



Capturing the Past, Inspiring the Future

# **Lisa Goodchild**

Interviewed by

**Kerri Mansfield**

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*Right, it is the sixteenth of September 2019, I'm Kerri Mansfield, independent IT consultant. Today I'm talking to Lisa Goodchild, founder and CEO of Digiwoo, a digital marketing and social media consultancy and founder of Digispark and Digilearning. So, Digispark is a micro-sized ... I mean, I don't know what this means Arduino...? ... Ardino? ...A R D U I O N [spells out]*

I don't know what that means.

*Anyway, it's an enabled USB development board, and we're going to be talking about Digilearning as well. Lisa has always been passionate about all things digital and shares her passion as an adviser and mentor as well. Good morning. I don't know where to start really. Having had a look at your public bio you've had a very busy life and you seem to like a very busy life. Can we go back and talk about the early years where that was formed in you, a little bit of background there.*

Gosh, I'm not sure. So my early years, I grew up very, very humble beginnings. I had a lot of chaos around me. My mum suffered from mental health issues. My dad wasn't around, he went to prison when I was a kid. My stepdad was a heroin addict, there was lots and lots of criminal activity so maybe not the ... how good you see business should be but, you know, criminal activity is business, drug dealers have a stock and have to get rid of it. I also had some really, ... also my grandad, he had a building business, interior design business and he used to do interiors for, like, David Bowie, and then you had my aunties and things like that who were, you know, my uncle was an electrician and had his own business. So I had lots of people around me that had their own businesses so I think that helped me see a variety of life. I had such extremes as well, you know, my uncle who was not on the right side of the law would pull up in his Bentley or his Ferrari and things like that. We were the poorest on the council estate so, you know, we had ... we used to knock on people's doors for 50p to put in the gas meter, the electric meter. We used to thank goodness for the milkman because we used to steal milk from doorsteps, many doorsteps, that was always good [laughs]. Yeah, so I think I was really lucky as well, I had lots of amazing people, a variety of people. The block that we lived in, as well, was a

curious block and actually back then they used to say that it was a mini Cane Hill [laughs]. It had lots of people from different walks of life, so lots of people, there was people with schizophrenia, and I think that gave me a real good foundation and understanding of human beings and especially mental health issues, my mum obviously with her mental health issues, and it gave me real empathy for humans and I think it gave me a great background for ... I don't know why I wanted to do what I always wanted to do, you know, I think, actually, when I went to ... it was at the Albert and Victoria Museum and it was a conference on Japan and in that conference it had all this amazing, like, futuristic technology which wasn't that futuristic now, but it was really, really cool and I remember just being amazed by this technology. My uncle as well, my uncle Ian, he always had super-cool, like he had the robotic arm and he had always had ....

*Gadgets, all the gadgets.*

Yeah, back in the day, in the eighties, he always had all the gadgets and I think I was really, really inquisitive about that. Yeah, I don't know, my background was absolute chaos, crazy, we were feral children, we were kicked out of the door, we lived in the park and we made do with what he had and we hustled, yeah, and I think that gave me a great foundation for life.

*And you went to university?*

Yeah. I was very, very lucky, it was my best friend's mum. She worked for a company called Kingsearch and Co and she realised that she couldn't progress unless she had a degree so she was really, really adamant to all of us. I actually, she came in my life when I was about fifteen and she fed most of us as well. She's the most amazing lady, she's still in my life and I'm still best friends with her daughters, they're my family and I was very lucky that she, sort of, pushed us and encouraged us to go to university. I applied for university, I only had one GCSE when I left school, a C level because I didn't really go to school, I wasn't made to go to school. I moved my boyfriend in at thirteen, I'm still with him thank goodness, twenty-eight years

later, just about [laughs], we've got two beautiful daughters, but yeah, she encouraged me to go to university and, as I said, I applied, didn't get in but I didn't give up, I contacted the lecturer and I said, you know, 'I really want to do this course'. He said, 'come in and have an interview, do a maths and English course', obviously I passed and I sat at the front of that class every single day and it was twenty odd years ago so it was one of the first degrees, it was a digital degree and you did everything. We did CD ROM creation with Direct and we used all the macro-media products, I loved animation, I just loved the creativity. And I remember at the time, a lot of people stealing a lot of code and I used to sit there and try and create my own stuff and not steal it, and really I could have taken the easy way out, but it was what was interesting as well, was when we left university it was the dot.com crash and it was only myself and Sarah, really, and a couple of others that went through and followed it through to have digital careers. A lot of them, they went into recruitment and things like that because there wasn't the jobs back then.

