know, an’
 45 then the next day you don’t. You have new family that you have
 46 to try and – like y’ meet – you meet an’ y’ get – y’ have t’ get t’
 47 know and y’ have to (pause) – um – y’ know, share your life with
 48 them, they share their life with you. They (pause) y’ know, you
 49 haven’t grown up with these people all your life, so, y’ know, you
 50 don’t know funny stories about them, or whatever. You just –
 51 yeah, you have to learn to meet new people and be able to
 52 accept new people an’ vice versa for them.

53 **Interviewer:** Very good. You’re going to make a good journalist.

54 **Alyssa:** Thank you.

55 **Interviewer:** Where do God and religion fit into this story of yours? Is there a
 56 chapter in this story where God seems to figure most?

57 **Alyssa:** Um – (long pause) God’s probably fits into this whole story
 58 because (pause) some things are just meant to happen. You
 59 know, you (long pause) y’ know, incidents – um – happy times,
 60 bad times, trouble times, whatever, they’re meant to happen, I
 61 think, because like we do create your own life. But there’s parts
 62 of it, I think, that have been made for you, so perhaps moving
 63 out from Ireland to here was a sign from him to say, y’ know, this
 64 is where you’re meant to be, this’ll help you. This, y’ know, this’ll
 65 change you, you know. You’ll explore, you’ll achieve, you’ll do –
 66 what – what you wanna do and be a – a better life for some of
 67 your family members – um – and yeah, just – (pause) keep
 68 saying: dare to change, dare to move on, don’t just stay in this –
 69 y’ know, this way just – stay where you been for the last ten odd
 70 years, you know. Move on, see something different, I think.

71 **Interviewer:** So, your image of God is of someone who encourages you to
 72 explore. Yes?

73 **Alyssa:** Yeah, I think so. Yeah, just him being there an’ helping us do
 74 things in our lives. Just – yep.

75 **Interviewer:** Good. Okay. In one of the chapters, you’ve written about the
 76 experience that confirmed for you that God exists.

77 **Alyssa:** Okay.

78 **Interviewer:** Can you think of anything in your life that – that sort of does
 79 that?

80 **Alyssa:** (long pause) I think I’ve always known he exists. I’ve never
 81 really questioned whether he exists or not. Um – yeah, just, I
 82 think, when you grow up with something, you don’t – I think you
 83 – you need to have s– you need to believe some things just are
 84 not – some things you are meant to believe, y’ know, it doesn’t
 85 have to be factual evidence to prove that there is a God up
 86 there. If you believe in him, that should be enough for you and’
 87 for people an’ – you know, as long as you can – you know in
 88 your heart that you believe, I think that’s good. So I’ve never
 89 really had an experience where I know – I say yes, God exists,

- 90 you know, he – he’s up there watching over us. It’s just
91 something I know.
- 92 **Interviewer:** Some people report having an awareness of God’s presence in
93 their lives. Have you ever had that sort of experience?
- 94 **Alyssa:** (long pause) Um – I don’t – I don’t – I don’t think so.
- 95 **Interviewer:** Okay. That’s alright.
- 96 **Alyssa:** (long pause) No. I can’t – I can’t say I’ve ever had this
97 overwhelming feeling that God is there. I just know he’s there.
- 98 **Interviewer:** Yes. That’s okay. Imagine that you’re thumbing through your
99 book and you stop at a page in which you describe something
100 that happened in an RE class that you found challenging. It
101 could have been something the teacher said, or something that
102 someone did, or something you watched, or heard; it could be
103 anything.
- 104 **Alyssa:** Um – (long pause) Good questions. (long pause) I can’t think of
105 anything.
- 106 **Interviewer:** So in this chapter what would you be saying about RE?
- 107 **Alyssa:** I think – I think RE has been a positive experience in my life
108 because it opened me up to other people’s views of God and
109 what they believe an’ what they see God as. An’ it might not
110 necessarily be my view, or someone else’s view of God. It’s
111 their own.
- 112 **Interviewer:** Can you remember any occasion when someone expressed
113 something different from what you believed?
- 114 **Alyssa:** (long pause) I can’t really remember anything.
- 115 **Interviewer:** But what you remember is that people did express things?
- 116 **Alyssa:** Yeah, but they – they – they (pause) Yeah, they just – they
117 might have different views to certain things that I necessarily
118 didn’t believe but what they saw other people believed. Yeah. It
119 wasn’t anything specific. It was just something that was there.
- 120 **Interviewer:** What about belief and non-belief?
- 121 **Alyssa:** Um – I think that people are entitled to their own views and what
122 they believe. If they don’t believe what I believe, I’m not gonna
123 hold it against them. I’m not gonna say, “Oh, y’ know, that
124 person’s a non-believer, y’ know. Don’t go near him!” You
125 know. But I think everyone’s just entitled to their belief an’ their
126 view. You shouldn’t hold it – you shouldn’t hold stuff against
127 people because they have different beliefs or values, or
128 whatever. Um – you should just accept them for who they are
129 an’ what they believe. And if they don’t believe in God, well,
130 that’s them. It’s what they believe they – you can’t stop people
131 from believing a certain thing. Or try to push your – your view on
132 them, or something. Yeah.
- 133 **Interviewer:** Where do teachers fit into all this?

