



Season Three Episode Seven– released March 2023

A conversation hosted by Jeff Dewing, with Nazir Afzal OBE

Jeff and Nazir discuss how good leaders and those in positions of authority, not only listen to those with less power than themselves, but also do their best to open doors and show those people where the doors are.

Giving a voice to those that don't get heard.

Jeff Dewing:

*Hi, and welcome to Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors, the podcast where you get to meet incredible leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book, and changed the way their sector does business. I'm Jeff Dewing, bestselling author and **CEO of Cloudfm**.*

Before I begin, I'm pleased to announce that for season three, you can now find all of our podcasts in video form on YouTube. Simply search for Jeff Dewing, or click the link in the show notes.

*Today you are going to meet **Nazir Afzal OBE**. Nazir was the Chief Crown prosecutor for the North West of England, and formerly the director in London. Nazir was also chief ex executive of the country's police and crime commissioners. He has written two books, **The Prosecutor** - now being made into a multi-part drama. And most recently, **The Race to the Top**.*

Nazir's focus has been predominantly in the era of violence against women and girls, child sexual abuse and honour-based violence. Despite carrying out over a hundred thousand prosecutions, his most notable was the so-called Rochdale grooming gang, all of which changed the landscape of child protection for the future. When you listen to his story, this truly brings to life the purpose of my podcast - doing the opposite, taking on the establishment is no mean feat, and he's showed no fear in facing such a task.

Hi, and welcome Nazir to the podcast. I can't wait for this conversation. How are you?

Nazir Afzal:

I'm very well, Jeff. Good to speak to you and looking forward to it myself.

Jeff Dewing:

Great stuff. Great stuff.

*Listen, Nazir, I've obviously read your book. **The Prosecutor** is the one I'm referring to. I know you've done a few, and what I find fascinating is that everybody's got a story, but of course there's always twists and turns and value in everyone's story. But your story has gripped me to a level that means I've been so looking forward to this, to this conversation. So I think before we get into the nitty gritty, perhaps if you can give me sort of a one minute just quick snapshot of your journey in terms of what the purpose of your existence is all about.*

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah. I think the, the, the memoir is about amplifying the voices of the unheard. And my whole life has been about trying to make it easier, better for people who've not been listened to, to be heard. And so I did that. I was the first minority chief prosecutor in this country. I was chief prosecutor more than 20 years ago. I spent 25 years in prosecuting. And then in the last six or seven years I've been working in either public and private sector again, trying to find a way by which the authority people in power get to hear the people who they are responsible for. And trying to bridge that gap and changing the laws, changing the way people do things. I never stop, you know, I think you used the word disruptor in some of your writings. I am a disruptor. Yeah. You know a proper pain in the ass, I think is one way of describing it.

Jeff Dewing:

<laugh>. So, listen I'm passionate about doing the best we can to justify our existence and making the world a better place for the people that follow on. But one of the things that you can see in people, especially those that wanna do good when you have the establishment, that might be the NHS, it might be a police force, it might be the criminal environment. We all know about the speed of stuff. We know about the pain, we know about the bureaucracy, the red tape, the self-protectionism, all the things that go on. What do you think it is that enables somebody like you and there's not many people like you that just don't give up? What is it that gets you out when you know you are facing these barriers?

Nazir Afzal:

When I was writing my memoir, I was trying to understand that. My parents came from the very traditional parts of Pakistan. They came to the very traditional parts of Birmingham where I was born. They you know, we grew up in the sixties and seventies when we had nothing. I had no role models. You know, the role models I had as a lawyer, or hopefully as a lawyer were Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Atticus Finch. And Atticus Finch is fictional, Mahatma Gandhi had been murdered by then, and Nelson Mandela was in prison at that time. So those were my role models. When I was eight, my, my eight year old cousin died in my arms. And I carried her for four hours basically.

When I was 14, my uncle was murdered by the IRA in Northern Ireland. You know, I've been touched by tragedy. I've been beaten black and blue by racists myself. Three guys used my head as a football on one

occasion. And when you've been through all of that, they, they call it resilience these days. I dunno what it was just getting through life back in the day.