*Because there weren't the jobs at that point ...*

Yeah, yeah, but my degree was amazing and my lecturers, my teachers, and we were so lucky because the university was at the Christopher Wren building so, you know, coming from a council estate in Penge to then go walking around, surrounded by these amazing buildings along Greenwich. We were lucky, it was the first one, we had just moved from Woolwich so we was lucky it wasn't at the Woolwich campus[laughs]

*I'll tell you, I live in Woolwich.*

It's nice now, it wasn't back then.

*Some of its nice now.*

Well, Greenwich wasn't nice back then..

*It's all changing, isn't it. So, having got that degree, or while you were going through that degree, could you feel that your life was changing in any way?*

Yeah, massively. I remember, actually, realising how amazing the world was because, coming from the place where I'd come from, I thought the world was a pretty dark place. You know, I was very aggressive, angry, as I said, Maggie, my best friend's mum who encouraged me to go to university, I actually had had a fight with one of her daughters, Clare, and I used to go around literally bashing people because that's what you did when you came from a council estate, which was a survival mechanism. I remember going to uni thinking, 'Oh my gosh, these people are amazing' and how nice everyone was and ... you know, everyone was from every walk of life but everyone looked after each other and, yeah, it really opened my eyes. And learning the ... what was amazing about our course as well ... I think it was about 70 per cent course work, so you had to actually to deliver a product.

*You had to do it, yeah.*

You know, you'd be given a brief and you had to deliver it, and I remember our first brief was take the word 'journey' and I created, it was called Journeyspecs and it was an animation and you wore these glasses and you pressed one of these buttons and it took you on a journey. I know, back then, I've still got the animation somewhere [laughs]. But I remember, I got like 96 per cent and, everyone in the class, and that just, you know, gave me such a boost, to be able to do it.

*To be able to do it, yes, exactly.*

I was just like well, if all these people being given the best chance in life and there was little me coming from a council estate, not coming from much. I just knew that, oh wow, I can achieve anything and it really did help me, helped set me up for the future and helped me realise that I can achieve anything.

*Which is absolutely brilliant. And then, I think you founded your first company.*

Yeah. I founded ...

*Straight out of uni?*

Well, actually, we founded it just as we was leaving uni really, it was me and my best friend Sarah. We were really lucky because we were creating websites for people and, you know, at that time it was predominantly musicians and footballers and estate agents, so I was very lucky a footballer paid me a sufficient and a nice amount of money for websites, so I just thought, 'ooh, this is cool' and then we both sort of went and worked ... well, I went and sold my company and my dad came back in my life and I went travelling with dad because I hadn't grown up with him as a kid and I really wanted to and he had a lot of money at the time and he took me, and he just said, 'where do you want to go in the world'. It was the first time actually, I remember my graduation, it was the first time having my mum and dad there together, so it's really an amazing experience but ... yeah.

*They must have been very, very proud.*

Yeah, they were really, really proud and they both are now still very like, they think I'm crazy with what I do but they think I'm, yeah...

*There must have been some obstacles along the route as well?*

Oh yeah.

*What did you use from yourself and your past to overcome those obstacles?*

Well, I think that this is what I'm trying to get around to kids with Digilearning, is that, actually, growing up in these situations it actually gives you a quality and experience that kids that go to Eton or the top private schools in the world haven't got, and that's this determination and hustle that you end up getting because of your

background, and yeah, I think those areas really, you know, helped me, the determination and being able to handle the knocks and just get back up. You know, I think being able to handle those in the right way, so I think when I was, like about twenty-five, I found yoga and started channelling, you know, and now I do a lot of meditation, yoga and running, and I think all of those things have really helped me working out how to settle the mind, like we do with computers, re-boot ...[laughs] we need to do that for ourselves so ...