134 **Alyssa:** Um – RE teachers have – um – they’ve opened my mind up to –
 135 I think they’ve made my faith grow because they’ve – they
 136 maybe challenged me to, you know, think about something, or
 137 they’ve made me – um – they’ve said stuff that opens – they just
 138 changes something or, y’ know, they – they’ve – I dunno, they –
 139 they told a story about something, or they seen something – just
 140 different things that opened my mind up to how, you know, there
 141 are other views outside – there – there are other opinions out
 142 there, there are other things out there that you can’t control.
 143 You just have to say, you know, this is a person’s, you know, um
 144 – I think it’s just you have (pause) just – yeah, just growing and
 145 embracing an’ – yeah.

146 **Interviewer:** so, if I said your RE class, what’s the first thing that would come
 147 into your mind? What class are you thinking about?

148 **Alyssa:** Ah, probably my Year 12 RE class because it was my final year
 149 and you were experiencing different things an’ stuff.

150 **Interviewer:** That RE class, how would you describe it?

151 **Alyssa:** It’s – yeah – there are s- – ah – it was fun, it was enjoyable, um
 152 – it w- – it – there was a lot of – you have to do work an’ stuff
 153 an’ it was, you know, we – we – we talked a lot about certain
 154 things like we got an assignment, or whatever, we – we’d talk
 155 about it, an’ we – we’d do brainstorms an’, y’ know, we’ get other
 156 people’s opinions an’ views on stuff. It wasn’t just, y’ know, sit
 157 down, write this down, you know, do this. You know, you were
 158 allowed to talk and express yourself an’ how you felt an’ stuff an’
 159 – yeah, it was – it was enjoyable.

160 **Interviewer:** Good. What’s one thing you can remember talking about?

161 **Alyssa:** Um – we talked about Mahatma Gandhi because we were
 162 studying him – um – his life an’ what he did an’ how he – how he
 163 fought for his beliefs, how he fought for freedom. He wasn’t
 164 going to say, you know: this person’s blocking us so we’re
 165 gonna give up. You know, that’s it. Just forget about the whole
 166 thing. I’ll go back to being a lawyer. You’ll go back to doing
 167 whatever you do. You know, that’s it. You know, he said: No,
 168 we are going to do this. We’re gonna get freedom. We are
 169 gonna be happy. We’re not gonna be under their rule anymore.
 170 Y’ know, we are going to be our own nation. We gonna stand up
 171 for what we believe in. We are gonna be free. That’s what it –
 172 um – he – he was great. He just – he – I think he taught me a
 173 lot about not giving in and, y’ know, just barrelling on an’ keeping
 174 going an’ never giving up. Yeah.

175 **Interviewer:** So you remember something!

176 **Alyssa:** Yeah. It just – it comes back whe y’ thinking about stuff.

177 **Interviewer:** In other words, studying Gandhi’s life has had an impact on
 178 you?

179 **Alyssa:** For sure.

180 **Interviewer:** Okay. What about Gandhi's faith?

