



Season Two Episode Two – released June 2022

With Julian Hall – The Ultra-preneur and Founder of Ultra Education

Jeff Dewing (00:05):

Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors - the podcast where you get to meet leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book and changed the way their sector does business.

I'm Jeff Dewing and I'm the founder and CEO of Cloudfm, a business where we thrive on taking risk. So our clients don't have to.

Today, you're gonna meet Julian Hall. Julian has been changing the game in education for children in disadvantaged backgrounds. He has introduced education on becoming an entrepreneur into the school curriculum and exposing children to the understanding of running your own business.

Julian, now referred to as the ultra-preneur launched his multi award-winning education program, Ultra Education just four years ago, Julian's also written three business books and just launched his latest startup. The world's first artificial intelligence chat bot that can teach entrepreneurship to kids and teens. And it's called [#askultra](#). Reading Julian's story highlights the real pinnacle of purpose for me. His passion comes across in everything you watch and read about him. And I cannot wait to get this conversation going.

Welcome, Julian, and thanks for joining me today.

Julian Hall (01:57):

Thank you for having me, Jeff, how you doing?

Jeff Dewing (02:00):

Um, not bad mate, not bad at all. And I'm looking forward to this morning's chat.

So let me start by asking you to sort of set the scene. Um, yeah. What, what's your background? Uh, and what was the choice of career you made when you sort of left school and, and moved into your early learnings of actually, you know, having a career and, and becoming an entrepreneur?

Julian Hall (02:21):

Sure. So, um, I was born and raised in Northwest London, a borough called Brent, and it had all the usual kind of disadvantage and socio-economic challenges. I had a really passionate mother who really geared me towards education and coming from the Caribbean, she was Grenadian born, um, in the West Indies they really value education, highly. And actually a funny story that she she was a nurse and when she was pregnant with me just before she gave birth on the same day, she was finishing her last exams for nursing <laugh>. So you know, my aunt would often tell me that you know, she finished her exams and then she went to have me <laugh>. So, you know maybe I had academics in the, in the genes, but I also kind of recognized that even though my mother was a stickler for education, that actually that wasn't the full story for me.

Julian Hall (03:23):

And what I saw was through education is I saw opportunity and it was the, it was that opportunity that led me into entrepreneurship. It was the sense that in everything that I'd learned in school, that I could do more than just what the world had presented to me in a career path or a nine to five job. And, and actually at the time, I wasn't really presented with exciting jobs or an exciting career path that I felt would match the ambition that I had as a teenager. And the only option that I had, which lit my fire was doing my own thing, was entrepreneurship, was starting my own business and experimenting and taking a risk and seeing where that went. And so I think it was the, the lack of opportunity that existed for me as a young man in that area.

Julian Hall (04:20):

That almost forced me to think of other opportunities, other ways in which I could realize my potential.

I'm using these words now. That's not those words, the words I was using back then it was just, it was just a feeling that I had. I can, I can explain it better now, but at the time I just didn't feel as if

what was being presented to me by the world was enough and that there was something else that I could do. And that was my, my gateway into entrepreneurship and trying to do my own thing.

Jeff Dewing (04:52):

But you also went into studying and getting involved in investment at some point in your early career.

Julian Hall (04:59):

Yeah. So what had happened? I, I had started my first business when I was 18. It was a fashion company with a, with some friends of mine. And it was really because we couldn't afford to buy the flash clothes that we saw in the music videos. So we had to make them ourselves. And my girlfriend at the time had just qualified from London College of Fashion. So she, she designed the clothes, you know, she taught us how to make, make the clothes. And so we'd solve a problem for us in being able to have cool clothes and, you know, for not much money, but we'd also solved that problem for other people you know, peers and, you know, other - that generation of the time. I then after that tried a few other businesses between my late teens and early twenties, but none of them worked out.