*Yeah, you do ...*

Yeah, it's given me amazing qualities, you know, that's what I want to get across to these kids, that it's like a degree, you should have a degree in the street because that's exactly what it's given you.

*It's given you resources, yeah.*

Yeah, yeah, being able to use these resources and, yeah, live the life that you want, you know.

*That's cool. I saw a mention that you went to a thing called the Marketing Academy and attended, what was it, a Living Leader bootcamp?*

Oh yeah, actually I saw Penny Ferguson, who's this phenomenal woman. I'm not sure how old Penny is now but she's not a young lady but she looks the same as ten years, well, I think it was like five years ago that I met her, and the Marketing Academy is brilliant because it takes thirty people, individuals, marketeers from across the country and they can be from Proctor and Gamble to the Prince's Trust, and then they take a couple of entrepreneurs, and I was lucky that year I got accepted as one of the thirty. And you go on this journey, which is phenomenal, with these thirty other individuals and you go on this bootcamp and Penny, she has this programme called the Living Leader and it's just, sort of, finding your purpose. But it's phenomenal and I'm lucky to now be a trustee for the apprenticeship element to that,

because they've got three areas: they've got the apprenticeship element, the middle area which I attended and then you've got the fellowship which is where they get people, CMOs, onto the board, but the apprenticeship level is brilliant, there's kids from my type of background and we're seeing amazing results and we've got some brilliant brands, like Virgin Atlantic to the Prince's Trust, that are really supporting and giving these kids the chance that they need.

*Right, because they haven't got the social mobility.*

Yeah, it's the social mobility and this is the problem with industry at the moment, you know, we're all becoming very bland and boring and, you know, the idea that you're getting pushed out there, I think we call it, was it stale or white male, or something like that.

*Pale, male and stale.*

Yeah, we're starting to get ... we're going to change that so, yeah, the Marketing Academy is phenomenal and Penny Ferguson, what she's done for me ... I told her the other day, it's all her fault that [laughs] I'm on a mission to change the world.

*So, Digilearning.*

Yes.

*It focuses on children's education in the digital world.*

Yeah.

00:13:57

*How did that come about?*



So, the Marketing Academy, going on that journey, made me realise that I really wanted to help people from my background and so we did ... Digisparks was the first element of it and that's when we went to Barbados, probably about five years ago now, and we went there and we trained about forty entrepreneurs and I taught them social media. So I've always done this, I've always worked in schools and colleges and tried to help kids realise the potential of social media. I've been harping on about social media for the last ten years. I've, you know, ... banging down brands, doors, and saying, 'please, listen, this is real' and if you watch the Big Hack on Netflix you'll soon realise that's why we're Brexiting and Donald Trump's been voted in.

*Of course, yes.*

Because of social media and the power of it, the propaganda.

*Yes, yeah.*

So, yeah, Digilearning. Me and my friends said ... we both had ... I had my second daughter, I've got a fourteen year old and I've got a five year old, so five years ago I had my daughter Sofia. My best friend, Sarah, the one from uni, also we've been on this massive journey together, she had twin boys ...

*Ooh, tough.*

Yeah, very tough. But we ordered some books for them, some texts, you know, coding books, and we got these books and we thought, this is just, it feels so out of touch, it feels like it's ... everything based in the computing world was based on the human world so what is this ... we've made it so out of touch so kids can't relate to it. So my other half went across the road with my daughter one day and I started writing a story and it was based on my cat at first, Harry, and then we thought, let's base it on the kids, so we created four characters, we've got Michael, Mitchell, Sofia and Mia, and each character's based on its own things. So Michael is video editing and, like, YouTube, Mitchell is about gaming, Sofia is about social and Mia is about, you

know, like search engine, Google, so she knows everything. So each of them's got their special character. So we created our first book, I was off to Jamaica, and we was like, right, we've got to print some of these books, so we printed some. I contacted my mate Paula, she put me in touch with the Ministry of Education because she's one of the seven families out there, she like knows everyone. Next minute I'm on a WhatsApp with them, then when I'm going on holiday we're invited to three schools, so I went to three of the schools out there and it was a real eye-opener about ... you know, these kids, they had no facilities, they were unbelievable.

*00:16:33*

*Is this school start or senior school?*

This is primary school.