And having experienced the other side i.e. being the victim, I realised actually there are many other people like me, and we need, they need a voice too, though. They have a voice, they're just not listened to. And so I, you know, I find every opportunity I can to try and change the way, the journey that they go on so they don't have to go on the journey that I went on, which was painful.

Jeff Dewing:

When you are going through your journey, and you've clearly established your purpose about giving people a voice, and it's not just about giving people a voice, it's about creating a better world for them in one form or another. And I think when you are faced these brick walls, you know, these barriers, the establishment, you know what? There must be times when you've gone home and said, 'why am I bothering'?!'

Nazir Afzal:

Lots of times? But that just gives me motivation to try again tomorrow.

Everybody has leverage in some way shape or form. And I, I'm very fortunate, you know, I've been very fortunate and, you know, I've always been at the sort of door of government. I've been working with ministers I've been working with senior leaders in justice and those environments. And so I have access.

I fought for that access. It wasn't given to me on a plate. And, and that means that if the way you help other people is by opening a door for them or showing them where the door is. And that, I think is where I've been able to achieve whatever success I have achieved, is being able to give people access and to use my networks for the greater good, so to speak.

And, you know, there's no getting away from it. There's no shortcuts, you know, I worked, you know, this is probably an experience a lot of children of immigrants will experience. I worked seven days a week, 365 days a year. I mean, when I left prosecuting 7 years ago, Jeff, I had 120 days leave to take! Yeah. <laugh>. Literally, I wasn't, you know, I literally wasn't taking the leave I was entitled to. I don't recommend this to anybody, by the way! But it was, the way I coped was simply, you know, worked as hard as I could. You know, also, when you're engaging with the public, you can't do a nine to five job that they're working too. So my evenings were taken, my weekends were taken. It was every opportunity and any opportunity. And also pushing yourself out of your comfort zones, you know that's how you grow yourself.

Jeff Dewing:

But I guess it's also the fact that it's all, if I'm not on a mission there to destroy politicians though I'd like to! But if you look at some of the lip surface that gets played when you've got, especially in the broadcasting world, where the public only see what is being broadcast, that's their medium, and therefore they're influenced by that.

And you'll listen to somebody go to a politician that says, 'look, my son got run over by an American woman. She's put under protection and she's exported back to America. We can't get access'. And then the politician does an interview and says, 'yeah, we really feel for the family, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah'. It's, it's all lip service. It's about how do you put yourself in their shoes. And I think the bit I loved about your book was, you, you sort of, you, you spoke, you touched on, I think that's a read between the lines a little bit, but you put yourself in their shoes and said, 'what if this was me'? And that's what gave you the motivation, is what it appears to be.

Nazir Afzal:

Jeff, Leadership takes many forms. Two things that we don't do very well – leaders - is empathy and listening. And they're connected. You know, it, empathy doesn't mean just feeling sorry for someone or, or sympathising with them, empathy is understanding them. And, and most people don't have the ability to articulate how they feel. They dunno what the, they don't know themselves how they feel. They certainly don't know what to do. And so I think I've learned how to listen. I'm privileged and honoured that people want to tell me their stories. And, and then when they've done that, well, you can do one or two things. You can say, 'well, thank you and goodbye' or, right. What am I gonna do for you? How can we work together to make, bring the change in some way'?

And that's the latter is me. And politicians, you've described them. I know hundreds of politicians. I've worked with 'em for three, four, dec three decades. And more often than not, they are thinking about the next meeting. They're not thinking about the one they're in. And the way you described it a moment ago, which is, you know lip service. That's fair description. I'm afraid you know, they think about where the next vote is gonna come from maybe the next donor. You know? Rather than thinking in terms of how can I help this particular person in front of me who has no power? And this is the thing, you know, society is driven. You mentioned the media. Media has power, politicians have power. Establishment generally has power. The average citizen has none of that.