Julian Hall (05:43):

I, I didn't, I was trying to figure it all out on my own. There weren't any business mentors, there was no internet at the time. You know, there wasn't a Jeff that I could reach out to and ask for some advice. So I just thought, you know what, I'm gonna do, what my mom told me, just go and get a job, like a normal person. And I ended up from that point getting you know, a few hop, skips and jumps having a career in investment banking. So, you know, and, and again, looking back at it, I believe that that early experience of entrepreneurship without having a degree, was able to get me into a career in investment banking because I could sell myself really well. I was a quick learner. I didn't give up when things didn't, didn't go well. And I just tried to listen and understand things as much as I could. And I think that really worked in a in a, in a corporate environment. And so that's when I, you know, I had this career in the Canary Wharf in the city for a number of years.

Jeff Dewing (06:45):

And that clearly gave you insight and experience that was always gonna aid you in your future entrepreneur journey. Because that knowledge and information of the investment process really opens your eyes up to stuff that most people have got no idea about. So yeah. So thanks for that, Julian. That's great. So now, now it's, I'm really interested because I want to begin by trying to understand, you know, what was it that drew you into the desire to engage children into entrepreneurship? I guess we got an insight into that question because of some of the things you said already, but I really wanna sort of peel those layers back and get under the skin of it. And more importantly is once you've decided that that's what you want to do, and you go on that journey, tell me how you think it will truly impact their lives or, or the view of your view of, of what their life and their work life will be when they eventually leave school. What impact do you think it's gonna have? So start off with telling me what drew you into it, and then tell me what you think the benefit and the outcomes will be.

Julian Hall (07:42):

Sure. So there were two main things which drew me into it, Jeff. And the first one was when I ran a business, it was a digital agency in Shoreditch back in 2006, 2007, I would often be asked to go into corporates and schools and colleges and universities to talk about my journey. You know, how did I end up having a business in Shoreditch doing my own thing? Why would I leave a safe and secure investment banking job and do this, you know, startup thing, you know, for a lot of people at that time, it just seemed counter-intuitive. So what, what would happen when I would go into schools, when I would go into education, the questions that the students would ask me about business and entrepreneurship concerned me because they were very basic questions. And it made me realize that, well, if you are asking me that means you can't be taught this stuff.

Julian Hall (08:40):

That means no one else is telling you, right. And if you're stopping me in the hallways, as I'm leaving, right, this, this, this lecture that I've, that I've just done to ask me more questions, it means that you really don't have anyone else to talk to and that you're interested in this stuff too. Around that time young people felt more confident about entrepreneurship because they saw that well, they were watching Dragons Den, The Apprentice, you know, they saw that all of these, a lot of these smart entrepreneurs were young as well. So it made them feel like they could take part in this sport. We

call entrepreneurship. But over time I realized that it wasn't just one student or one kid that didn't have support. It would, there were loads of them. And then when I would speak to teachers and lecturers in university, I'd say, you know, do you guys actually teach them about entrepreneurship, not business in the macro sense, not big business, but how to start up a business and they'd say no.

Julian Hall (09:36):

And I'm like, so what do you teach? 'em In business studies then? Well, we study your business, but we don't teach them how to start one up. So that really concerned me. I thought, well, you know, what chance does the next generation of entrepreneurs have if they're not being taught it at a young age? The second really big influence that I had was my daughter. So around this time my daughter was, she was still a child from the primary school. But so that I could be close to her, because I had done a lot of traveling in the first few years of her life - so that I could be close to her, in my home office she would have a little playpen and she would, she would play around and you know, whenever I'd have a call, she would know to be quiet and you know, all the rest of we had this little thing going on.

Julian Hall (10:23):

After a couple of years we had a, a garden party just with family and friends and halfway through, she came to the patio doors with about six or seven of her cousins. And she said, 'right, everyone we've made you stuff to buy. And if you don't have any money, we've made you credit cards too'. <Laugh> and everyone looked at me and said, Julian, what have you been teaching this poor child? You know, this you've been teaching her these evil corporate ways. And actually I hadn't taught her a thing. She had just absorbed everything that dad was doing. And she was just replaying it in a way that a child does, right. Children just pretend to be like adults. And so it then dawned me that, 'well, if a seven year old can pick this stuff up unintentionally, what if we deliberately taught it?'

