THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 5 – Episode 1

School Days to Sweet Success with Tom Newey

Ashley: Hello, I just want to come on before you start listening to the podcast and say this season, I've done like a small section of young people so that is really important that us as parents are listening to the experiences of young people, us as educators or anybody who's involved with young people is listening to the experiences of what it is like to come through the education system and what they're doing now.

So, none of the guests are still at school, but it's what they like. Now it's their personal opinion, but obviously the more that we listen, the more we can make change. So I'd really like to introduce you to Tom, who is not only an amazing entrepreneur, younger entrepreneur. He's very humble and he is, does not sing his own praises enough, but what he is doing is absolutely amazing.

He's got a really thriving, successful business that he runs from his mom's kitchen and that he, he is one to watch. I would absolutely. Put money on it that you will see Tom Newey in the future. He is the next Stephen Bartlett in my eyes. Enjoy the podcast. Pin your ears back adults. We need to be listening to these young kids.

Hello and welcome to the Resilient Kid podcast with me, Ashley Costello. Today is the first of our young people season. So I have reached out to various different young people that I know that may have not had the average education, might not have gone to university but just done it their way. And we have got lots of guests coming up, but today we are joined by our own very Willy Wonka, Tom Newey, who is the founder of Layers Treats.

Hello Tom, welcome to the Resilient Kid podcast. How are you?

Tom: Good, very much for having me.

Ashley: You are welcome. So, first of all, full disclosure, Tom and I know each other because well, I like to call your mum the unofficial mayoress of Northwich

because she gets us involved in everything, doesn't she Tom? Sam, Tom's mum is really fab and she's kind of involved in everything like TEDx, community rewards the new plaza project, lots and lots of things.

And she's one of those people that really. Kind of brings everybody into a fold and yeah, she's just one of those people who is a joy to be around, but you do know that you're going to get a to do list if you're within her vicinity. And so that's how I know Tom. And the reason I wanted to kind of invite Tom onto the podcast is because Tom is a is a young entrepreneur that I take great pride in knowing, that I often will talk to my kids and other students who are not quite sure what they want to do with their life.

Life or their career, because for me, Tom, you just seem to be smashing it, absolutely smashing it out there. Tell me a little bit about kind of, cause you, you literally went to the same school as my kids, didn't you? But tell me a little bit, how was school for you?

Tom: I think I don't have a very positive outlook on my school experience. I think at, my primary school I didn't really have a huge circle of friends or people that I hung out with after school as well, and I often think I would have benefited from living on you know, like an estate, because I live on like a main road, so I never really saw people after school, or you know, it was only during playtime and class, you know, during class but no, I was bullied throughout by the same group of people, you know, each year, and then, unfortunately it was, you know, a classic example, but I was then put in the same form group as them , so after the first two years, I was moved to the other side of the year, and thankfully that was really good because I didn't have any lessons with that group of people anymore, and I created a small group of friends that was about four or five people, and I think that massively Helped me in the last couple of years of my high school experience, but unfortunately, I'm not someone that can shout about teachers either. I've never really had a brilliant experience with teachers in primary school or secondary school. I don't know, I'll get telling off by my mum later. She'll say that you shouldn't be saying that, but I just, that was my experience. I, I didn't, I didn't have anyone that really inspired me or encouraged me to do better in any particular area or took me under their wing and showed me how to do something when I didn't understand it.

And I only discovered when I was in, say, year or four or five that I was dyslexic. So It unfortunately wasn't the school that discovered it, it was my mum and dad

took me to be assessed privately by a really lovely lady, I think called Yvonne I think and it was over two days, a Saturday and Sunday, and we did loads of different little tests and by the end of it, she invited my mum and dad in and she showed them and she even did an exercise with my mum and dad and she said, and I suspect that dad is dyslexic too because we got the same score, me and him, you know, on the same thing. So I think once I knew that it helped my mum and dad because they understood better why I might not be.

Understanding things, and also, at that age I didn't understand, but more going into high school I was able to figure out that if I didn't get something the first time it wasn't because it was my own wrongdoing. It might just be that I need to go at it from a different angle or go over it again.

Ashley: I think you're so right and I think for me, I know lots of fabulous teachers and I know that your mom often listens to the podcast and she, we will both get telling off for that.

But what I would say is. You know, there is some fabulous teachers out there, but there's also some teachers who will dismiss kids and who will not listen and not, not actually hear the kids. You know, where, and, and a big thing for me and a big part of kind of my values is meeting them where they're at, you know, rather than go kind of, and it doesn't matter whether it's bullying, whether it's reading, whether it's just a friendship issue, it doesn't really, but you know, meeting them where they're at instead of us putting our adult heads on going, oh, but you'll be all right.

