

Vera describes supporting friends and family in Ukraine by phone and how her hosts in turn have supported her.

I try to be stable and strong, you know, and be supportive of those people, of my husband, there in Ukraine, of my friends... because originally, I come from small town. I lived in Kyiv for the last twenty years, but before Kyiv I lived in a small town in southeast of Ukraine, Nikopol, which is at the moment under severe attacks, because it is just opposite Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station. My native town is shot every day, every single day, a few times a day and it is getting destroyed little by little. I can see those pictures and they are just awful...

And some people just cannot leave, because, as my friend, my close friend, is still in Nikopol and when I ask her *"Why? Why don't you leave?"* And she says to me, *"I have elderly Mum who is not able to go far, and there is my husband and my son in law. They still work at the plant and they will continue working, because they are afraid to be left without job, any job and any means"*. And she says to me, *"Like everybody's leaving and they leave their, I have now five cats and two dogs and a big aquarium, and chickens, and the whole lot! I cannot leave them. Who will feed them?"* And I say, *"But it's dangerous."* And she says, *"I've lived"*, and she is being 46, she says, *"I've lived my life"*, you know? So, when I talk to her, hours, sometimes it's over an hour, I talk to her and I understand that I cannot do anything actually for her, but I can listen to her.

Afterwards I need to talk to somebody else, just to lift this emotional pressure from me. And my hosts, Abi and Anton, Abi is very supportive also.

Abi is listening to me and they are very supportive. Sometimes I just speak to them and sometimes I say, *"I understand, it's a lot of me."* You know, I have a lot of circumstances, it's difficult for them to understand, but they do. They do a great job, accepting us and trying to understand what's going on. Sometimes I can watch some news, and out of sudden start to cry, because I cannot, you know, take it anymore. So, for our hosts, I suppose it's not easy, but they are not complaining.

Sometimes you need to talk to somebody from Ukraine because they are from the same circumstances... The news, when you hear the news in general, somewhere in one country, something awful is going on. That is one thing, you do, you do feel for those people. But when you know exactly the names of the people, when you know exactly the names of the streets, when you know exactly what happened to them. When you see the pictures, and that is the house you've been passing by, it is absolutely different. You cannot get used to it, do you. Probably never.