THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 4 – Episode 13

Bullying Episode with Kids Author Sam Dean

[00:00:00]

Ashley: Okay, and we're live with the Resilient Kid podcast. I have a very special guest with me here today, Author Sam Dean. Soo just to give you a little heads up before we introduce Sam. You're here Listening to the Resilient Podcast with me, Ashley Costello, um, psychotherapist of over 20 years, as you'll know if you listen well, listen hard.

Today's episode is around bullying. And for us, it's a real Well, it's really prevalent at the moment in society because we don't just see it in schools, like we've always [00:01:00] seen it, but we're actually seeing it in the workplace, we're seeing it online, we're seeing it on social media, and our children often can't get away from it.

And so, I came across this book, um, By Sam, and it was just a breath of fresh air, because it really, it's a children's book, but it, it really addresses issues, but with such a funny and naughty feel to it, that you can't help but laugh, and it really gives us a sense of hope, I think, that's, you know, more than anything.

So what I'd like to do is, Pin your listening ears back. I'm going to ask Sam to introduce himself right now. Hi Sam. Welcome to the podcast.

Sam: Hi Ashley. Thank you so much for having me on.

Ashley: Oh, you're more than welcome. Um, Sam, could you tell us a little bit about yourself? About what made you write the book?

Sam: Great.

So, you know I believe everybody is, [00:02:00] it has a gift, which is their personal journey and one of the things that we try and do in life is take something

out of our personal journey, which you can pass on to, to somebody else that, that might be helpful for them. And, I've certainly benefited from lots of, wiser, smarter, funnier people who have taken a moment of time to share something with me.

from their life with me, which gave me a little bit of a lift, a little bit of determination, a little bit of focus and a little bit of hope and belief that actually I could get through whatever difficulty I was going through. And so I, I came to, to sit down and think what, what would I like to put together?

And I have, I had this one really burning passion and that was about to write a book for children. That tackled the subject of bullying, but didn't do it in an academic way, but, you know, sort of lent on experiences of life. So for me, I was bullied at school. I had, you know, like most kids, you know, like most adults, we get bullied.

[00:03:00] I had chewing gum pushed in my hair and while I was waiting in the dinner queue, I was threatened on the way home and had to walk an hour along the beach to get home to avoid the way the kids said they were going to, you know, go get me and push me in the head. Beat the living daylights out of me, um, I was even chased, this shows my age, this, Ashley, but I was chased by a skinhead through the school.

I was in year 11. When they were in year 11, I was in year, uh, seven. I had a knife with him and I ended up having to Hide in the cloakroom, underneath the coats in the cloakroom, shivering, just like Harry Potter scene it was. Until Mrs. Armstrong, the head of the school, came and grabbed him and dealt with him for me.

And then, also, I was bullied by teachers they would shout at you, and intimidate you, and threaten to tell your parents, and do it repeatedly, and wait until you're feeling vulnerable, and sort of target you. And so, although there are some wonderful teachers out there, unfortunately, there are lots of [00:04:00] miserable teachers out there, and so for somebody who, I don't think I had a unique life, I suspect most people have been experienced to, to bullying.

But then the first thing that really started to turn my stomach was when I watched my own children being bullied. And realised that although it would reduce me to tears, and although I would want to do something about it, actually, there was very

little I could do, other than stand back and just hope against hope, that your child develops the resilience to be able to get through it.

And so I thought, maybe, if I write down some funny, giggly, naughty children stuff, about, about picking scabs and snot and, and whatever, that, some children might just be able to get through a little bit easier, and then they can pass it on to somebody else.

Ashley: Yeah, absolutely, and, and it's, I do hear what you're saying there around kind of being bullied and with the, just having a little research into you and, and the [00:05:00] book and stuff before, we were meeting, I was thinking about You know, I was bullied and I think we always see resilience as something that, you know, a trauma or something that you have to get through.