And so how do they bring some change, or how do they get justice? They've got to then tap into somebody like me or others like me, who have the ability to give them hope. And sometimes you can't deliver what they want. I mean, the number of times when, you know, I've prosecuted hundreds of homicides in my life, and, you know, at the end of the day, yes, somebody's brought to justice, but that doesn't bring their child back. You know, it doesn't bring their loved one back. So you've got to recognise that, you know, so I've seen people come out of a courtroom cheering. I mean, my lawyers cheering at the success of being able to bring the bad guy to justice. And then there's over there is the family who will never go back to where they were a year, a year before. You know? And that's empathy or lack of empathy.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah. And I, and I guess as well, when you think about it, I, I guess you look at some of these families that meet the public eye through media, where they'll go on to start a charity, with the only one ambition, and that's to stop it happening to somebody else. And that gives them a purpose, right?

Nazir Afzal:

You know, your Claire's law, which is about you are entitled to know the background of somebody you're in a relationship with. There's Helen's law which is if the person who's killed you, your loved one doesn't tell you where the body is, that they, they're not allowed to come out of prison until such time as they do - they all they have a name, because of some brave, bold, courageous person who realised, I can't get my loved one back, or I can't fix what, what's happened to me, but I don't want a, b and C to have to go through what I did.

Jeff Dewing:

And again, that's a true purpose, because listening to your book, when you talk a lot about you know, honour crimes, and it isn't just the perpetrator, it's the people that influence the perpetrator, the people that actually wanted the outcome. And it's how do you get access to them? And you explain how difficult that was, but you wasn't prepared to accept that that was okay. You had to find a way. No,

Nazir Afzal:

No. The the thing with honour is it's a power and control thing. You know, the reality is that there are vulnerable people and there are people who control them. And time and time again, Jeff, it's women, the suffer sufferers as a result of, of this issue. They carried the honour. I remember a father saying to me a long time ago, he said, a particular father, he said to me, 'Nazir, you don't get it. He said, my son has gone to jail for crack dealing crack cocaine, six years. He got, and my daughter, she wants to marry someone of her own choice. What shame she brings to my Family'.

Jeff Dewing:

Unbelievable.

Nazir Afzal:

I was thinking, hang on a minute, <laugh>, I was just sidestep when you told me about your son. You know? So men and boys can do what they like. Yeah. Girls and, and women can't do. And I think it was just a lack. What drives me again is lack is unfairness and inequalities. And, and people need to be treated equally. But you know, you're right. It's not just the perpetrator. There are people who are encouraged, who incite or just by not saying anything, allow people to get away with literally murder. And they too need to recognise their responsibilities.

Jeff Dewing:

But that, again, is a cultural thing, right? So even though you might be in an environment in our country where we have a, a justice system and a set of rules and ethics and values. You're now addressing people that don't understand those values potentially. And how do you

Nazir Afzal:

Well, they have their own values and their values are sometimes it's about, you know, sort of family's the most important thing. That's a, that's a strong value, isn't it? However, then it be becomes, therefore you can't step out line otherwise the family is undermined. Yeah. Yeah. So a strong value with a, with then, then there's a nefarious element to it. So you've gotta recognise that you can say to people, look you, your, your family can, will be strong. What's the worst thing you can do to your family? Is by just...

I remember I prosecuted this 70 year old woman who'd murdered her, and her her son had murdered her son's wife. And I went, I was regularly go around prisons in those days, and I went to Holloway Prison, and this woman was now, which was that time with a woman's prison. And she was, you know, gonna serve the rest of her life in prison - 25 years. And I went there, and there she was in the prison. And I don't know what I expected. Did I expect her to say I don't know, remorse? No. She abused me like nobody's business. Nothing was gonna change her. And actually she felt she'd done the right thing. By her family and by her community. And you know, she was prepared to quote, unquote pay the price. And that I was the bad guy.

Jeff Dewing:

It does come down to an interpretation of values, if you like, but it's strange.

So listen, coming back to your personal life where you've committed the time and effort in terms of 24 hours a day, seven days a week fifty two weeks, a year, and so on, during that time, you've had some big challenges. You've had a lot of work. Now, one of the things that we talk about in leadership is that if you

are gonna progress in life, there's one thing you have to do. You have to have time to reflect. You have to be able to think about what's going on around you. And one of the biggest challenges people have in the working world these days is they don't give themselves time to think. They just jump from stone to stone to stone, and then wonder where they're going to end up. How did you go about that when you were thinking about changing the establishment? How did you go about that process?