Julian Hall (11:16):

Now, my wife is, is an early years teacher. So she's in a lot of experienced expert educator. And we then realized that actually, if you unpack entrepreneurship, it's a bunch of teachable skills. Yes, people are born with, with a few, you know, things that can give them an advantage, but actually, you know, you can teach teamwork, you can teach leadership, you can teach problem solving. You can put people through experiences that make that make them more resilient. So that was those

two things combined. I had this growing compulsion to solve the problem of kids and young people, not knowing about entrepreneurship as it exists today and being able to do it at scale. So as opposed to, you know, people thinking that entrepreneurs have been sprinkled with magic dust at birth and that they were just lucky or they had some particular superpower - that actually entrepreneurship should be available to everyone. Not that everyone will become an entrepreneur, but in the same way, when I was 18, I didn't think there was a job out there for me. So why I wanted to do my own thing that other young people should be able to have the same opportunity if they want to, to at least explore the idea of starting their own business.

Jeff Dewing (12:29):

Which, which I, I think is great. I, I guess my question at that point then is how does, how does the institution of education respond to that? How, how did they feel when you were starting to say, 'look, we wanna make this to the curriculum'. You know, were they anti, were they going, 'oh no, no, no. You know, we don't do things that way'. I mean, how did they respond?

Julian Hall (12:48):

It's really interesting. And it took me a few years to work out where the friction was. And if you speak to teachers, most teachers, head teachers and others would agree that having an entrepreneurial mindset and an, and an entrepreneurial skill set is a good thing. However, if you go all the way up to the Department for Education they, they think otherwise not that they discount the value of it, but I remember speaking to a woman her I've forgotten her name, but I'm sure it's Google-able who actually created an, A-level for entrepreneurship. Right? And she said, the reason why it wasn't accepted by DfE. And the reason why it doesn't exist in the curriculum today is because DfE said that 'if you study plumbing, you'll become a plumber. If you study marketing, you can go in, you can get a job in marketing.

Julian Hall (13:40):

If you study medicine, you could become a doctor. If you study entrepreneurship, there's nothing for you to become'. They couldn't connect it to an industry, to a sector, to a, they couldn't connect doing A-level entrepreneurship to a job. So they just discounted the value of it. Right? And so when you ask, did they accept it? Does education accept it? Teachers accept it for the most part, but it would appear that the department for education hasn't yet - and this was some years ago, they may be

getting closer to it now - but they've not fully been able to work out where does entrepreneurship fit within the rest of the subjects in the curriculum? And that's one of the things that I'd like to do more of, you know, educating them around.

Jeff Dewing (14:26):

That's really simulated an interesting thought in my mind because entrepreneurialism is sort of a word that people hear, but they don't really ever dig deep enough to understand what it actually means. And I guess a lot of people will just come out and shoot from the hip as to what they believe it to be. It's about starting their own business. It's about making money. It's about selling business. It's about all that stuff. When in actual fact, I don't think it's any of those things. What I think entrepreneurialism is, is somebody looking at the world through their eyes and that might be plumbing. It might be industry, it might be government, it might be public sector. It could be any of those things. And what they're doing is they're saying something's not right. You know, we need to fix this thing. We need to disrupt and change and improve and enrich people's lives, which currently they're losing out'. And an entrepreneur's job or an entrepreneur is somebody that's has no fear in saying 'I'm gonna go fix that problem'. And that's how I would probably link the word entrepreneur.

Julian Hall (15:24):

Yeah. I really like that. And whenever we talk to kids about business, we always ask them, what problem are you solving that you're passionate about? Because entrepreneurship isn't just about selling someone something, or making some money from it. It's about saying, how can you add value to people's lives by solving a problem through a product or a service that is compelling enough for them to pay for, and then pay for again, right? And then you have the makings of something. So I, I, I couldn't agree more.