And I think that's true, that does build resilience, but I think you can build resilience on the way as well. You don't need to have gone through a trauma to have resilience. But I, I remember, being bullied at school by friends. Funnily enough, in the last year of high school, and actually, I didn't stand up for myself, but what I did do was stand up for my friend, and that was kind of where I realised what I was, you know, not what I was made of but

I wasn't willing to stand up to them for me, like, you know, the stuff that they were doing, I mean, they never came at me with skinheads. You know, and I thank God. But, they certainly, you know, were physically, aggressive to me and would, you know, jump me and stuff like that. And [00:06:00] actually, it was only one day when I was walking home with a friend and they jumped her instead.

And that's when I realized, no, hold on, I'm not going to put up with this. And that's when it turned for me. And, you know, I've got, my oldest is in high school. Luckily, she's, you know, she's great, but my youngest is going up and it's a worry. It is a constant worry that, you know, how are kids and how teachers, because, you know, like you say, there's some amazing and fantastic teachers out there, but there's also some teachers who, you know, are at the end of the tether are.

Shouldn't be in kind of role anyway, and you, you waiting to see what happens, you know, I'll certainly I am for sure.

Sam: Great. I think that's a great point you've made, isn't it? About you couldn't necessarily stand up for yourself, but you were prepared to stand up when it came to a friend. And that's, that's really powerful concept, isn't it?

I think for children going through it as well, the power of having a buddy, the power of having. [00:07:00] You know, another person. They might not be Mike Tyson, but just them standing alongside you gives you that added sense that you're not alone. I then took it a stage further. I decided to become a school governor and, I thought I'm going to change the world, you know,

Smart cookie, I'm going to change the world.

And then, as I didn't manage to change the world as a school governor, I became the chair of governors. And so I thought from here, from this position of authority and power and influence, I'm going to change, I'm going to change the whole schooling system and I wasn't able to. And so what that led me to understand was that a lot of teachers want to blame the victims.

You shouldn't be standing there. Well, why have, why did you do that? Well, well, well, if you say, if you stand there and you look at that boy like that, you know, he's going to hit you, you know, you should close your doors, Mrs. Smith. That's why somebody broke into your house. You know, you're, you're a young lady.

You shouldn't dress like that. You know, we, we, [00:08:00] we find it so much easier to blame the victims in whatever we're burglary or sexual assaults or. Or, or bullying because that's easier than dealing with the paperwork. And it's easier than actually dealing with the parents of the bully. Because the parents of the bully could well be bullies.

And so actually with Ofsted, with the paperwork, and with the busyness of it, life goes on, the performance criteria, do you know what? We'll, we'll just shout at little Billy, and tell him not to be so silly, and not to get upset when, when Freddy smashes him in the face. Because that's the easy way of tackling it.

And then as a parent then, that makes you feel completely numbed because you think, gosh, I'm relying on the school or the teachers or the education specialists out there to, to help resolve this issue. And then you feel, completely numbed because you can't go round to the child's house and, and shake them because then you've adopted the behaviours that you, you're trying to resist.

So you just hope and you hope against hope that that child's going to find something that's Resilient Kid, [00:09:00] that's something in there that switches them on, that lights the fire. Thats why I wrote it. A comfort. Something to give hope. That's why I wanted to write it, but also to make them giggle so much they might wet themselves.

Ashley: Excellent. there's a few things there that you said when you said, I'm a governor and I wanted to change the world. I was laughing because I am sat in that very seat of school governor, wanting to change the world and knowing how hard it is. Don't have any aspirations to be chair. And this minute, I'll be honest.

But the other thing is as well, I think you are right, we do blame, you know, as a society, we blame the victim. And I think, we almost, you know, we are handing over our children at the start of a school day, in the hope that these teachers are there. You know, the school are keeping them safe. And actually they're not, school is not always a safe place.

And I think we don't always recognize that. And without scaring anybody, [00:10:00] you know, scaring the parents out there, it isn't always a safe place. And I think the best thing we can do is kind of try and equip, uh, Children. And I think one of the things I always talk to my kids about being an ally, whether that is against racism or homophobia or, or just your friend who's getting bullied, you know, and I don't mean that just, but a friend being bullied as well.