*Primary school, yep.*

This is primary school. They had nothing, you know, the books were so old, it was in a shack, it was really, really ... it was unbelievable to see that they had no computers either, so I'm on a mission to change this. So that's where it sort of developed and then, when I sat down with the Ministry of Education, she said, 'oh, have you got teaching guides?' and I was, like, 'Ok'. So when I got back we went into a ... we thought, right, we need to do this properly because there's definitely a need for it, so we spoke to a lot of teachers, we started working with some copywriters, etc and some other professionals and we created fifteen books. So they're ranging ... and I mean, we're still creating books ... so they're ranging from Artificial Intelligence to how to keep safe online or just searching for the right subjects, you know, when you're looking at the ... we created paper books because ... we've got both, we've got digital books and we've got paper books ... but we knew that some of these kids in the hard to reach areas ...

*Haven't got books ... if you haven't got a computer there's no point in having a digital book, is there?*

Yeah, there's no internet so how are they going to be able to realise that they can do this. So, we thought we would cover both. So, then, we started doing that and then we realised, you know, there's more to this and then we started thinking about how we can really, really make impacts, so with the Digihacks we approach Lord Harris from the Harris Academies. My cousin happens to be Sir Richard Needham, the Earl of Kilmorey. My nan always told me about him but I never really, really ...

*God, what was going on there ...*

Yeah, she used to say, 'oh, my cousin works in the Houses of Parliament' and I was, like, 'ok', so he was in Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet, he was, I think, imports exports minister or something like that, Trade Minister.

*Yeah.*

So he was really a cool guy and obviously, when I met him he was just absolutely, yeah, brilliant and inspiring and, sort of, told me ... he's sort of taken us under his wing as well, but I've got a lot of ... that's what I believe as well, throughout all of this is, I've had amazing people take me under their wing.

*Well, of course.*

Em, some really influential humans and that's why I've realised my potential and progressed. But yes, so we spoke to Richard and Richard was, like, this is a really good idea, and then we started thinking about how we can make it so we could get to more kids as well because, the problem is, is you're limited to how many children you get. So Lord Harris has got, I think forty-three academies they've got, and it's our neck of the woods as well in London. And also Lord Harris has got ... it just seemed to pull us towards him because one of his first shops was in Penge where I grew up,

one of his carpet shops, Harris Carpets, then all of these schools and I knew that he would understand where we were coming from.

*Yeah, understand what was happening, yes.*

Yeah, so Richard arranged the meeting, we went and sat down with Lord Harris and the Harris Foundation said, 'yep, we'd love to have you come on board' so we've been working with the Harris Academies with our Digihacks. So we've got three areas with Digilearning, we've got one, our Digihacks, two, our DigiPpacks, and three is our Digiworld. So, our Digihacks is where we physically go into schools, colleges, youth zones and work with children, young people, and also parents as well and teachers, so our aim with our Digihacks is to go in and physically do workshops. Our second area is our DigiPpacks which are monthly subscription packs where people would be delivered ... we're raising money at the money ... people would be delivered a pack every single month, so this pack would include a book, a number of missions and some physical tasks. So these tasks could be creating a binary code bracelet out of beads, yeah, and using binary code. So it is that sort of element. Then, our last area is our Digiworld which is where kids would be able to log onto an area, so with our Digiworld it would be, we'd have our App that would be aimed at kids which would have a gaming element, with augmented reality and Artificial Intelligence, delivered in that sort of Pokemon style but really capturing the kids because what we've got to do is get away from making education boring and so separated from the real world. It's just this really weird thing that we've done with education, we don't get it. So, yeah, our other area is aimed at teachers and parents because we feel that we're not training our teachers and parents and empowering them, so the teachers and parents elements, a platform, we're delivering our first one this November to take to Barbados and working with some parents out there to pilot it. Obviously, we're doing this as well alongside with the Prince's Trust because their Prince's Trust International is going after the Commonwealth so they've started off in Barbados and they're gonna go to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and we're going to work with them.

00:21:51

*That sounds amazing. There's a couple of things that maybe we'll come back to later about digital in the city, I think the Lord Mayor will be very interested in that. You are still a woman in an overwhelmingly male business world.*

I am.