Jeff Dewing (15:53):

Mm. And then of course, if you then play that back and it's something that my listeners will hear me say frequently, and they'll probably go, oh, here we go again. But there's one thing that really summarizes all this for me. And I only came to, it only came to me a few years ago and I wish I'd have known this when I was at school and coming outta school and it's ikigai. Right? So a ikigai, a Japanese tradition that basically translates as the meaning of life. And it's four circles intertwined and it asks four questions. What do you love? What are you good at? What can you get paid for and

what change you're gonna make in the world. Right? And when you can answer those questions, of course, as a youngster, you don't, you can't answer those questions straight away. You've gotta go through some life experience to understand what you, what, what you enjoy, what you don't enjoy.

Jeff Dewing (16:37):

But the ultimate aim is if you don't love what you do, you don't do it. If you, and, and the other thing that's really great that I love in the world when you've understood that you there's a challenge or a problem that you wanna fix, or you wanna address, or you wanna improve is be the change you want to see. And essentially what that then does is creates a driving a passion that is relentless, and people that get into that stage and understand it. The reason they tend to be very successful is they don't see the mountain. They only see the summit and it just drives, right? So if we could get the youngsters in the world to say, and, and have a mindset that says, 'it's really important that you do what you love', and you need to learn as fast as possible, what it is you love.

Jeff Dewing (17:24):

And I think that will then put them on a road that will help them understand, you know, the real focus. And of course, life's about keeping things simple, right? You can't have kids reading 30 books a week, and God knows that I know the confusion comes with it. How do you give them something really simple? That helps him understand, you know, going beyond the plumber or the electrician or the nurse. So it, it's a fascinating subject. And it's, and it's one that I'm starting as, I unpeel this stuff. And obviously reading a lot about you. I'm starting to realize how important that journey is, because it will shape the future. You know, the, the children of the future. We know that, and it's a bit of a cliché, but the millennials will be running this country in five years time. So we need to understand that the Gen Zs are, are not far behind and they seem to be, the ones are teaching us oldies a huge amount of value in what we should be doing in our lives going forward.

Julian Hall (18:14):

Yeah. I mean, you know, you, you've, you've really kind of hit the nail on the head of what sits behind how and why we teach entrepreneurship and you know, our slogan for the company is 'Do what you love.' And it's because what we've realized, when I, when I've read the biographies of many successful entrepreneurs, you, you, you get to, you get to see that they're not doing it for the money. They're doing it because they're passionate about it. And and even in your book, Jeff which I've got

here, <laugh> I, I was really, you know, it really made me smile when you said that your dad was his success because he did what he loved and he made money from it. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. And that really resonated with me because that's, that's what we tell our kids. We say to them, look, whether you start your own business or you get a job, it should be something you enjoy.

Julian Hall (19:09):

And it should be something that you love doing because you are gonna spend a lot of time working, right? Mm. Not just in the day or the week, but for your life, you'll spend a lot of time doing it. So why do something that you hate or that you just really dislike? And that seems like something which is obvious, but a lot of people in this country are doing work that they don't like, you know, lots of people do not look forward to Monday mornings and they celebrate, you know, Fridays. Right? Why not celebrate the whole thing? I mean, it, it sounds utopian, but and there isn't everything in every aspect of our work that we love. But as you say, love the summit, right? As, as you've rightly put, like the actual thing that you are trying to achieve, that should be the thing that you love, right.

Julian Hall (19:54):

Climbing up mountain is gonna be difficult. You're gonna get some scrapes. It's gonna be tiring. Right. But you are relentless because you love the, the summit. You love the, the, the mission you love, the, the, the problem that, that you're trying to solve. And for us, what we've found actually with children and young people. And I was explaining this to someone earlier on in the week is that kids do know what they love. They just don't wanna tell adults because adults would normally rubbish it for them. Right? So if, if a young person wants to become an in an Instagram influencer, or they wanna become a YouTuber, a footballer or whatever, right. They often don't tell their parents and teachers this, because they'll say that's not a real job, or you'll never become a pilot, or, you know, you'll never become a YouTuber.