And sometimes there's power in numbers and just standing by quietly. You don't have to say anything. You don't have to hit anybody, but just stand close to that person who is being bullied or victimized. Um, And actually, there's great power in that. I think that's a really good kind of

Sam: tip. I was entertained by a headteacher of a school where one of my children went, and we were, myself and my wife were brought into school to be lectured about how, our child had, developed too many friends and would sit in one of the, , the corridors [00:11:00] and would have different people sat alongside him and in front of him and, and on the floor.

And, and he'd be making them laugh and giggle and chuckle and stuff. And, and this was becoming a problem for the school. And, and the school had thought, started it long and hard and they'd had a number of policy discussions. And,

professionally they thought that they, they needed to speak to the parents to sort of resolve it.

And I almost sat and wept. I said, gosh, I said, would it be the case that he's managed to identify one person in each of the different friendship groups? And they went, well, yes. I said, oh, right. I said, do you think he's developed his talents as a comedian to entertain so that they don't hit him as much?

And I went, well, uh, well, I, yes, I see where you're going with this. I said, and do you think he sits in a corridor with his back to the wall so that he can see where everybody is coming from him? And good enough at that point, the headteacher went, I've got it. Thank you. [00:12:00] I now understand this isn't a problem.

This is a defence mechanism.

Ashley: And this is a strategy and how amazing,

Sam: yeah

Ashley: know, at that age, they've almost like a three-pronged strategy to try and. Make sure they weren't bullied, and yet none of the adults in school have noticed this.

Sam: And you just want to say, oh goodness, we're in a room full of nincompoops again, aren't we?

How about, here you go, your teachers, how about 1 plus 1? You know, because I'm not an academic specialist, I'm not clever, but I'd worked it out, and more importantly for me, thankfully, my child had worked it out. So,

Ashley: yeah,

Sam: so, the, , you know, what I want to do, there's a message in the book, Ashley, and the message is about, you're not alone.

You will feel alone. You will feel that you are the only person in Victoria. You will feel alone. You'll feel sad and your energy will be sapped. But the bullies [00:13:00] have their own story to tell. All the bullies in the book all have their

own journeys that they're on as well. I, I worried for a number of years between when I was sort of 20 and 40, had I become a bully?

Because of my experience, had I learned how to intimidate people? Well, did I get things done as a leader and a manager by; by emphasizing particular parts of a discussion did I wait until people were vulnerable to ask them to do a little bit more? Am I worried about that? So, you know, all the bullies have their own story to tell.

Um, the teachers all have their own stories to tell. They have hairy legs. They, they fart like the rest of us. You know, they, they go off into a quiet place and pick their nose. The, the teachers, you know, are not as big and strong. So what you've got to do is you've got to build your resilience.

That's why I just adore what, the work that you're doing and the website you've got and the resources you've got available because it's about. Building your resilience, your ability to cope with it, because dad [00:14:00] can't sort it, mum can't sort it, the teachers can't sort it, most of them don't care anyway, and the school system doesn't support sorting it.

So what are the little tips, tricks, hints and assets that you can absorb into your soul and build your way of coping with it? And the most important thing is don't give up, don't give up.

Ashley: Absolutely, and I think, I think there is that don't give up. And also, there is a, well, there's a model which I find often comes from indigenous people because it's been passed down because it works, not because somebody thought about it in Whitehall or somebody's thought about it in a governor's meeting, but actually, because it works, you know, and it's passed down from generation to generation.

And one of them is about bringing a bully in and surrounding them with love. And giving them that opportunity to be who they need to be, but meet them right [00:15:00] there and then, where they're at, rather than, you know, focusing the attention to, oh, you've done this, you've done that, but actually you've hurt one of us and we need to know why.