*You've mentioned a couple of very influential people in there. So, two things there really, how much difference does having good mentors make to you and then my second question is really about being a woman in a male-dominated world.*

I've never actually pinpointed and said this is my mentor but I've had many mentors around me and, I must say, I've had so many ... I think once I hit thirty ... before then I didn't have most amazing women in my life ... I had a lot of most amazing men in my life actually, and one was, you know, growing up with my mum suffering from mental health issues I used to have these ... my mum's friends who happened to be male ... and they used to help me escape from the chaos that was. When I got to thirty I just ended up having these amazing women coming into my life, so Sian Osmond MBE, Kanya King MBE, June Sarpong MBE, I'm like girls [laughs] but they've always guided me and took me under their wings, especially Kanya King, you know, she let me run all of the social for Mobo and she's always ... I'm an adviser to her and she's an adviser to me and same as Sian as well. And then there's June Sarpong who's just unbelievable and she's like this sunshine and she wants to share sunshine with everyone and she always tries to lift you. And then there's Brenda Umaus as well, I think she's got an MBE now or one of them ... they've all got these MBEs and CBEs, they're pretty phenomenal women ... and another amazing woman, Mary Keane-Dawson, but I've just had these phenomenal women that really made me believe in myself. I can't say I've ever really experienced anything bad from men, me and my Sarah, when we did our degree course we were literally the only women sitting there and we were lucky, we had a harem of men around us and helping us, and it's really interesting because I met my nan's ... my nan passed away many years ago

but her cousin - because my nan was born in India and was Anglo-Indian - and her cousin was telling me about the family out there and they're matriarchs, and I was like, 'that is where I get it from', that is obviously where I get it from [laughs].

*Matriach of society.*

Yeah, so it's really, really interesting but I've had ... You know, I'm sure I've had some obstacles but nothing major, you know, my sister was abused as a child and I nearly had ... a lot of people I know have been abused or had something, you know, the hashtag MeToo movement is there for a reason because there's ... women have been dealing with these situations for a long time.

*For ever, yeah, for ever.*

I'm very lucky that when I've met men I'm very fierce at saying that I've been with my other half since I was thirteen and they realise that they haven't got a hope in hell, I mean that sort of helps, do you know what I mean.

*Just keep walking.*

Yeah, just keep walking, but yeah, I have been lucky not to have any horrible stories. I've had a lot of amazing men lift me, as I've said, Sir Richard Needham and people like that believing in me and I've just, yeah, kept going on and not let much bother me. I am quite fierce anyway so I think I scare a lot of men. [laughs] I think they're a little bit daunted by me.

*You've mentioned the Prince's Trust.*

Yes.

*How did you come to be involved with them?*

So the Prince's Trust was all a bit of a ... so a good friend of mine again, Sofia Foster who's a phenomenal, an amazing woman who's always believed in me, she introduced ... we was working with them for a charity event called Badu, the Prince's Trust were involved, you know, the charity was raising money for the Prince's Trust, but also I did work with the Prince's Trust many years ago as well, with Lynn Franks, and Lynn Franks is obviously a phenomenal woman, you know, PR queen, guru, and she sent me off to Zurich and I was doing this big Fashion Rocks, and she said 'Lisa, I want you to oversee it' and I was like, 'Ok', but we worked with the Prince's Trust there as well, so that was brilliant, and then obviously working with them on Badu. And then, there's an amazing lady called Rosalind who I said what I was doing and she said, 'this sounds amazing, it just so happens that we're doing the Prince's Trust International' which was only set up two years ago, and then when I explained how I have such connections with Barbados and we'd already been to Jamaica and they were intrigued by me and I was intrigued by what they're doing and they haven't got any digital, anything digital, and obviously I'm an entrepreneur so they cover that element, they tick that, but I'm like, listen, through me finding digital it had a knock-on effect for the whole of my family as well because my mum, you know, she started coming to college when I went to college and then said, 'oh, maybe I should fill in this job' and she did, and then she got that job and she's been in that job ever since...

