S10E4- The One Where I Felt Seen

Ashley: There are moments in life that stay with us. Not always the big obvious ones, but the quiet conversations, the small acts of kindness, the people who showed up when we needed it the most, and sometimes without even realising the impact they were having. And when you look back, you can often trace a thread to the one person who made the difference.

So in today's episode, we're gonna explore exactly that, because as parents, as carers, as adults in our children's lives, it's easy to wonder if what we're doing is enough, if the little things matter. But this conversation is a reminder that they really do. That one person, that one safe, steady, encouraging presence can change the direction of somebody's life.

So I'm joined today by the gorgeous Sarah Vogel, friend of the show, and together we are gonna reflect on the person who made a difference in her life—what they did, what it meant, and how that impact has stayed with her over time. And as you listen, I'd love for you to gently think about your own life too.

Who was that person for you? And maybe, who might you be that person for now?

Hello, Sarah. How are you?

Sara: Hello. I'm very well, thank you. Yeah, I'm good. The sun's out. The sky is blue. I did check that before I said it, by the way.

Ashley: Just had a quick look at the window.

Amazing. Oh, thank you for joining us today. We always have plenty to talk about. But first of all, I want to just start off with—when you think about your life, who is the one person that really stands out for you for making a difference?

Sara: I had to think about this, and the person that came to my mind is someone that I had a conversation with in the maybe late eighties.

Probably was late eighties. Someone that I worked with, and is now, is still a dear friend of mine. And that is my friend Dr. Elaine Swan. She's an academic, and she is passionate about all sorts of things that have influenced me over my life. But maybe I'll start with the conversation that changed so much for me.

So we knew each other. We were both shop girls, by her own description. We worked in Selfridges in London in the eighties and nineties. And I remember her as being a supervisor in the hosiery department—so that's tights for those of us who aren't in their sixties. And I remember her wearing things like yellow tights, and she always stood out to me before I knew her because she had a kind of really unique style.

And so I knew of her. Then she moved to the training department. And, long story short, after I became a manager in two or three different departments, after I was promoted, I was seconded into

the training department. So I then worked in the same team as her, and she was always just a bright and brilliant person.

So always very inspirational, I would say. And at that time, she was doing her master's as well. So she did a master's in management learning at Lancaster University and was working in our training department.

Ashley: Do you know what? It's really funny, isn't it?

Because the whole theme of this season of the podcast is—it only takes one person to make a difference in a young person's life. And you think, university's probably not on your radar because you messed up, self-confessed, messed up grade levels. You weren't probably that interested.

At that time, you were earning money in Selfs, which at that time must have just been amazing to work for. Anyway, just—

Sara: Unbelievable.

Ashley: London. The whole works.

Sara: Yeah. London in the eighties. Come on, you're bumping into pop stars all the time, serving famous people. It was incredible.

Ashley: Perfect, perfect job in your early twenties and stuff. So then Elaine—you get to know her, she's this character that you see and you already admire, and then she just sees something in you.

And I always think that, especially with young people, they either rise to expectations or they lower themselves to expectations. And her view of you was, what are you doing here? Why are you not at university, almost?

And you absolutely blossomed under that, to changing location, changing your life—absolutely. How do you see Elaine saying that to you? How do you think that kind of path of her—how does that show up in you now?

Having her seeing that in you, does that affect you when you are with other people?

Sara: Yeah. Oh, a hundred percent. And I'm a coach, been practising as a coach for 26 years now. And I think when you see yourself in other people—people who don't think they've got it in them—and let's face it, I went to university, and I will say this without any shame or correction, that actually some of the brightest people I know didn't go to university.

And some of the least bright people I've ever met, I met when I was at university. And they were often people who'd gone through the, on the kind of—what do you call it—like the conveyor belt. They'd gone straight from school to A levels to university.

And the fact that I'd been working for 10 years really did make a difference. And actually, my two best friends at uni were 10 years younger than me, but they'd also done a year out, and they were so different to the 18-year-olds, the 19-year-olds—very different.