Julian Hall (20:43):

That's ridiculous. Right. So they just don't say anything. Usually what happens because in the work that we do, we put kids in a safe space and we say to them, look, it doesn't matter what you wanna become because there's, there's a business model behind almost anything now. Right. They're then more, they then feel more comfortable. They, they don't feel as exposed. So they don't feel as if, if they share that with us, that we'll just shoot them down in flames. Right? And so for us, it's about

saying, look, you know exercise that. And if it's, if you're seven years old and you like watching YouTube, then be YouTube. You like reading books, write books. If you like artwork, create your own artwork, et cetera, et cetera. Right. And, and that can change over time, but at least you now know the mechanism of, of what that feels like, so that you are then more confident to do it again later on.

Jeff Dewing (21:35):

Well, yeah. And of course you I dunno, people say I'm lucky enough or I'm lucky enough, but I've got five children, eight grandchildren, and my view of children and their psyche and their, their mentality has materially changed. As a grandfather versus as a father, when we're all working all the hours under sun justifying that we're working all the hours under sun justifying that we've gotta put a roof over their heads and stuff like that. And it's not to hear a granddad. You think 'God, I got all that wrong' and mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, and when you then start to listen to children, especially if you come, you know, you've got into business and you've learned a lot of stuff, you've become a leader. They're unfiltered, right? They're totally unfiltered. And the second you start shutting em down, then you start worrying them for the future, which is why we're all wired.

Jeff Dewing (22:21):

The more you can let them be creative and reach for the stars and have those moonshots, the more chance they've got on that success and improving the world. But it's a difficult thing to do because as adults, we all think we know best. And nine times outta 10, we are, and we are still learning from children. I mean, my seven year old granddaughter will come out with phrases to me and I'll go, 'where on earth did that come from'? And yet it it's it's, and it's fascinating. And it's, and it's, it's glorifying. And I love it.

And of course the other thing I wanna pick up on what you just said there, we all know how the, the, how society has been reacting to stress, right? We're all worried about mental health. It's gonna become a big subject, and mental health is driven by how you're feeling, depression, stressed and all those other things.

Jeff Dewing (23:02):

And again, life for me is about how do you simplify a message that people can hone in on and potentially address? It doesn't mean it's gonna fix everything. But when people would say to me, oh,

my wife says something, you, look, you look stressed. I go, yeah, I am, I am stressed. I've got a lot of things on my shoulders at the moment. I don't really know what to do. But I'm gonna try this and try that until one day I heard someone say something, I think it was actually Simon Sinek. And he gave me the clarity. I've been looking for all my career. And he said, 'if you are doing stuff you don't love. That's called stress. If you are doing stuff you love, that's called passion. And your mental mindset is completely reversed'.

So if you feel like you are stressed, you need to question what it is you're doing, because you know, trying to overcome stress and take some pills, take some time off, all you're doing is kicking the can down the road, right?

Jeff Dewing (23:53):

So you've got to really assess it. Because those people that feel there is nowhere to go. 'If I, if I leave this role or leave this job or stop running this company what am I gonna do next?' Then you're just carrying your stress further. Whereas when you make that jump, you'll be amazed how adaptable the human race is. And we've only gotta look at how we've responded to COVID. When we all said at the time, 'what an earth are we gonna do?' And here we are all adapting, right? So you have to have that understanding that you will always adapt, but it's about mindset. And I think it's an interesting journey when I, you know, when I reflect on, on mental health and it's just helped give me a lot of clarity. And it's also helped me drive that clarity through the people I work with by saying, if you don't love every part of what you do, then don't do it.

Jeff Dewing (24:41):

And if there are parts of what you do that you think I'd rather not do, then find somebody else in your team that loves that bit of work, or let them do what they love. So, in my case, I hate doing expenses drives me mad, but I've got a lady in my team who loves doing expenses. So I say, can you do my expenses? So she's absolutely punching the air going 'I've got, to do some more expenses today'. <Laugh> and of course, suddenly everyone is now doing what they love. And it's about the bravery and courage to do that.