*Brilliant.*

...so that's, you know. My little brother Giovanni, I think has like eighteen years at the same role at Gatwick Airport security. And then recently she was semi-retired and said, 'Oh, I'm a bit bored, I need some extra money though' ... she likes going to the opera ... so I said, 'well, why don't you set up your own business?', so 'you're good at ironing mum, why don't you just do a little ironing business?' so we did a logo and set up a Facebook page and she does her ironing business and she goes to opera all the time. And then my brother's the same as well, he's got a gardening business, and my sister, I did the same with her, we did a logo, we set up a Facebook page, showed them what to do, and they've got their own business, so, you know, changing one person's life can have such a massive effect ...

*Such effect, yes...*

Yeah, domino effect. But, yeah, the Prince's Trust are phenomenal and what they're doing out in Barbados is brilliant, because Barbados is a small island, is only 300,000, so you can really see the significance ...

*...see the difference, yeah.*

What's going to be a beast is when we go to Jamaica because you can fit twenty-six of Barbados in Jamaica and there's a lot more social problems in Jamaica and poverty and, you know, I'm a believer as well that this country was massively built on the Caribbean and we need to massively give back. And I'm so proud that the Prince's Trust has taken that angle and taking the step and are really making a difference and that their results have been phenomenal. I was very lucky, about three months ago, for they said, 'oh, we've got a VIP party, are you going to be there?' and I was, like, 'oh, not really, but I can be', did a bit of research because they're not allowed to flog the thing around, and noticed that Prince Charles was going to be on the island at the time so I thought he might probably be there ...

00:29:01

*Might turn up, yeah.*

Yeah. And I helped them with some ... they didn't have the contacts out there, met this most amazing ... my friend, Paula in Jamaica, introduced me to this amazing woman, Dominique, out in Barbados, and Dominique's phenomenal and knows everybody, so Dominique helped us and led the way in introducing us to some of the leading hotels trusts out there, so we managed to raise them a lot of money, raised the Prince's Trust the funding they needed to take the project further through the Caribbean, and they said to me, 'Oh, Lisa, you're going to meet Prince Charles, so got to meet the Prince himself' ...



*...lovely*

...which was really cool.

*Really nice.*

Yeah, really lucky, yeah, I'm just really proud to be part of it and the difference that they're making. I know that we can help them digitally and we're going to partner with them on a lot of things and really, really make a lot of impact.

*It's just so incredible, yeah.*

Yeah, it's really exciting.

*And it's really nice that it's making changes now. If we look back ... I don't know, thirty, forty, fifty years ... and see where technology has brought us, then where do you see it going in the next twenty, thirty years?*

I think it can massively change lives. My only concern at the moment is we're very stagnant in education. Throughout the world, you know, I think China is doing a massive, they've done a massive move in training, they changed their whole education system in terms of Artificial Intelligence because they want to be leaders by 2030, and the Chinese are very determined and they will be ...

*They are, yeah..*

... yeah, and America's just opened, they've just got massive funding for a big institute out in New York that they're going to focus on Artificial Intelligence, and there's massive moves ... I see a lot of courses offered to private schools and my concern now is, we're getting a massive divide between the rich and poor again and the rich, very well-educated and digital and the poor, not becoming very well-

educated or even the middle classes, and we need to ensure that our education system has the fundamentals of ... I believe that digital has to be the fourth pillar of education, you know, with maths and English and science, and we really need to focus on that. And it's vital that we start investing in our young as we've seen with knife crime rising and they've had a direct link now between cuts and our curriculum for computing and digital has actually had cuts, and we need to [laughs], you know, we nearly need to invest in this otherwise we're going to see ourselves massively behind. And when you think of London being this phenomenal, or the UK as amazing, you know, we're this little island that produces these phenomenal future thinking, you know, creatives, and that's the thing that I believe as well, with computing, is yes, computers are going to be able to cope better than us, but they can't be creative like us. You know, we are the most amazing, when it comes to fashion designing, music making, we really are a hub of creativity and I believe the UK specifically is that hub of creativity. We can give masses to a digital world and then follow that through and help educate the rest of the world, especially using the Commonwealth.

00:32:32

*It's extraordinary to think that so much new stuff will come and yet we can't really envisage what it is yet.*

Yeah.

*There are people out there who know what that is and it's the children, as you say, they're going to take that forward.*

Yeah.