Anyway, that aside, I think this idea of helping people to see themselves more fully is really important. Particularly—and I think in my case—I'd thought of myself, I'd constructed a worldview of myself as not being academic. Okay, not being someone who was capable of that kind of thing.

Going out to work was actually great, and I loved being at work. And I did do personal growth-type things, I did do a lot of management training. However, that's very different—a very different world to the world of university.

And I'd always thought, again, I came from quite a lower middle-class background, first person in my family to go to university. And although my parents are bright and did O levels, as they were at the time—both of my parents are bright and quite erudite people—they didn't go to universities.

There was no precedent. There was nobody in my family for whom university was the natural thing to do.

So whilst I don't necessarily advocate for people to go to university now, because I think life has changed and it's not the answer that it might have been at one point, I definitely think that I see—I try and help people to see what they may not see themselves.

And I've recently, actually thinking about younger people, I've recently had the absolute privilege of working with some year sevens on confidence. Somebody that I met—again, you meet people, you have a conversation, you end up doing something a bit like the Elaine thing, really.

Somebody says, would you do this? And I say yes, because that's another thing—saying yes to stuff has always been a bit of a thing for me.

There's a book that was turned into a film called The Yes Man , and I think the book's much better than the film because the film was Hollywoodised. But basically, it shows you what can happen in your life if you say yes to stuff.

So anyway, I said yes to doing this stuff with year sevens, and it's getting great feedback. I did it at a boys' school a couple of weeks ago, and I just had some feedback last night that some of the words they used were inspirational, encouraging, and so on—which absolutely fills my heart with joy.

Because we've done an all girls' school, we've done an all boys' school, we're doing a mixed school in a couple of weeks' time, and then another girls' school.

So helping them to see themselves—because let's face it, the education system doesn't always focus on the character and attributes that people have. It focuses on whether they're hitting the mark, whether they're hitting the exam results.

And I think being able to get people to see themselves—the younger, the better—is a passion for me. To see what they're good at, to appreciate themselves, to learn to love themselves early in their lives.

So that actually—although this may be depriving me of people in my class later in life—actually, to learn how to be confident early so that it doesn't hamstring you later in life and create imposter syndrome and create some of these things that I also support adults with.

Yeah, it's—and I firmly believe that one conversation can change the direction of your life. It's what we teach in fierce conversations. We say no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of your life, but any single conversation can.

So sit down beside someone you care about and begin. It's woven into my whole life, this idea of helping support people to see something that they may not see themselves.

Ashley: Yeah. We will just finish off by saying, so teen tickets are on sale for Will manifest. We are hosting the tent. We've got—there is like an arts and crafts tent and stuff that they can do there, but we are doing the work. We bring your teen if you know they want.

Sarah's going to do a confidence and a body positivity workshops. We're also gonna do a workshop run by Het—Heather—who's going to do red flags in relationships and what young female teen doesn't need that kind of stuff, even if it's relationships with their mates. It doesn't have to be around partner relationships.

We're going to do lots of work on resilience. It's gonna be lots of fun. There's gonna be lots of work to be done. They're gonna go away with learning and hopefully feeling held as well by the end of the weekend. Sarah will be there both days—whoop—to find a party as well.

So yeah, thank you for listening today. Sarah, thank you as ever for joining us. I really appreciate you.

Sara: And vice versa. Thank you.

Ashley (Outro): So I've just been listening back to the podcast with Sarah, and what I love about it is that it reminds us that it doesn't take those huge moments or being a perfect parent, perfect teacher. Sometimes it's just one person showing up consistently that changes everything—for a child, for a teen, for a fully grown adult.

And that's really at the heart of what we do here at The Resilient Kid. We're building a community of people who want to be that person for children, for teens, and in more places.

So if you're listening and something in this conversation has resonated with you, and if you've ever felt that pull to make a difference—not just in your own family, but in your community—then that's exactly why we created The Resilient Kid franchise.

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