Nazir Afzal:

Jeff? I have, I have two advantages. One probably isn't seen as an advantage, and that's, I only sleep four or five hours a night, you know, and have done for 30 odd years. So I have a 19 hour day to fill with stuff. So that's an advantage and maybe might shorten my life. I dunno!

I made a conscious choice about 20 years ago when I, I was working in London. I was Chief in London, and my friends wanted to meet me and go do things with them. My family were very young at that time, and I wanted to be with them. My work was demanding. And I was literally thinking, where, what? Woo, you know, how, how do I, and I made a conscious choice, and I, you know, I don't regret it, but I told my friends 'I'll see you when I see you'.

And so that meant that, you know, once or twice a year I'd meet people socially. I decided that the two most important things to me were my family and the work I was doing, and that something. And so rather than having, you know, rather than the pain of, you know, balancing x, I made a judgement that two out of three ain't bad. I think Meatloaf said that. <Laugh>, right? And so I, so literally, I focused on family and work, and that gave me time, which otherwise I wouldn't have, you know, I don't regret it. It meant that, you know, when I was, I wasn't travelling to go to a bar or something or, or play golf or whatever. I would be able to reflect upon what I've done, where I need to go, and also tap into expertise.

I'm not.. there are better lawyers than me that are better politicians or people who in, you know, powerful people than I. And I would tap into those people and their knowledge and their experiences. You can be at the top of your profession, but still have mentors and coaches. Of course, of course. And it's important that you do actually. Yeah. It's also important you look outside of your own profession because I've talked to people in business who, you know, I've never been, well, particularly in the private sector, but I will talk to them about how they manage things and how they may manage the situation. And that guides me and helps me.

Nobody has all the answers, and I'm the last one to say that I do. What I do have is people who do have the answers. And so I'm quick to tap into their knowledge and expertise. I'm good at or have the ability to reflect upon things. I'm, I'm also really keen, I learn more from my failures than I do from my successes.

Jeff Dewing:

That's a golden rule of leadership. Right? That's how you learn.

Nazir Afzal:

A hundred percent. A hundred percent. And, and, and also you don't, don't go around thinking it's a failure, it's a learning opportunity.

Jeff Dewing:

I use the analogy, you've got all these scientists going to work every single day trying to cure cancer. Do they come home every single day of their life and say, 'I'm a failure'? Of course they don't. They're in a

different mindset. We are trying new things to find the answer. Right? So failure is how you learn. If you don't fail, you don't learn. It's as simple as that.

Nazir Afzal:

And actually you get complacent if you succeed all the time. I think you are.

Jeff Dewing:

And it gets boring, right? <Laugh>. And I don't wanna meet someone that says they're always succeeding, cuz I'll think they'll be boring. But anyway, moving on from that bit, the next, I guess the next bit is when you look at the things that you've done and the things that you've been passionate about and you've, you've taken on board.

The media's a big problem to me. Not because of the people in media, but because of the institution and the methodology and the outcomes. Because at the moment you've got the general public going 'the British police force are corrupt'

But the reality, yes, there's some challenges, there's a challenge in any organisation or group of people, but there's clearly the minority, but yet it's been, you know, the public will portray as a major branch of problems.

How do you, and I'm not suggesting you know, the answer to this, but when you think about, you know, the, the chief commissioner's now gotta think, 'Jesus, I've now got this, I've got crime to sort out, but I've now gotta sort this problem out that's actually commanding more attention from the public'.

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah, well, I mean, I work with people like him and, and Mark Rowley who's the commissioner of the Met. Again, you can't solve all these problems yourself. You've gotta start firstly, Jeff, start from the basis that there is a problem. The worst thing you can be is in denial. Yeah. About being a problem. Yeah. Because if you don't accept there's a problem, you'll never fix it. Public confidence is really low. We know that for a fact. You're quite right to say it's a minority of officers, but a minority can be several hundred or several thousand you know?. So that's a significant number. And also it has to be said also you know, when you've got a Warrant card that is real power, you know if it's misused and, and abused, so we recognise there's a problem, but there are answers.