*Thinking of... you're active in blogs, you're active in social media, which social environment do you find is the most useful for getting things recognised?*

Well, it's interesting. Social's taken an interesting direction. I think anything that gets commercial slowly starts ... not leading in the right way necessarily. So all the platforms have a purpose, depending on what you are, so if you're in the fashion industry obviously Pinterest and Instagram are going to ... you know, they're visual, they're going to be massive for you, so it depends on what subject area rather than what you want to achieve. If you're doing professional stuff then LinkedIn by far is that route and also LinkedIn, since Microsoft has taken over, they have actually improved so many areas which usually when a big company takes over they don't necessarily improve, but LinkedIn is a very cool place for the professional arena and that's something that we want young people to realise, that they need to get on LinkedIn and get their profile and stuff, becoming thought leaders and if they're, you know, really interested in a specific subject like, for example, cars ... you know, cars are just full of digital now, you know, the computers that are in cars, we won't have the people to be able to fix the cars if we're not careful [laughs], there'll be a bug and there won't be no one to fix it so...

*They won't know what to do with it.*

Yeah, we really need to invest in our young.

*What advice would you give them, any specific advice to young people who are thinking of going into technology in any way?*

00:34:39

Become a thought-leader in that space and start building your platforms. You know, you are the future leaders and the future creators and if you want to ... so, if it was, for example, Artificial Intelligence, then create a blog, create your Instagram, start talking on LinkedIn, and if you start talking and wrapping yourself in that area - I think it's Malcolm Gladwell who says if you spend 10,000 hours on a certain area then you will be an expert in that and of course you will. If you do that, companies will be all over you because there's no way you will not be an expert if you just live and breathe a

certain subject and talk about it with passion and love they will come and find you. They're starting to realise as well, you know, they are on the hunt for these amazing individuals and now we've got the rise of other social platforms like TikTok, which is a phenomenal platform and is video-based, but it's really interesting because they purchased musically recently and now the numbers are just going through the roof and the kids love it. And it's short videos as well on how to do things as well as ... when it was musically it was sort of music-based, as the name says, but now it's like, you know, it's becoming pretty sophisticated and I think brands like LinkedIn and Instagram and Facebook have got someone hot on their heels and ... you know, and SnapChat ... and it's the future. It is evolving and I think companies like Facebook need to ... the funny thing about Facebook is ... I love Facebook, a lot of the community element of Facebook, but they are becoming that commercial beast so they're worrying a lot more about money than the other areas which are the people and the community, and I think they need to heavily invest in our young like all of the social media platforms. And also, you know, our governments obviously have let these companies get away with a lot of things because they are unaware of what these companies are doing because our governments aren't educated enough, and I think there's a massive piece in educating governments [laughs].

*But maybe the young need to educate these older ones.*

I think they do, yeah.

*Reverse monitoring.*

Sure, yeah, reverse monitoring, I think there's a big piece in that for sure.

*What brings you the most joy in your life?*

The most joy, obviously I like friends, family and spending time with them, but Digilearning, watching these kids progress and seeing how much they love learning and when they do learn something. When we was in Barbados there was a young girl

and she had mental health issues and I taught her how to search using Google and the excitement from watching her, you know, high-fiving me and ... it was a simple search, it was unbelievable and even when I was speaking about doing the workshops with the Catford, Lewisham boroughs, for my friend's team summit, it was amazing when you receive a message from one of the girls saying 'thank you so much, thank you for talking about digital to me, I never realised how interesting it was and I really want to go down that route', so I think they're the rewarding parts.

*00:38:15*

*What goals for the future?*

Goals for the future is to create the leading education, entertainment brand for the world really. I think it's massively needed and we've seen all of these games like Roadblocks and Minecraft and ... I can't think of the one that all the kids are going mad about but its ...

*Fortnite?*

Fortnite, which is ... we need to make the equivalent in education where the kids go mad for ... you know, there's no reason for it not to, we just need the right brands and creatives on board. So with our Digilearning platform we want to get the kids creating it with us as well, we want them to be part of the journey and for them to massively be involved in it.