181 **Alyssa:** That was – he – he – he had a very strong faith. You know, he –
 182 he gave up everything for his – not necessarily for his faith, but
 183 for his – for what he believed and for his – the people he was
 184 trying to free. You know, he was going around in, you know,
 185 white dress or, not dress, it is like – whatever it is they wear –
 186 their long things – and he – if his people were, you know,
 187 fighting or, y' know, rising up against the people, he'd starve
 188 himself until they – they stopped – um – er – fighting or rising up
 189 against some in – in – in a violent way 'cause he didn't – he
 190 didn't believe in violence. He just belie – believed in (pause)
 191 rising up with your voice instead o' your fist. So he (pause) – his
 192 – he – he – he – his faith, I – I – I – I think, helped him to do it
 193 because he had such a strong faith, you know, he kept saying –
 194 perhaps his faith kept saying: No, y' know, this is – this isn't
 195 right. We're gonna – we're gonna stop all this. Y' know, we're
 196 gonna have, y' know, people be allowed to walk through the
 197 street with whoever they want, you know, an' – an' not get
 198 bashed up, or whatever. Just stuff like that.

199 **Interviewer:** Do you see a link between what you've just described about
 200 Gandhi and your family coming from Ireland to Australia?

201 **Alyssa:** Yeah – um – (pause) – it took us about two years to get out here
 202 and we could've said, an' you know, stuff this, we're gonna
 203 forget about it, or whatever, but we didn't because we thought it
 204 was best for us. And, you know, we just said no, you know, we
 205 are gonna do this. If it happens, it happens. If it doesn't, it
 206 doesn't. But we are gonna soldier on an' we're gonna do our
 207 best an' we're not gonna give up an' we're gonna do this, you
 208 know, and – yeah. I think it was kinda the same with what
 209 Gandhi though in a way, yeah. I think – yeah, I think that's it –
 210 just –

211 **Interviewer:** So are there any conclusions you would draw from think about
 212 how you came to Australia and how it's Gandhi's life and his
 213 faith that you recall?

214 **Alyssa:** Um – (long pause) Gandhi came from India, no not India. Yeah,
 215 somewhere like that.

216 **Interviewer:** Yeah, India.

217 **Alyssa:** He came from there to – can't remember where he came to.

218 **Interviewer:** South Africa.

219 **Alyssa:** That's the one – to South Africa – um – to do legal work for
 220 someone and then he saw – um – the hardship that the Africans
 221 were going through. (pause) He – he – he – he – he stood up
 222 and said: No, this is not going to happen. Um – and I think – we
 223 – I think my family – 'cause we – we came over here – we kind
 224 said (pause) that, you know, we're gonna – we're gonna do this,
 225 we're not – we're not gonna like back down an', you know, we're

226 gonna – gonna come out an' we're gonna see my uncle an' my
 227 aunty an' see my cousins an', yeah, we're just gonna soldier on
 228 an' do it.

229 **Interviewer:** Good. So do you think your view of God and religion has been
 230 affected by what you've learned about Gandhi, or by what
 231 you've studied in Year 12?

232 **Alyssa:** Um – I think my faith has definitely grown because of what we've
 233 learned – um – It's – Gandhi's life show – what Gandhi did
 234 showed me that there are people who stand up and take a stand
 235 against – bad things that are happening an', y' know, people
 236 who are suffering, you know, who are – who are – who are
 237 suffering and don't have anything an', y' know, the government's
 238 against them an' y' know, an' it just kinda showed me that hey,
 239 you know, anyone can stand up and make a difference to
 240 people's lives. You don't have to be world leaders, you don't
 241 have to be presidents, or – or heads of government, or
 242 whatever. It can be, you know, be just your average Joe who
 243 does it. You know, you don't have to be something special. You
 244 just have to have the guts and the determination to be able to st-
 245 – I to be able to do this thing an' just (pause) fight for what you
 246 believe in. Just never give up. Yeah.

247 **Interviewer:** Is that a theme that's important to you?