Rather than you've hurt one of us, we're going to punish you. You know, it's, they're, they're, they're kind of kept and it's such a beautiful kind of metaphor and,

but a beautiful process. You know, I've seen this work and it, it just works really well because the first thing it does is envelope the victim.

And then puts the spotlight on the bully, but says, what, what, how are we failing you? What is happening that you are doing this? That's our fault as a community. And I think, you know, for me, I've, I've only suddenly, I've only recently started to research this, but in my head, I almost need to leave it to sink in and to see how this fits in our education system. [00:16:00] Because

well, I won't bang on about it, but I think our education system is broken. It's something I've been chanting for years, but you know, how can we change it? And to say that as a community we're failing this person because you're being mean and you're hurting people, but you know, as a therapist, Sam, my thing is hurt people hurt people.

Sam: Exactly. Exactly. And I did, I did some amazing work. I had enormous privilege of doing some work in Soweto, in South Africa with the schools. And I was taken in and they said, you know, we'd like to introduce you to Sam. Here he is, he's coming along to do some work with us. And there was two ex-offenders in the room.

And there was a group of sorts of about 12 kids, and they said these ex-offenders, as part of their, sort of, repaying their debts to society, they, they wear a yellow jacket, and for 12 months, they come and do work in schools, sort of, to earn their place back in society. It's brilliant. They said, and these kids in here, these 12 kids in here, they are part of a group who've been [00:17:00] identified as potentially troublesome individuals.

And so working them alongside these ex-offenders is, we think, going to give them a route to glory. And they said, we'd like to invite, you know, this child here to tell you a story, Roy. So I said, okay, great. So he said, he said, well, the thing is, he said, you know, my mother and father hate me. And so I let out a little sort of, you know, adulty, smirky laugh, you know, because Most of us at some points have thought, you know, I hate you, you know, like your parents hate you.

But as I did so, the, one of the eyes of one of the, ex-offenders caught my attention and he sort of shook his head to say, Don't, this isn't funny. So he said, I, I don't get fed. And I have to sleep in the quarters with the animals and my father and my mother regularly beat me. he said, so I have working with the ex-offenders.

What I've realized is that I, I have no respect. I have no respect for my father, no respect for my [00:18:00] mother. And as such, I come into school and I'm dirty and I smell and I've got rotten clothes on. So I get no respect off my friends. I'm hungry and I'm weary and I don't get much sleep. So, I'm inattentive at work, at school.

I'm, I steal other children's food. And, as a result of my lack of getting any respect, I have found that if I hit children, I, I get respected. And the harder I hit them, the more respect I get. And if I can hit them hard enough that I break a bone or I cause them to bleed, then I get an awful lot of respect.

So I've learned that as a human being, I need respect, and I have found my route to getting respect, which is to hit. My you know, other, other children in the class. And I just sat there and I was like, in awe of the capability of this child. He said, but what the ex-offenders have done is they have managed [00:19:00] to track down my grandmother.

My grandmother has agreed to adopt me. I now live with her. She only has one bed. So I sleep in her bed with her. She feeds me, she reads with me, she looks after me, she makes sure I go to school with my teeth cleaned and my, and my clean clothes. And as a result of that, my work has massively improved. And as a result of that, the teachers respect me and applaud my change of behaviour.

I have friends, and now I have respect from friends and from teachers. I don't need to hit anybody anymore to get that respect. I just sat there and I had tears rolling down my cheeks. I said, may, may I ask just one question? How old are you? And he just looked at me and he said, I am eight, so.

Ashley: Oh, wow.

Sam: And I thought, you have had my life's journey by the time you are eight.

But there, and there's so much in there is that he had learned to get the [00:20:00] respect that he needed as a human being only through the vehicle of punching other children.

Ashley: And that is, you know, it's a right, it's a human right to be respected. I don't mean to be rude, but for us to have respect is part of our basic needs.

You know, like the food and the shelter and the warm clothes and stuff. For me, I think, particularly for children, because they don't often have a voice. They're not often heard, you know, particularly in schools, they're not, but wow, not only to have that journey by the time they're eight, Sam, but also to have processed that journey.