*What else is on your vision board for the next couple of years?*

The vision board is to ... we're aiming by 2023 to have reached twenty million, which is a big number but I believe we can because if you've got a digital platform that's what's phenomenal about having a digital platform. If Facebook can reach billions then we can reach, you know, we can definitely reach 20,000 kids, or 20,000 young people, teachers and parents. It's just we need the right supporters on board to help

and, you know, I just think it's vital that these companies will also realise that these young people are their future employees, you know, they're the ones that they want to employ.

*And their clients.*

And clients, you know, this is so important for their future companies and also, at the moment the kids, they're not silly young people either, they realise that these are marketing ploys that these companies are using and they're not fooled by it and they switch off of brands immediately. If brands don't touch hearts and be there in the foundations and you've actually helped these young people, they're much more likely to have a connection to you, so you know, it's good for business and in all forms, in terms of getting people in and having your skills and creating the best technology as well as they're your customers. They're your customers so it's vital.

*[laughs] It's absolutely vital.*

Yeah.

*Thinking about what you've done so far, which is a lot, which would you say were your key achievements that you're, not necessarily proudest of, but the most pleased that they've worked?*

Em, well, I suppose Digilearning is the one for me. You know, Digiwoo, we were ground-breaking ten years ago, you know, when we was selling into companies and trying to get them on social and it was phenomenal. When you work with companies like Mediamouth which were an adtech company who ... you know, bland, boring, nobody really wanted to know anything about them ... and we made them cool and gorgeous and ensured that they were in every ... you know, all over the industry, and that helped them become the brand that they are now. So, I think that helping brands like that ... Another one is Hewlett Packard. Two years ago they invested in a film called Manto and it was about the partitioning in India, about the short story writer

who wrote about the dark side and he also was a real women's advocate as well, he wrote about a lot of women's lives and what they were dealing with at the time and it was a phenomenal film and it was amazing working with a cool brand that believed in it and backed it. We're hoping to get HP to believe in us and back Digilearning as well.

*That would be great, wouldn't it.*

They are talking to us, yes, it would and they've got the power. [laughs]

*What's the worse decision you've made in your career to date?*

Oh, worse decision I've made ... [pause] I don't think there really has been as such. I think all of anything that's been ... So, I did get investment ... after I had my daughter Mia I worked for a guy called Dan Wagner and it was an amazing company called Powa at the time – it was called Venda and then changed its name to Powa – but it was e-commerce so it was getting brands to get online really and sell their products, so it was Mothercare and Ted Baker, to Panasonic, to Allders back then [laughs] who died a death and owed us some money at the time ... in administration while we was building their sophisticated online presence ... but it was interesting because it was a small company and Dan was a real entrepreneur and really believed in e-commerce. But then I had my daughter and I realised that I couldn't deliver what Dan would want, you know, he wanted you to sleep in the office really, so I went and got investment with a business partner, from him, for an idea that we had. We got a quarter of a million quid, he invested in us but then I soon realised that he had ulterior motives and it was getting very political and I was lucky enough to have had Sian Osmond in my life and a few other believers and I decided ... that's when I decided to set up Digiwoo because I had this massive interest in social media and was doing behind the scenes. But, yeah, I think that was a difficult part, that was a difficult time because it was this, you know, I'd taken my baby, this idea to him, and it had all sort of fallen apart, but ... you know, in hindsight it was the best experience.

*It worked out well, didn't it?*

Yes, so I don't think anything came bad from that ... you learn from it, don't you, and at the time it seems awful but some of your biggest failures can be your biggest pushers for your next move going forward.

*Exactly. What about you is least documented that you'd like people to know?*

What about me is least documented? Em ... I suppose all my technical expertise. You know, that's not really documented, people look more at my persona. I'm not the normal, as we know, the normal person in the tech space, I'm a woman for one, I'm quite glamorous another, so people focus more on that than actually I can code website at the weekend, you know, when one of your best friends asks you to put together something and that I can pull. I've been so lucky that the course I did, the degree, I can do anything, I feel that I can do anything. If I can't I will find someone that will do it or I'll work out how to do it through using Google.

*Yes, exactly.*

Yeah, so more I suppose, my technical expertise is not that well-documented.

*That's nice. It's been an absolute pleasure to meet you. Thank you for being open and honest and interesting and inspiring and sharing your knowledge and experience with us.*

Yeah, thank you.

[recording ends at 00:45:49]