Julian Hall (25:07):

Yeah. You know, and I think that's a real freeing message because it means that everyone can find their place in the world and be empowered to do that. Because as I said, often, people are in jobs

that they may be good at, but they don't actually like it. Right. So, and this is the other big differentiator, there are loads of people in corporate that I met, who are really, really good at their job, but they're not passionate about it. And I just think, wow, okay, we've got that bit. We've got that bit wrong, haven't we? Because in school, actually, what young people have been told is do the thing you're good at for a job. Right. But just because you're good at it, it doesn't mean you're gonna be passionate about it, or it doesn't mean you'll be passionate about it forever. Right. And that's the other thing I think there was a parent who came to us and said that her son had set up a business. He was only like 12, he set up a business and six months later, he wanted to do another one and six months later, he wanted to do another one. And she said, you know, 'why can't he stick to one business?' I said, 'well, he sounds like a serial entrepreneur to me.' <Laugh>

Julian Hall (26:10):

And and I said, actually if he is gonna chop and change, why not chop and change at 12 years old. Right? You know, why not? You know, what's the problem. But it's because there's this narrative that parents are picking up from society and from teachers, which is like, you know, stick with it, even if you hate it. And sometimes you do have to stick with something for long enough before you realize you hate it. And actually you can differentiate, you know, it being hard from actually not liking it right. There is, there is something there. But actually, you know, for me, it was, well, you know, it, it's better that they do that now so that they can work through all the things that they like or don't like and explore it. So when they get a bit older, they can say, well, I've tried a bunch of things. And I'm closer now to the thing that I would love doing. And, and there's that confidence to then go into a job and say, you know what, I, I love working with numbers. You know, if you want me to do expenses, I'll do them all day long. <Laugh> there will be someone that will hire you for that. Right. Yeah, of course. You know, cause you'll be taking a problem away from someone.

Jeff Dewing (27:17):

Mm. Yeah, absolutely. And I, and I, listen, I love, I absolutely love what you just said there, because you know, in our, in our business and the environment I work in all the time, I say to everyone in our business, it is impossible to fail in this organization. You only succeed or learn. Right. Mm-hmm <affirmative> so, and if you look at that example, you've just given where someone is trying different things and you're absolutely right. Because we are wired, right. We've been wired in our generation and our growing up and our education that we say, 'you just gotta stick to something'. No, you

haven't. Right. You've got to play and you've got to learn. And if you are doing that learning, when you are 12 years old, then it saves a huge amount of time and gives you absolute clarity when you suddenly move into that work environment. So I think it's a, I think it's absolutely genius that you encourage kids to do stuff like that because the knowledge they're gaining is off the scale. If they only start gaining that knowledge at 18, 19, then potentially they're gonna go through some real hardships before they really understand what, what they care about. So I, yeah, I, I love that. I love that quote. So Julian, so in view of this incredible conversation, which I'm loving, tell me what's next for Julian.

Julian Hall (28:20):

So really, really great question. And it's something that I've, you know, I've been thinking about a lot more, especially during the, during post pandemic you know, where do we want to go and just kind of resetting that.

One of the things that we started off with as an idea, was getting entrepreneurship into the curriculum. And as I've said to you, you know, I'd met with DfE, Ofsted, bunch of teachers. And to be honest with you, I kind of gave up on that idea years later, which is, you know, this year I thought about it again. And I realized that one of the reasons why the Department for Education hasn't, hasn't taken entrepreneurship into the curriculum is because they need evidence that there's impact and that there's educational value if you were the Department for Education and you are in control of 30,000 schools and millions of kids, you are not gonna go on Julian or Jeff's say-so either, right?

Julian Hall (29:19):

You're gonna want some kind of evidence. So, so what I've decided to do is over the next maybe 18 months or so is to reconfigure our curriculum, expand it for all of the key stages and to provide for free to as many schools as you would take it an entire curriculum an entire teachable curriculum on entrepreneurship. So it'll have all of the schemes of work, lesson plans, resources that teachers are used to pulling off you know, the internet and delivering. So that if we can get enough schools that, that are using this curriculum, we can then go to the Department for Education and say, 'look, we've got thousands and thousands of schools who are using this. This is how they've said, it's been benefiting students now, will you put it into the curriculum?' Right. So I'll have some evidence.