Why I do it and change, you know, that to me is like, as you're, as you're telling us that story, I could feel myself getting choked, you know, that's such a powerful story. And I'm so lucky, you're so privileged to be in that situation to hear that as well.

Sam: And I felt bad that [00:21:00] I wept because he had no tears.

Ashley: You

Sam: know what I mean? He, he had no tears and I, and I ended up the meeting by saying, look, because each of them had, like, I won't take your time to say, each of them had an amazing story to tell. And I stood up and they said, what would you like to say before you leave Roy? And I said, gosh, I thought I was coming here because I had something to offer you.

But actually, you've given me so much more than I could ever hope to bring to, to your lives. Cause that, that's really, you know, really helped me. That's really helped me.

Ashley: Yeah, and, and, oh, just what a courageous story.

Yeah, but just such a beautiful one as well.

Sam: Little munchkin.

Ashley: So, tell us a little bit about the book, Sam, because, I, I love it.

I love the characters. I love the fact that everybody's human in it. You know, everyone, like you say, everyone farts. But I also love The, the kind of how you [00:22:00] tie it all up at the end, and I'm not saying give it, I don't want you to give the end away, because what we'll do is in the show notes we'll put a link to where you can get a copy of Timothy and the Triplets 3, by Sam.

So we'll, we'll put that there, but kind of just give us a little overview of the book so people know what they're getting into.

Sam: Right, so Timothy is adorable. Timothy is just, he's got white hair and he's got fluffy hair and it also needs a good comb at the back and he's happy go lucky and he, and he seeks to have a happy life and whatever and everything is actually really rather rosy.

His mum adores him and hugs him to the point of embarrassment. His dad tells Dad jokes and is always sort of slightly off the point. His sister's cracker doodles and uh his nan is brilliant because his nan just sort of it feels like she's a member of staff in the 50p shop and gets invited to [00:23:00] the Christmas parties you know and always takes me down to the 50p shop but he stands behind and sort of he waits until she's bending over one of the shelves and he sort of goes you know and then he goes Nan?

Actually, I didn't do that, I didn't do that. And so everything's going really well, but then, unfortunately, there were three children at school who were the triplets, and they were made in a test tube, and there's nothing wrong with being made in a test tube, but these three children, unfortunately, decided that for whatever reasons, and it sort of sets out in the book, they, they were rather grisly and nasty to, everybody that they came across, and because there were three of them, they could act in unison.

So it wasn't just about being up against one, it was about being up against the triplets three. And so this, this book is about Timothy's journey in coping with and tackling the people who help him along the way and the people who don't help him along the way, until he finally gets to some sort of resolution at the end.

Lots of giggles, lots of teachers with hairy legs, lots [00:24:00] of you know, mad, neighbours and, and stuff going on. But I, above all, I, I would almost challenge any child. In fact, here's, here's an offer for you. If anybody buys the book, and their child reads the book and doesn't giggle once, I'll give them all their money back.

Because it's a, it's a giggle fest. It's, cause, cause with trauma, you know, goes giggles. And if we can lift ourselves enough to sort of see some light and, and see some humour in things, it helps us cope with the bleakness. So that's my real destiny is tackle, tackle the issue of bullying in a, in a, in a serious way.

But also. Have lots of funny things that kids will relate to and make them giggle. Absolutely,

Ashley: and I think it really smacks of the David Walliams humour for me. You know, with, Uncle Fingers and Crazy Chris and, and, and characters like that. And I think that's, you know, that's just what kids need nowadays, for sure.

And, [00:25:00] and, I'm not surprised that, kind of, as we've had lockdown, books, book sales have just increased and I know, you know, because kids have had to homeschool and be online and things like that, I know for mine, particularly, having that physical book just gets them away from the screen and they're, they're not really using it.

