

Brian Draper on BBC Radio 4 Thought for the Day

This is the transcript from the program Janet referenced (help us live well with whatever happens next).

Good morning!

Like so many others on Thursday, my wife and I sat nervously with our son as we awaited his A level results. We were watching through nail-bitten fingers on-line as the UCAS clock counted down the seconds to 8.15am. For others, it was the opening of an envelope, or an e-mail.

And I'm sure you recall those various moments when there's nothing left to do but wait, and hope, and maybe pray. I tried to pray a mature, silent prayer, 'Lord help us live well with whatever happens next' - but you can't help the 'PS Let him get the results he needs,' too, even when your theology doesn't quite stretch that far.

So much hanging in the balance in those few seconds for so many young lives - the friends for life they may or may not end up with, depending on where they can or can't go next for further study or work; the nagging awareness of how we all tend to grade ourselves in life according to the grades we're given.

The book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible says, 'Remember your Creator when you are young', and for me that's not a patronising religious command to upstarts but a happy reminder that from the start of life, and in any given moment, we can find deeper perspective ... on who we are, where we've come from, who we're becoming ...

And those words honour for me the way young people have this innate, brilliant (and I believe God-given) capacity to dig deep, to unearth not just material treasure but the human spirit deposited within them.

Goodness knows, this particular class of 2022 have had to dig deeper than most. And I'm sure you don't just move on from an educational experience like cancelled GCSEs, lockdowns, endless home learning when you might not even have a computer, and all the various emotional and psychological challenges that come with it.

You carry the scars in life. But you can carry a wisdom that goes with them, too. And I for one look forward to what I can learn from that generation's learning, wherever their many paths may lead from here, this week.

And in those nail-biting, life-changing moments that are yet to come, for them, and for us all, whether we're opening a letter from college or a prospective employer or even from the hospital with our scan results ... these thresholds can at least remind us of what matters most to us, as we wait, and hope, and maybe even pray, "Lord help us live well with whatever happens next."