And the answers - not necessarily from your own organisation. That can be from other policy organisation or other organisations. You know, how do they respond to massive existential threat? The other side to be said to said Jeff, is we all need the police. We all need a health service, we may have concerns about the way things are, we may have concerns about individuals within, at the end of the day these are institutions that we desperately need to succeed. And so I think there's a will to help him and the others who are trying to tackle these issues because we want it to be successful. We don't want it to fail. It can't afford to fail!

Jeff Dewing:

Of course. And therefore, there has to be that motivation to find a way. Right?

Nazir Afzal:

There's more good people than there is bad people, you know? And I think that's the, that's always the thing that fills me with optimism, is that there are people who are working together, all of us trying to make things better. And I'd rather work with people like that than the naysayers. You'll just complete in

your ear all the time about how bad things are. Because, but they won't do anything about it, you know? And you mentioned the media, you know, I've worked with the media for a long, long time and, you know, just done an interview with BBC News tonight. And the, the, the thing with the media is they have their own agenda and they have to fill 24 hours a day, seven days a week of content. And, and the thing that excites them and excites the people, the public isn't good news.

It's bad news. You know, Jeff and I, having a chat wouldn't make first News at 10, you know? But Jeff and I are having a little battle over something might Yeah, yeah, of course. And so I think that we have to recognise that. But as I say, the media have 24 hours a day, seven days a week to fill. So there's an opportunity for us to put out some good news stories and things that are going really well. And, you know, they, they, they want to hear them and they will broadcast them or write about them if we tell them. The kneejerk reaction, the lazy reaction is just to focus on negativity.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah. I think you're actually right. It's funny how the, the general public will be drawn to negativity if they hear a story about something that is all what's, you know, the curator. It's, it's not about, 'oh, we've just heard that you know, the entire royal family have become reunited'. Well that's a bit boring. I much like, I much preferred it when I was all a row with each other.

Nazir Afzal:

So it's like war. Exactly! This is the, this is the nature of thing. And also there's something particularly British about this. I prosecuted a case called Baby P a long time ago, which was a young boy that was murdered by members of his family. And it's what we did afterwards. When it became publicly known, we, this is what we wanted. We wanted a head to roll. So the head of social services was told to resign. The second thing that we did was we, we want them to change the way they look at Protect children. And so they brought in a brand new tick box risk assessment tool. And you'll be, know this Jeff. No tickboxes have saved anybody's life. So they brought this, brought in a new way of engineering the process. The third thing that happens is the hundreds of experienced social workers left the profession. Because they didn't want to be in a profession where they were no longer applying their judgement . And now after bringing in new leadership, new ways of working, more children were killed by their carers than ever before.

We don't learn, you know, we got, we actually made it worse by going as we did, you know, going full for leather and, and attacking the way things are, rather than thinking what actually does work? What can make things better?

Jeff Dewing:

That brings me onto something I'm really quite passionate about and have a view on. If you can imagine that we are in this scenario now where we've got ridiculous inflation, we've got interest rates off the, off, off the scale. We've got almost a general strike and we've got the politicians telling us what the answers are, right? And what they're gonna do about it.

And you now come back to use your care-worker scenario. One of the things we do in business, which the public sector could learn from the private sector, is that we are the strategists. We come up with the decisions and the strategy of how we're gonna run our business, how we're going to create the outcomes and the solutions and solve the problems we wanna solve. But we get all of our insight. 100% of our insight comes from the front line. We ask the people on the front line, what should we do? Right? And that insight means we get it right. 9.9 times out of 10 because the people on the front line are feeling the

pain and experience it. And they don't decide your strategy. They don't decide how to run your business, but they give you incredible insight! And that's what I think is missing from the public institutions.

Nazir Afzal:

You're right. And everything that I think I've achieved successfully has been led by people at the grassroots that people at the front line at the coalface who said, 'Nazir the way we're being treated as victims, or the way we're being treated as defendants, or the way we're being treated as witnesses was shit'. Right. And I'll tell you why it was shit with A, B, and C and d and E. And then they, then we go away and fix that or try and fix that so it gets better because of their experiences. And you've absolutely Right. You know, this is what they could do better. You know, the, you know, there are a lot of senior managers and a lot of organisations, a lot of institutions who are so remote, they don't know what, what their business is anymore. They don't know what's happening in a ward or on a, on a street or in whatever. They don't know that. And, and yet they are making these decisions which apparently will determine the strategy and the way things are going. You know, you don't really care about a strategy if you, if you can't afford to feed yourself!

