*Begin transcript:*

ALEX: Vikesh, are you there?

VIKESH: Hello, I’m here.

ALEX: Hello! You are there!

VIKESH: How are you?

ALEX: I’m good. How are you?

VIKESH: It’s been a while

ALEX: Oh holy moly, you sound just a bit different, like a few octaves different

VIKESH: Yes, that is true. It’s been a while –

ALEX: It has been a while – it’s been what, like three years?

VIKESH: Three years. I think so, yeah. Wow.

ALEX: I haven’t seen you – I saw your dad at the No Frills.

VIKESH: Yes, and he took a selfie with you.

ALEX: That's right, he did!

VIKESH: I think I saw that photo, and I was like yeah, it's Alex. Yes.

ALEX: Okay. So much to talk about in a short amount of time.

VIKESH: Yeah –

ALEX: So, where are you right now, are you –

VIKESH: I am at home at the Hugh Gardner, on my couch.

ALEX: And, who are you with?

VIKESH: My sisters are here, my mum and dad are here.

ALEX: And you have all been there throughout this whole pandemic-y time?

VIKESH: Yes.

ALEX: How has that been?

VIKESH: It’s been a bit tough. Like it’s a little hectic sometimes, but I’ve been doing online school.

ALEX: School! I am glad you mentioned school because I remember one of the things we talked about when we went on our walk was you were going to have to decide on what school you were going to go to, and you weren’t really sure at the time what that would be –

VIKESH: Oh wow –

ALEX: – and you were thinking about things you might be interested in, so I’m so curious to know – where did you decide to go, and why did you make that choice?

VIKESH: I went to Central Toronto Academy ‘cause I thought it would be a nice small school. Um, grade 9 was the best year ‘cause I got to meet a lot of people, and the teachers were very very nice. It's a very welcoming school, and it’s a school where you could get lost and then later on you will get used to the school, so that's exactly what happened. I know where everything is now, even not being in the school right now, I can picture where the rooms are, I can picture what room I would have if I see a map or something like that. And yeah so, I miss being in the school, so . . .

ALEX: What about it makes it welcoming?

VIKESH: There’s always marks on floors, like, where to go. Like maybe you would want to go to the gym or the auditorium. There would be marks somewhere or signs that would say ‘it is here’ or ‘It is on the left.’ There’s a lot of arts everywhere. The first door you enter, there’s always paintings on the doors. And then another door – it once said welcome in different languages. It was very nice – I think that was really cool.

ALEX: What kind of other activities are you - I guess maybe not so much now that you’re at home, but – in terms of, you know, you were talking about sports as something you might do professionally, or did you say a pilot at one point?

VIKESH: Yes, actually, I did – I am in Air Cadets – so there’s a lot of opportunities where we can go gliding, so it is a plane that actually doesn't have an engine.

ALEX: And so, describe to me what it’s like when you are up there.

VIKESH: We can see . . . we can actually hear a lot of wind streams, sounds like fans in your face, you know, kind of in your face, and you’re just zipping through the wind. Everything is so small – you can see the cars are the size of ants, you can see the buildings the size of pencils and sometimes, if you are close enough, you can see the CN tower all the way in the distance, and it just looks like – wow, this is our city. It’s just a really a peaceful feeling.

ALEX: And again, you are reminding of, because you took me to the roof top garden – remember? To meet the chives –

VIKESH: I remember that!

ALEX: And we had chives.

VIKESH: Yes, those were good, those were good times. I love those

ALEX: I remember you pointing out, you know, because we were up high, so you were pointing things out to me about the city.

VIKESH: I think at one point I was describing boats out in the, I think it was the lake. It was very small because from our building, you can see the lake, and you can see sailboats sailing through the ocean, I mean through the sea, I mean, wait – through the lake! – got mixed up.

ALEX: Looks like the sea –

VIKESH: If you were there on the boat, like, on the water, I wonder if you could see the building, you know? If you could just take binoculars and scope out maybe our building. Maybe it would be really cool to see. You know? I’ve always wondered that.

ALEX: Since we can’t go on a walk, I wonder if you would tell me something that you have inside your home, so I get a little sense of what is significant to you in your home, where you live.

VIKESH: For sure. My - the object that I chose was a hat, what we would call a tilley hat in cadets. It has a beige colour, a peach-beige colour – has little dots on the seam of the hat. It has a bunch of signatures from my friends at the camp and messages that they wrote like ‘good luck’ or ‘have a great summer.’ There’s a lot of people that I met that I miss, and this is a way I can relive those memories of my camp. That camp was really special to me, so I really like how that shows in my hat.

ALEX: Are you wearing the hat on your head right now or are you just looking at it?

VIKESH: I am.

ALEX: You’ve got it on your head? That’s great. You've got them in your hat. Alright my friend. Well, I guess that is it for today

VIKESH: Alright – awesome.

ALEX: Ok VIkesh, thanks so much for talking to me this morning.

VIKESH: Thank you so much. It was nice talking with you.

ALEX: It’s been great. You take care. Say hi to your dad for me

VIKESH: Yes, of course!

ALEX: See you soon.

VIKESH: Have a good one.

ALEX: You too.

*End of transcript.*