248 **Alyssa:** Yeah. Um – standing up and taking a stand is something that's
 249 important to me 'cause I don't think that you should just, you
 250 know, back down, say nothing 'cause like that's how wars an'
 251 stuff were started just, you know, people going: Aw, you know,
 252 well this person's gonna help us, so we shouldn't say anything,
 253 you know, than just standing up an' saying, y' know: No, this is
 254 wrong. We need to – we need to fix this, we need to be free.
 255 We need to – you know – do the right thing, not just for our own
 256 personal gain. You know, we need to think about everybody as
 257 a whole instead of just us an' what we're trying to get outa this.
 258 Yeah. I think (pause) yeah – I think that's important. You know,
 259 that's how poverty an' stuff has come around, y' know, with
 260 people just being too scared and too afraid to say anything
 261 because, you know, in some places if we say anything, you'll be
 262 shot. Y' know, th – th – th – they're too scared to stand up an',
 263 y' know, make a voice for themselves. Yeah, I think that's – that
 264 would just be how all them things are important to me. I
 265 definitely believe in St Augustine, y' know, being your own
 266 person and' – yeah. Not being afraid to stand up to people who
 267 are just not doing the right thing by you.

268 **Interviewer:** Good. In talking about the importance of standing up and taking
 269 a stand in your life, in your memory, do you – can you remember
 270 a time when that became important for you?

271 **Alyssa:** Um – (long pause) – I think it's quite probably important to me.
 272 When I became very aware of like poverty an' stuff like that – um

273 – maybe it became a bit more important because I thought, y'
 274 know, this is what's going on in the world, an' y' know, there are
 275 – there are people doing stuff to try an' stop it, or to try an' help
 276 people just like – I mean, obviously there are organizations that
 277 do, but –

278 **Interviewer:** What's one organization? One that your remember?

279 **Alyssa:** Aw – the – the United Nations. They try to help people an'
 280 World Vision an', y' know, companies, or companies,
 281 organizations that go to try and feed people, like ACTID. Yeah,
 282 so – um – just – yeah, just –

283 **Interviewer:** Was there any experience you've had that has brought this
 284 home to you?

285 **Alyssa:** Aw (long pause)

286 **Interviewer:** What about work experience?

287 **Alyssa:** Um – I think working in World Vision last year as part of my
 288 INSTEP that showed me that hey, there was people out there
 289 who were – who – who do help people. They try to get people
 290 sponsored. They – they try to raise money. They – they do
 291 what they can to help – help the people and to try an' get them a
 292 better life. An' I – it just showed me that – there's an
 293 organization out there who do help people an' they're not –
 294 they're not afraid to or – it – it, y' know, they – they – they'll
 295 stand up for these people's rights an' stuff. So, yeah, I think
 296 that's –

297 **Interviewer:** How important was that experience for you, that INSTEP
 298 experience?

299 **Alyssa:** Really good. It was really good because it showed me how
 300 many people there are in, y' know, how many different countries
 301 that are poor and places that I've never thought were poor or
 302 poverty-stricken, I found out were. An' it – it just – yeah, it just
 303 showed me that, you know, there are so many people out there
 304 who need – who need our help an' you know, there's a lot o'
 305 good people can do, for sure.

306 **Interviewer:** Do you think your faith in God is involved in any of that
 307 realisation?

308 **Alyssa:** Perhaps, because these – I think – these people they had
 309 perhaps a calling to, y' know, go and be missionaries, or go an'
 310 help – help people an' raise awareness, stuff like that. You
 311 know, (pause) God (pause) God helped these – helped people
 312 help people to realise that this is what they were meant to do
 313 with their lives. He just – yeah – he just – he was there and he
 314 guided them to it an'. Yeah, that – that – that – that's how he
 315 helped them. You just – me think, y' know, he's – he's good an'
 316 he's – y' know, he – he does send people down here to do the
 317 right thing by people, by other people.