Jeff Dewing:

<Laugh>. Exactly. Yeah.

And then coming back to something, you said a little while ago when you talked about, you know you like to engage with people and, and different networks.

Someone said to me once, so if you've got a finance problem or a finance challenge or a process, you wanna review or adapt or, or improve, what do you do? I said, 'if I wanna solve a finance problem, the last people I send into that meeting is finance people'. Because they've only got, they've only got their lens, right.

Nazir Afzal:

Tunnel. Tunnel vision. Tunnel vision. Exactly.

Jeff Dewing:

Yeah. And that's not their fault. That's just because of who they are. So if you wanna solve a finance challenge or finance problem, you send in non-finance people. Cuz then you get a fresh perspective and it gives you a different dimension to consider into that process. And they're the things that we love as a private sector or in a leadership and doing things differently that again, the public institutions could learn from if they weren't so focused on believing they're getting everything right yet clearly are not.

Nazir Afzal:

No, I'm with you on that entirely. I mean, as I said, I'm not an expert in anything, but the people I speak to are. The people who suffer, who are impacted by the decisions made in the public sector are the experts. So get them in the room, understand what they are doing, what can be done differently, and then apply it. And you know, too often I'm afraid we bring in consultants, <laugh>, right? And they're 30 year people who've done their time and they're now retired or maybe retired, maybe not. And we think that that's the answer. And you've made it very, very clear, the tunnel vision is a significant problem for us. They, they don't think out the box. They only know one way of working and that's how they apply to every issue, you know? But there are many ways in which you can change things. And I'm afraid the best ways may not be the way you've been taught.

Jeff Dewing:

And it's gotta be a radical thinking, thinking out the box, being disruptive. And when people sort of talk about disruption saying 'why are you disruptor? Why did you wanna disrupt stuff'? Well, if you were gonna do things differently by default, that's disruptive because you're doing something differently, right? So it's not in a negative connotation.

Nazir Afzal:

I often say to make a difference, you've gotta act differently.

Jeff Dewing:

Of course. Yeah. Absolutely. And the, and the most insane thing, it's a great saying, you know, insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results.

Nazir Afzal:

<Laugh>, which we do all the time!

Jeff Dewing:

We do!

Nazir Afzal:

Many times, it's my point earlier on about we have a knee-jerk reaction to any crisis. Mm-Hmm. And we do the same thing and the crisis gets worse.

So, and then we'll do that again, shall we <laugh>? And literally they, they, they, they, Jeff, they open a filing cabinet with the crisis management plan that didn't work last time and bring it out again, <laugh> and and I really don't think, I mean, they just need a bit of sense checking sometimes. When I talk about diversity, I don't talk about colour or gender, I talk about different mindsets, you know, diverse thinking. The best decisions are taken by people around the table as you just alluded to, who bring you a new way of looking at something

Jeff Dewing:

Because you're constrained otherwise. Yeah!

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah, absolutely. But if you, if you bring in your, your loyal people, the people who always think like you 'Yes sir. No sir. Three bags full, sir'. Guess what? Your decision's gonna be rubbish,

Jeff Dewing:

<Laugh>.

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah. It's gonna be the same. So we've done it before. We'll do it again. And I think we can, we need to think, we can need to learn from what works.

Jeff Dewing:

My final point before we go into the last section is, I'm gonna be a little bit controversial now and talk about what I've purposely tried not to talk about. I'm gonna talk about Hancock for a minute.

And it's not about the person or the personality, it's about the action. Yeah. So he went on GMB the other morning saying how he went into the jungle to seek forgiveness and how he was really regretful when he takes full responsibility and he's not looking for excuses that 'yes, I ended up resigning and paying the price for my little escapade in an office'. Right? and GMB asked a great question, and it's a question that he clearly felt uncomfortable with. 'Had you not been caught on camera, would you still be here now? Or would you still be in politics'? Right? And because of the lack of humility, he and most other politicians have shown, it didn't matter what he said, we already knew that he'd still be there because it's only because he got caught.