Just delve into that world that takes them away from everyday life. So to have the giggles and stuff on the way, , is just brilliant. There was a question that I wanted to ask you, Sam, because you, because you mentioned it. So part of resilience for me is around, Connections and the people that support us and particularly people who support us outside of our family unit as well.

I think it's really important to have those adults and those, you know, older kids that kind of help us on our journey. And whether it's there'll be a role model or even if it's a, you know, you know, I don't want to be like that kid, but, but having those people around us and having that support [00:26:00] network, I think is a real, it's an integral part of resilience for me, that connection to others.

So I wanted to ask you, who kind of supported you in your life growing up? Who was, who was those connections, you know, who was the ones who kind of held you, whether it's at the time that you were getting bullied or afterwards, who's your, who's your go to people, I guess is what I'm asking.

Sam: Great. So, when I think about myself and, and how I've seen other people cope with resilience, there's something I, I was, I had the privilege of being a Samaritan for 12 years.

Um, and that, that was a fantastic, opportunity for me to learn and develop my sensitivities and soft skills. And to make a contribution to people in their bleakest moments, but one of the bits of training that they gave me in Samaritans was about the, and you'll know all about this, Ashley, I'm embarrassed to talk to you about it because you'll, you'll have passed an exam on it, [00:27:00] but you know, this,

this thing about the bereavement curve, uh, you know, and so, you know, we go through the seven stages of grief.

There's the, you know, the shock denial. It's like, are they really trying to thump me? You know, then there's the second stage of sort of the pain and guilt. Well, it must be because I've changed your hair. It must be because I'm thin. It must be because I'm fat, I'm tall, I'm short, I'm, I'm gloopy. I've got a big nose, a small.

But it's, it's the pain and the guilt. Then there's the anger and the bargaining. You know, well, maybe if I, maybe if I go home a different way along the beach, like I did, they, they won't attack me. Maybe I can cope, maybe I can avoid it. Maybe if I hang around with the big boys, maybe if I tell horrid, inappropriate jokes like the bullies, they'll accept me as one of theirs, you know.

And, I remember I've stood with a group of bullies once at school and they told a horrid joke and I didn't know what the joke meant, but I knew it was important to them. So I laughed, you know, it was like, ha ha ha ha, to sort of be in the in crowd, and then the biggest buddy said, what are we [00:28:00] laughing at?

And that was worse than not laughing, because then I didn't, I couldn't explain what the joke was. And then there's that settling bit in the middle of the depression, the gloop, the, the sort of, like the fly on the sticky paper, where you get one leg off, but you can't get both legs off, or that sense of there being a dog, heavy cloud over you.

But then. Hopefully, if you keep moving forward, then there's the upturn, then there's the action planning, then there's the thinking about how am I going to put this together, and eventually there's the acceptance bit, where you accept you are, you are who you are, you are where you are, these people aren't going to go away, and so learning to cope with them, learning to live alongside them, but to try and, you know, have your battleship inside that enables you to cope with a grottiness, , is where we need to get to.

And so, I was very lucky that I had some people in my network who helped to steer me as quickly as possible to acceptance. I couldn't fight these people. I couldn't, [00:29:00] I couldn't annihilate them. They weren't going to all weren't all going to move to a different workplace, these bullies were there to be, coped with, unfortunately.

But there were some great, great people. I had one, you know, adorable friend, and he would just, he helped me because he would hardly say anything. He would just walk alongside me on the way home and he would say nothing, and I would offload all my worry. And unhappiness and bitterness and, you know, upsetness.

And he would just listen. And then when we get to where he would turn off, he would just turn on and give me a hug and shrug his shoulders because there was nothing he could do, but he could be there for me, be there with me. And so that, that was really good. And now, you know, as an adult, I look for people like that.

And I have pictures in my head that I use to help me cope. And, and, and may I entertain you with one of them? Ashley?

Ashley: Please do, please do. [00:30:00]

Sam: So something that I, I, I don't know whether I watched a big boxing match, but I imagine myself up in a boxing ring, up against the biggest, most fierce, you know, super heavyweight world champion boxer.