- 318 **Interviewer:** Alright, let's move on. Now you turn to the last chapter in your
319 book. It's about the future. What title did you give that chapter?
- 320 **Alyssa:** (long pause) Um – Living Life to the Max – and –
- 321 **Interviewer:** Good. Why did you use that title?
- 322 **Alyssa:** It's something like I believe an' I – I wrote it in my Year 12
323 booklet an' stuff because I think you have to live life to whatever
324 you can make it. You can't just say: Aw, you know, that's a bit
325 hard, not gonna go there. Y' know, you have to live your life to
326 the full an' you have to be happy with your life an' what you have
327 accomplished an' what you've done. So, yeah, y' just have t'
328 live life to the max an' be happy, for sure.
- 329 **Interviewer:** Okay. Good. So, what's that chapter tell to the reader what you
330 have achieved in your lifetime?
- 331 **Alyssa:** Um – hopefully, I've become a – a respected journalist, not
332 necessarily a rich or famous journalist, 'cause that doesn't
333 interest me. Um – but a respected journalist who – who – who
334 people, y' know, they don't think: Aw, y' know, that – y' know that
335 journalist, aw, y' know, she – she writes stupid stories about
336 people an' tells lies an' stuff. I want to be someone who is
337 known for her honesty an' her truthfulness, an' is respected by
338 people an', y' know, has – has people, y' know, coming to her for
339 interviews, or whatever and, yeah, definitely.
- 340 **Interviewer:** Good. Okay, how would you like your relationship with God to
341 be in the future?
- 342 **Alyssa:** Um – I think – I think my relationship with him is now it's pretty
343 good. Perhaps it could be a little stronger like – um – going to
344 Church an' stuff like that an' – Not necessarily going to Church
345 but being able to talk to him an' tell him stuff an' just – yeah, just
346 –
- 347 **Interviewer:** So that's what you would like it to be in the future.
- 348 **Alyssa:** Yeah. To be able to talk to him more.
- 349 **Interviewer:** Okay. So what changes to make that possible?
- 350 **Alyssa:** (pause) Um – (pause) being perhaps stronger in myself an' – y'
351 know, just – y' know, just to be able to sit down and say: Hey,
352 God, how y' going? – Y' know, um – y' know, this is happening
353 and that's happening, y' know.
- 354 **Interviewer:** So in the future, you've found time to sit?
- 355 **Alyssa:** Oh, like I've got time now, but I just – I don't have the – possibly
356 the capability to just sit down and' say: What's happening, God,
357 y' know, how y' going? Um – I don't – what's the word? – I don't
358 have a lot of concentration. Like I wouldn't have enough
359 concentration to just know, sit down for a half an' hour an' talk to
360 God an' y' know, an' tell him all my, you know, what's
361 happening in my life an' stuff like that because, you know, I just

362 – I don't have that extreme concentration. I just – I don't – I just
363 – I – like Gran's always saying: Aw yeah, y' know, say a prayer
364 at night an' stuff, but I just can't because I just concentrate like I
365 read before I go – before I go to sleep an' I just wanna blank
366 everything out. You know, just – just so it's all gone and' I can
367 just go to sleep.

368 **Interviewer:** Okay. Obviously something's changed in your life, hasn't it?
369 Here we are, in the future in your book and you are a respected
370 journalist and you have developed the skills needed to spend
371 time with God in prayer. Do you see that it's possible for you to
372 become like that?

373 **Alyssa:** Yeah, I think – with a bit more guidance an' stuff, it'd be – be
374 possible definitely because I want to be able to just talk to him,
375 not just talk to him occasionally or when I feel like it, or
376 whatever.

377 **Interviewer:** So if we come back to the RE that you experienced when you
378 were at school, were there things that you would have liked to
379 have happen for you in RE, that never happened?

380 **Alyssa:** Um (long pause) – a bigger concentration because I just –
381 y'know, I – I – I can't study or nothing, "cause I just sit there an'
382 I'll look at the words an' it just goes totally over my head an' then
383 I go to write in an exam. I go, "Oh, my God, what – what am I
384 doing?" Yeah, I just – I can't sit down and just write. You know,
385 I just –

386 **Interviewer:** And yet that's what y' going to have to do as a journalist.

387 **Alyssa:** Weird, hey.

388 **Interviewer:** No, it's not weird. I think often the things we find hard to do in
389 these lie the seeds of our future. Okay, I think I will stop at this
390 point and continue the interview next year. Thankyou, Alyssa.