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah, yeah. No, you, and that's exactly that. I mean, people lie now you know, I dunno about you, Jeff, but people are lying now, particularly our politicians and leaders lie more now than I've ever known. You know, we may not have had a lot of respect for some, for some from 30 odd years ago, you know, that we didn't like what they did, but we never challenged their integrity!

You know, when they told us X was X or Y was Y we accepted it. Now, Hancock tells us that he, he, he did it to raise awareness of dyslexia or something, wasn't it? Yeah. <laugh>, right? He, he raised awareness of his bank account, didn't he?

Jeff Dewing:

Did you like the bit as well when he said I gave away a five figure sum to charity, right. Which was the smallest five figure sum <laugh>.

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah. I know he made a six figure sum. At the same time he was publishing, pushing his book, which made a another six figure sum. I mean, it's that lack of humility, a lack of self-awareness, you know you know, we look at ourselves first and think, you know, 'I don't like me myself, therefore you won't like me'. Maybe they need that to be go into politics these days. You know, I don't know.

Jeff Dewing:

It's an institutional fundamental failure of, of, of humanity and humane activity. Cause again, if, I dunno if you've had the benefit of reading Stephen Covey or Turn the Ship Around, which is where it, it's an incredible story where there was a fleet of 40 submarines in American fleet and it was, this was the worst performing submarine. It couldn't retain staff beyond one tour.

And this guy had worked all of his life to become a captain eventually achieved. It was absolutely over the moon until he was told you'd been given the worst performing submarine in the fleet right after the first tour become the best performing submarine in the fleet. And he had two attitudes. One is 'I don't know what you guys know about this submarine, so I'm not gonna tell you what to do or even how to do it.

All I'm gonna ask you is you are gonna tell me what you are going to do'. You're not gonna ask permission. Right. You're just gonna tell me what you do, just out of courtesy so, I know what's going on. And in addition to that, he said, 'my job, when I leave this, I'm only on a three year commission on this

ship. When I leave this ship, it has to be in a materially better position than when I took it over for whoever comes in after me'.

Whereas when you look at politicians, they have a three or a five year agenda, and they don't care if they leave you with a ticking time bomb because we are not in power. Right. It's, it's an, it's an attitude, right? And if we had a politic political institution that said, 'we have to leave this in a much, much better state for the people coming on', then you think, well, great, now I've got a purpose in life. And that's the reason why nothing ever lasts and there's no long termism in politics.

Nazir Afzal:

I think it's, I think it's even worse than that because the, the impression one's getting about some members of the current government is that they are looking for their next job. Looking to see what they, how they can fleece us to secure their own futures. So it's worse than that. It's, never mind thinking long term and thinking 5, 10, 15, 20 years. It's literally thinking about their own pockets tomorrow. And, and I, you, it really just, I have to think about our children. I mean, I've got four kids and they're in their twenties and I have to think about the legacy, what they're seeing now about the, the world generally scares the living daylights out of me. Because they're thinking 'if you lie, you succeed'. 'If you're able to be very good on the media, you'll succeed. If you're good at social media, you'll succeed' rather than if you do a good job. And, and try and ensure that others around you do a good job. And I think that's the challenge we face now is that the young will look at Hancock and others like him and think, 'I don't need to work really hard actually. I can be an influencer, I can be whatever it is'. Rather than actually thinking 'I need to work hard for a living'.

Jeff Dewing:

I agree with that viewpoint in terms of from that context but I think they're a lot smarter than we think they are because my children are saying 'what a load of old shit is going on here'. Right? What they care about is they care about the planet, they care about the environment. They're actually looking at us like, 'my God, are you really proud of what you are doing'? They're the ones that are influencing change in our behaviour.

Nazir Afzal:

Jeff, I'm, I'm optimistic about mine as well. And the same re for the same reason that you've said, unfortunately our nine children are, are not all the children <laugh> and no

Jeff Dewing:

Agreed

Nazir Afzal:

<Laugh>. And so you know, there are there are several thousand, millions probably who are going on social media and thinking actually this is the way to succeed. You know, be as nasty as you possibly can be as malicious. Look at the mental health problems young people are facing right now. But they need role models. And so I'm hopeful that there are people, your children, my children can be role models for others as well. Never mind for themselves.