And, and for some unknown reason, I find myself in the ring with this huge mammoth of a man, and he's literally knocking my block off, you know, and I don't know whether I'm coming or going, I'm on the ropes, I'm off the ropes, I'm on the floor, I'm picking myself up, whatever, but eventually he swipes me in such a huge thump, and I'm lying on the canvas in the boxing ring, and they do the count of 10, and the other guy is declared the winner.

And while he's receiving all the cheers of the crowd, I'm receiving the jeers of the crowd. And while he's doing the TV interviews, you know, I'm trying to find my teeth that are on the canvas somewhere and, and spitted blood and, and whatever. And, and, and It's at [00:31:00] that point I have to imagine myself picking myself back up off the canvas, dusting myself down, walking back towards the guy who's just knocked my block off, shaking his hand and congratulating him, but saying really slowly and quietly, today.

You beat me, because you were bigger, and better, and stronger, and you've knocked my block off, and I'm going away now, to repair. I will be back, and I will be bigger, and better, and a much stronger opponent than I was today. And at that point, I should be kind and, and that's what I do. So in my work life now, when I'm up against real difficult people, I think, fine, you know what?

You took my block off today. You've got one over on me and I congratulate them and I quietly say to myself, I'm coming [00:32:00] back and I'll have read it better. And when I get back in here and I'm better and bigger and stronger than you, I'll be humble and I'll be kind. Does that make sense? Absolutely. That is a picture that I used sort of when I was 10 years old and I still use it today regularly when I'm bish bash boshed in the boxing ring.

So I think it's for each child, it's getting some sense of visualisation of what this is about and how I come through it.

Ashley: And you know what, it's, I think there's a few things that we've said today. One of them is that, you know, being, just being by the side of somebody, showing that you're their ally, showing that you're there for them without doing anything, without saying anything.

The other one that you said that's really, really powerful is listening. It's just listening to them. To people, to your friends, or somebody who needs you, you know, you're working this Samaritan Sam, you know, it's, [00:33:00] it's incredible, and, and the amount of time you were there as well, but to know that somebody is listening to you, and, and in my job, it's very easy sometimes to want to come up with a solution for those people, and to, and to fix it, fix that problem, but actually, There's so much more weight and, and, and gold in just listening to that person and, and saying, I'm here for you, you know, and giving them a hug or whatever.

But actually the third one is that visualizations, whatever it is. And I work a lot or around visualizations. Even if you're, you know, just running a race and you don't think you're gonna be the best, but imagine you're gonna finish it. You finish and you are gonna well.

And it doesn’t matter you know our Neuroscience wise; our brain doesn't know the difference between real and imaginary. So to be in that boxing ring, but to get back up and to go, I'm going to be back, you know, you're already setting that pattern to your brain and saying, we're going to do it the next time. We can't do it every time. You know, as in we're not going [00:34:00] to win every race.

Of course we're not. That's not what resilience is. Resilience is about falling down seven times and getting up eight. And so that visualisation, Sam, is just amazing. Yeah, really good, really good.

Sam: I listened to that TEDx talk yesterday. Is it Carol Dweck?

Ashley: Yes, who talks about growth mindset. Yeah, she's fabulous.

Sam: Yeah, and she says, you know, the school reports in her school said, if they didn't pass the grade, it said, not yet.

Ashley: Hmm

Sam: instead of fail, it just said, not yet. Not yet. Well, I mean, honestly, when I heard that yesterday, I almost had to sit on the carpet for half an hour. And my wife said, what on earth are you doing?

I said, not yet. That's, that's the key. I just haven't passed yet. That's all. I'm going to do it if I want, but I haven't passed yet. But may I tell you one other little tale? Now I'm stretching your, I was, when I was at Samaritans, I was collecting, money [00:35:00] In the town centre where I live, and different people come along and put 50p in, or whatever, a pound, so thank you very much.