Julian Hall (30:12):

And then I can start using that evidence to lobby the right people in government to get them closer to saying, 'look, you know, if I'm honest, the schools are already using a curriculum. It's updated every year. Teachers can adapt it, they're already using it, all it, all it now requires is for you, you know, tick to officially make it part of the curriculum'. There are other countries in the world, if you have entrepreneurship in their curriculum, we are essentially behind the the ball on that. And so that's one of the things that I, you know, I really want to get done. And I suppose, you know, our mission is to ensure that every child has access to effective entrepreneurial education. That that's our mission, right? And the only way we can do that is to do it at scale is to do it by, you know, getting into schools and also getting parents, giving parents the resources and the tools that they can use to encourage entrepreneurship in their kids. So that's, that's kind of next.

The other mechanism we're gonna use is technology. So we've got a prototype of a chat bot which can learn the way in which children digest information so that it can autonomously is what we're trying to get it to do, teach entrepreneurship, using our curriculum in the same way that a teacher would do. So it's, it's an entrepreneurship tuition app. So those are the two ways that we hope to use to scale the availability of entrepreneurship to kids everywhere.

Jeff Dewing (31:48):

And that's, that's great, cuz at the end of the day, technology is an enabler, right? So if you're getting that right, it certainly does drive it. I've just suddenly thought as well. Do you remember the program? 7, 14, 21 where they followed the kids for the first seven years of their lives. Mm. And then they went to 14, 21 and then 50, I think it was and seeing the journey of how different children unfolded from different backgrounds. You imagine that, you know, if you went on an even bigger plan where you are following the entrepreneurship curriculum, that's being delivered by the schools and then actually following a dozen kids that have gone through that journey and into entrepreneurship and some fail, some succeed or they all succeed cause they've had the education- I dunno!

But I mean, what incredible advice that would be or evidence that would be when you then go to, to the, the institution, if you're still pushing against closed doors, that you can then actually evidence look at the impact that had on these kids that actually went through that journey.

Jeff Dewing (32:37):

So, you know, that, that would be, you know, that would be a fascinating story to watch that unfold, but of course only downside is, its time. Right.

Julian, brilliant. Love that as well. Love, love the idea, love the principle, love the purpose, love the passion. And, and I think it's I find it all quite fascinating really.

So now if I look at if I look at all the things that, that, that we do and all the things that we, all the changes that we wanna see in the world, based upon your experience, what you've learned, the challenges you faced, the closed doors, pushing the water up hill, all the things you've had to go through. What one piece of advice would you give to the list ener now that wanted to start their own business and become a disrupter?

Julian Hall (33:22):

It's to repeat what we've said before, but I'll just unpack it a little bit. So it would absolutely be to do what you love. Now, how I will unpack that is by saying this: that doing what you love means that you will, as an individual have a sustainable career, meaning you probably won't give up at solving that problem because you love it. Right. Nine out of 10 businesses fail. And I think one of the reasons for that yes, there's finance and the market and all the rest of it. But actually there was something that a podcaster said once and that he said businesses don't fail. People give up. And I think the reason why they give up is because they weren't genuinely passionate about it at the time. Now sometimes you do fall out of love with things and that's fine too.

Julian Hall (34:15):

But if you are really passionate about something, you might slow down, you might take a break, but you're not gonna stop. And therefore the business - you'll have the ingenuity because of that passion to find the nooks and crannies and, you know, go around or through things or whatever it might be to just get one step further. And so I think for you as an individual so that it can be something which helps to fulfill you as a person, because I think that's really important is purpose and fulfillment. If you don't do something you, you genuinely love and it's not connected to a fin, an immediate financial outcome where it's not just about a financial outcome, then you will just be one of those nine out of 10 businesses that fail right now on the flip side, the reason to do what you love is because if you don't chances are your product or service, won't be that good <laugh> because if you don't love it, then you're not gonna put the time and effort in to make it special.

Julian Hall (35:15):

You're not gonna put the time and effort in to really consider what's going to make this product or service great? And what's gonna make it the best in class? What is going to enable it to create an experience for the customer or the client that will have them coming back that will get them talking about it. If you're not in love with it, you're not gonna do any of those things. You're just gonna package it up as, as basically as possible and try and get it out the door where if you love it, you are always gonna want to improve it. You are always gonna be listening to the customers. You're always gonna wanna see how you can make it better. So I think on both sides doing what you love, if you're starting a business, is important for you and it's important for your customers and clients.