Jeff Dewing:

Well, we've still got David Beckham, right?

Nazir Afzal:

<Laugh>? Well, yeah. We've got David Beckham. What more could we ask for, you know?!

Jeff Dewing:

Anyway, listen, is, that's been a fascinating conversation. I wanna just move into the last bit. I've got a couple of quick questions for you.

Of all the things you've done and you've been, you've been in incredible environments and incredibly challenging situations and and so on. If there was one thing that you had to name that you were most grateful for, what would it be?

Nazir Afzal:

My family. I mean, I, I'm not gonna say it's my work because they're my legacy. My, my, my parents gave everything for me to be able to study and, and to pursue my career. They have been my rock. And I can't ask for any more than I've, than than them.

Jeff Dewing:

Brilliant. Fantastic. And then finally, bearing in mind the, the, the world we are living in today with all the stuff we've been talking about, media, institutions, climate, whatever. If there was one message that you would wanna send out, what would that message be?

Nazir Afzal:

I think I said it earlier on listening. I'm good at talking, you're good at talking. And lots of people are good at talking. I don't think we listen enough. And there's a large number of people in the, in our country, in our world who are just have no voice and who have no platform, who have no ability to be heard. We need to give them the platform they deserve.

Jeff Dewing:

Fantastic.

And finally Nazir, finally what I'm excited about, because I've obviously read it in the various press releases that that they're looking to create a drama series on your book!

Nazir Afzal:

Yeah they are! Keeley Hawes, the actress has bought the book. She, it's her first purchase to produce. And, and the actor playing me, I can't share who he is, is much more handsome than I am Jeff. So <laugh> you know if it hadn't been, I'd be, I'd be telling you to leave the country. But <laugh> I'm quite happy about who might be playing me and that's fine.

Jeff Dewing:

*That's fantastic. Well, listen, Nazir I've thoroughly, thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. I really appreciate your candidness and your transparency and, and sharing with us some of the stories. And if you want to hear more of those incredible stories and there are more, trust me, then please, please buy his book, which is *The Prosecutor*. He's also got another book out. What's the, what's the news book called?*

Nazir Afzal:

*It's called **The Race to the Top**, and that's Harper Collins*

Jeff Dewing:

And there'll be another fantastic book. So Nazir, I hope our paths cross again soon. I've thoroughly enjoyed it. And thank you very much indeed.

Nazir Afzal:

You're welcome, Jeff,

Jeff Dewing:

*What an incredible conversation, a huge thank you to Nazir for taking his valuable time to speak to me today. What a conversation. I've been looking forward to this ever since he agreed to come on the show. If you get the chance to read his book, **The Prosecutor**, I really urge you to, it takes you into a life of unbelievable behaviours that most of us don't even understand even exist. And if it wasn't for people like Nazir, they would be materially worse than they are now. When you listen to his story and his behaviour and his purpose, it's pretty clear to see how there is so much alignment with someone taking on an establishment in the way in which we did. And of course, leadership, whether it be in public sector institutions or private sector businesses, or even SMEs, it's about how we behave as human beings. It's about what's right. It's about serving other people. Nazir said, 'the one message I would give out to people is the ability to truly listen'. Not just here, but to listen. Listening is an art form, certainly for great leaders because a great leader will be the last to speak because he or she is more interested in what everybody else has to say first because they've learned the art of listening.*

Now Nazir is clearly a charismatic character and he clearly had to be charismatic and tenacious to never give up, to get things done. I hope you enjoyed the conversation as much as I did, and thanks again, Nazir.

*I'm Jeff Dewing, author of bestselling book, **Doing the Opposite**, and CEO of **Cloudfm**. If you'd like to know more about my podcast or my incredible guests, please visit www.jeffdewing.co.uk. You can also find out more about Cloudfm at cloudfmgroup.com or simply follow us on LinkedIn.*

Finally, I'd like to offer a big thanks to my team, Nichola Crawshaw at Cloud, Thinking Hat PR, and of course my incredible production team, What Goes On Media.

Thanks for listening.