And this lady came along, and she was quite an elderly lady, and she rolled up a 20-pound note, and she put it inside the tin. And I said, gosh, that's so kind of you, thank you very much, I really appreciate your kindness today. And she said, oh no, no, no, she said, whenever I've needed the Samaritans, they've always been there for me.

And I said, Oh, well, that's so good. And, she, I said, well, I'm so pleased. She said, yes. She said in 1973, my son died of leukaemia. And she said, and, and you were there I said, I'm sorry. And she said, and then in about eight years ago, my husband passed away and she said, and, and I rang up and you were there for me.

I said, I'm so pleased. I said, that's such a lovely story. And she said, and last year she said, my cat died and my cat's the only thing that I've got left really. And so [00:36:00] when she went, that's it. I really now I'm on my own and I'm too old to get another cat. She said, so I was very, very low. But she said, I rang the Samaritans and you were there for me.

And I said, that's awesome. I said, I'm so, that's great. And thank you so much. I said, and she said, and it was just lovely. And I said something like, know, well, it was great to talk to you, you know, and she said, oh no, no, no, I've never spoke to

you. And I said, well, no, it wouldn't be me. It would be one of the other volunteers.

She went, oh, no, no. No, no, I've never, I've never spoke to anybody at Samaritans. She said, I ring up and then they pick up the phone and they say, Hello, Samaritans. And she said, I just sit there, but I know I'm not on my own. And then I put the phone down.

Ashley: Oh my, wow. Wow. I was going to say the power of listening, but that's not even the power of listening.

That's just the power of being there and always being there, isn't it?

Sam: Always being there

Always.

And we, we, [00:37:00] you know, again, the book Timothy and the Triplets 3, maybe some of the children who read this might read it because they're being bullied. Maybe some of the children might read this and it might help them be there for somebody who's being bullied.

And if either of those outcomes come out, Ashley, oh my goodness, I'm well spent.

Ashley: And that is a lovely and perfect way to finish. I just want to Sam very much. And just to let you all know; Sam Dean is not your real name. I'm not going to out you, but because, you know, for me, that is almost as equally as intriguing.

I know who you are because I can see you today, but the fact that you've taken time out of your busy schedule and, you know, your busy life to write this for kids is so important and I kind of want to put one more on there. So we did talk [00:38:00] about, you know, giving kids that hope, but also, it's not just the kids who are getting bullied, it's all the kids that, watching their friends being bullied.

Let's hope they get something out of it. But I hope it comes across the desk or in a bag or in a, under a Christmas tree. For those kids who maybe are bullying, who've got that story behind them, or that journey that they're going through, for whatever journey it is, and they feel that they need to demand respect from others through hurting, other friends or other, other kids.

But I hope it lands in there. You know, some way in front of them and they start reading it as well because for me that's what I feel like that you've kind of tackled each side of the story and actually why we're all coming to and how we all come to this very important issue of bullying and so, thank you for that and can I just say to you, Sam, thank [00:39:00] you so much for today. I could sit and listen to you all day because your, your stories are always enlightening.

Your stories of Not only your life, but the people that you come into contact with as well are just amazing. Most of all, thank you for sharing the story of Timothy and the triplet three because it is, it is outstanding. For a children's book that tackles such an important issue, it does it in such a light hearted way that, you know, you're laughing the next minute, you can really feel it.

The pain, but it is such a brilliant way to get such an important message across. So I just want to say thank you very much for joining us today on The Resilient Kid. Any last words before we go, Sam, that you wanted to share?

Sam: Thank you for the opportunity to be on and let's, let's, you know, I know it sounds a bit cheesy, but let's just hope one, one, one person reading it gets a little bit of hope. Then that's a job well done for, for both you and I. [00:40:00]

Ashley: Oh, no, that's, that's amazing.

And we will put links to the website and to, A copy of the book and stuff, in the show notes. So just one more, thank you very much, we really appreciate you sharing your story today with us at Resilient Kid. Thanks Sam.

Sam: Great, thank you.