Jeff Dewing (36:00):

Yeah. I, I wholly, wholly agree. And I guess, you know what I would probably add to that as well from my own experiences is that

Jeff Dewing (36:11):

I will declare victory when I hear that people have stopped talking about work/life balance, because for me, there is no work life balance. There's just life, right. And you know, if I go to work from nine to five and I love what I do, and then I read books of an evening because I like to read books or I play pool, or I go to the pub or whatever, the things that make me happy, that's socially acceptable by my family, because I'm not working. Right.

But if I come home at five o'clock and then continue working, that's socially unacceptable. Because you then get put on the pressure going, 'why are you bloody working again?' Right. So, but I'm saying 'I'm not working. I'm doing what I love.' Right? So it's not about, I don't label it as work. And, and the, I guess the, the one thing that you, you need to is back to what we've been saying throughout the whole, this whole conversation.

Jeff Dewing (36:56):

If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life. And if you start a business because you want to earn more money, that's probably the wrong reason to start a business. It's about solving a problem, right? The money will follow when you solve people's problems. And of course it's listen. It's great for people like me. And perhaps you would say, because we've been there, done it, got a t-

shirt we've had those experiences. We've had the benefit of the wisdom when you are much, much younger. You know, you've either got to take that wisdom and trust in it, or you're gonna have to learn yourself and always say to, to, to people around me, my wife and whatever. And I say, look, you can't tell your child when you're teaching them to ride a bike that if you fall off, it'll really, really hurt.

Jeff Dewing (37:37):

<Laugh> right. Doesn't matter how many times you tell 'em they're not gonna appreciate it until they've fallen off right. Then they'll appreciate it. Then they'll change their behavior. You have to experience life before you can adapt to it.

Julian, it's been a fantastic conversation. Absolutely loved every minute of it. You've really opened my eyes to some stuff that that has really sort of got, got me sort of thinking really deeply about, you know, some of those opportunities that you are clearly delivering. I'd like to thank you for your time today. and hopefully we'll catch up again soon.

Julian Hall (38:10):

Thank you for having me, Jeff, and good luck with the with the rest of the episodes on your podcast. I'm sure that it'll all be a tremendous success for you. Thanks for having me again.

Jeff Dewing (38:23):

Well, what a conversation, a big thanks to Julian for taking time to talk to me today. I absolutely thoroughly enjoyed it. I guess the one thing that really stood out for me was the piece when he talked about the youngsters, the children at 12 years old, that were starting a business and were gonna become a YouTube influencer or, or an Instagram influencer or whatever it is that they, they feel at this moment in time they love. And to them realize that actually they don't really like it. So five months later, they're gonna try something else. And six months later, they're gonna try something else. And as, as adults, we are wired to, to say, 'no stick to stick to one thing, stick to one thing, stop trying new things'. But in reality, that's wrong. In reality, letting the children have the freedom to explore means the knowledge they're gaining the lessons they're learning and the ability to understand what it is they love and the speed and acceleration to which they will achieve understanding what they love means that they can hit the ground running when they are a mature adult and moving into the world of having to sustain a living.

Jeff Dewing (39:31):

I think it was a really poignant element of that conversation that says maybe as parents, we are getting it wrong, maybe we need to give children more freedom to fail rather than suggest that by failing, that's a bad thing because the reality of life says, if you don't fail, you don't learn. And part of our responsibility as adults bringing children into the world is to educate and to enable them to learn as fast as possible.

So thanks Julian for that, for, for surfacing that I really, really enjoyed it.

Please do listen back to earlier episodes of Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors, where you'll hear from guests like Jerome Van de Waal, who embarked on a journey to repair the world's oceans with new man-made coral reefs to reignite life in the oceans: an incredible quest that he's, he's embarked on and being successful in. Incredible episode to listen to.

Jeff Dewing (40:49):

Anyway, I'm Jeff Dewing author of the best selling book 'Doing the Opposite' and chief exec of Cloudfm group.

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