

Endorsements for Finding Stability in Times of Change

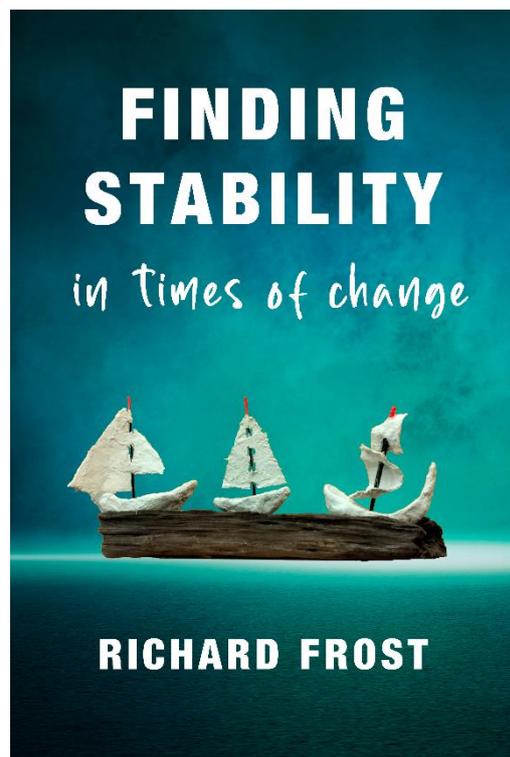
This is a timely and wise book. The past few years have brought exceptional changes – in addition to the many changes which characterise human life – and our ability to adapt has not necessarily caught up. Richard Frost offers a perceptive understanding of life-changes which sees them as an inevitable aspect of being human but which, like weather conditions, can vary from a gentle breeze to a violent storm.

Richard helps the reader understand how we will each react differently to change, sketching out how various kinds of change can profoundly rock our sense of stability, our sense of self, and our relationships with one another and with God. Using the story of Jesus calming the storm, Richard prompts us to reflect on our own relationship with God in times of change: do we feel, like Jesus' disciples, that a sudden and violent 'storm' is more frightening when we feel we have embarked on the voyage in obedience to God's call? What does Jesus mean when he tells us, 'Do not be afraid?' From the Bible and from present-day followers of Jesus he sets before us examples of responses to change which do not minimise the pain and challenge but which offer prayerful reflection and practical advice.

Above all, Richard reminds us that a positive response to change is grounded in a place of stability and he shows how Jesus found that stability in his relationship with his heavenly Father, making time and space for that in his ministry. Drawing on his experience both as a chaplain and as one who has advised those with mental health conditions, Richard Frost concludes with some practical advice about how to strengthen our sense of stability in our daily lives through practical routines and habits and through simple spiritual practices.

I read this book at a period in my own life when I was experiencing a great deal of change, from the relatively minor (returning by train from a much-needed holiday) to the more significant (major changes in my workplace). Richard leads us gently through a process of identifying, understanding and responding to change. He weaves wisdom from the Christian tradition together with secular understandings of the treatment of stress. His book is perceptive and wise – a valuable guide on life's journey.

Morwenna Ludlow, historian, theologian and Anglican priest



This is a timely and helpful book. It is about change. Life is full of it of course. But while some change is welcome, energising and life giving, there is change that arrives like a storm or earthquake, uprooting even the most deeply rooted things in us. It leaves us de-stabilised. Off balance. For many, quite a lot of life feels like that right now.

Richard Frost's book explores how to find a place to stand in such times. The task needs wisdom and it takes practice. The book approaches this in a variety of ways. There are reflections from the Christian scriptures and the lives of people found there. There are resources drawn from Christian practices of prayer and spirituality. But also here are the stories of a variety of people who have journeyed through the most unsettling life changes. Their voices are honest and vulnerable and they enter this discussion in the toughest realities of life and faith.

So the book feels like a conversation in the midst of the winds and the storms - with ourselves, with each other, with scripture and the hard won resources of Christian faith – and with God.

David Runcorn, writer, speaker, spiritual director & 'free range' priest

At a time when the rate of change – of all kinds – far outstrips our ability to negotiate the transitions, Richard's book is undoubtedly timely. Whilst it is easy simply to encourage a believer in God to 'have faith', so often that is the one thing that may prove difficult in times of storm and stress. Richard draws on his experience of the Benedictine Rule with its emphasis on listening, conversion of life and stability, as well as the accounts of Jesus calming the storm on Lake Galilee to aid our search for wisdom.

Many people find it easier to learn from stories than from theory, however wise and Biblical: and Richard uses these to good effect, looking at both Biblical characters, contemporary testimony and Jesus himself. Remembering that faith is both receptive – a gift of God – and active, requiring a response on our part, is salutary, as are the questions interspersed in most chapters prompting us to reflect on our own circumstances.

Given that those who are perhaps most in need of finding stability will by definition be facing challenging times, this book is neither too long nor too difficult a read. Several other authors are quoted and referenced for those who may want to dig deeper, but Richard's 'prescription' here should prove both accessible and reassuring for many.

Sheila Walker, priest & author