Oh, you'll be okay. You can get through this, you know? And I think that's a really kind of important point that you've made there that actually sometimes. Kids I don't listen to, and You know, the fact that you was put in the same form in high school as these kids, you know, the, that would've been on record somewhere, surely.

And if it wasn't, why wasn't it? You know?

Tom: Yeah. You know, it's not down to the teachers that if they've got 30 kids in their class and one or two of them haven't understood something, it's easier just to move on. But you end up being. Left behind at each stage and it's an awful lot of pressure for a young, a young person to then have to come home and make up those, you know, , each area that they're behind in.

And an awful lot of pressure on someone like mom or my dad, you know, if they've got to do the teacher's role of catching me up each night, then my school day goes from being not only nine till say three, but also, it's like four till seven , you know, where I'm just trying to catch up. It feels inescapable.

Ashley: And do you know what I would say there, Tom? And like we're literally five minutes into the podcast and I'm going to disagree with you. I think it's absolutely the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that all the kids are at a place where they understand. And if they're not, and I understand that if there's 30 kids in the class, they can't always get everybody.

To the same place, but actually that's what differentiation in educate, you know, when we learn to be a teacher, we learn about differentiation and actually putting things into place and saying, okay, Tom, and you know, maybe Tom and, and somebody else hasn't, you're not quite there yet. So let's do this with you. Let's, you know, make sure that you're in that place. space because it is a huge amount of pressure to, for parents and for a young person to try and catch up. So that was kind of, it sounds like you had like a really tough kind of school in primary wise and thank goodness for mom and dad, you know Good old Sam and Roy, but, but actually not everybody's lucky enough to have that, where the parents have gone, hold on, there's something, we know you're struggling and we, we want to help you.

So that's fabulous that you had that. As you kind of moved across forms, across the other side of the year group in high school, how was that? Did you start to find kind of your tribe? Did you start to find your way with, with school?

Tom: Yeah, I think it was, like I mentioned, it was definitely a more positive experience and I always remember that in year 7 and year 8, the years where I was still mixed with that bunch of That group of children that weren't very friendly towards me.

I was put for two years and I was taken out I think once or twice a week for an outreach time to do a friendship building class where we had a workbook of how to Make friends and how to make good friends and what it might be what I might have been doing that made me I don't know if this is the correct way of saying it, but less approachable or, you know, not as good of a friend or, you know, it was a workbook that I had to work through to sort of suggest ways that I could be a better friend.

And I thought, I'm not sure why I'm the person that's being taught how to be, you know, better here. So I think when I did move over to the Other side of the year, it was quite a new experience, because these group of people didn't have predetermined views on me from primary school, so I was going into a new form and a new side of the year, so I don't know, maybe 150 children on that side of the year, where I got to almost like reinvent myself, there wasn't a view of me that was, you know just to be nasty towards me. But I think that was quite a big learning curve. cause then I did have to sort of learn how to make friends for the first time. So it was a bit challenging at first, but definitely much better than being on the other side of the year.

But then also I think at that sort of age, like year nine, 10, and 11, children go through lots of changes and I think I was only friends with those. Four or five people for like one or two years before I then made new friends again, you know, so I never had that experience where you've been friends with someone all through school, if that makes sense, you know, like a long-term friendship with anyone.

Ashley: Yeah, and I think you're being uber kind there, and I think that's the, that's kind of the way the system is set up, like, you know, you have, we've got record here of kids bullying you. And actually what we do is we take you out of the, of class and we give you lessons instead of like, for me, I have a lot of parents who, you know, have to approach school, excuse me.

And they will say, this is happening, or that's happening, or there's been an incident between two things, two kids. And my first thing is, okay. So I know you're going to dish out some kind of consequence and that's your business, but my business is how do we, these children are going to spend a long time together, how do we reconcile this?

Like how do you do work with these two kids or three kids or however many it is to make sure this doesn't happen again? Because usually what happens is in bullying situations is exactly what's happened to you, is we pull out the person who's been bullied and we go, this is how you make friends. Like it's your fault, and it absolutely is not, and what we should be doing is, is taking the other kids and going this is the impact that you're having, how do we do it better, how can we skill you in so that you are not being mean, so that you don't have to do that to look good in front of your other friends, you know, and I think that's, that's where for me, education falls down completely, like we, we, and we do that a lot in society.

We always, we look at the person who is struggling and, and go, okay, but actually the bully needs the help, because it's there, it's their behavior that has the impact. And I'm not saying they're not struggling, they might be, but actually we need to address that, not address, you know, of course support the person who's being bullied, but actually we, where the work needs to be done is, is with the kid who's bullying.

Tom: Yes, I think at the time when they offered me that Option. I just took what was in front of me. I think it was the best result that solved it within. I remember they didn't tell my class or the new class and I, it was a Thursday and I just changed and I thought it was brilliant because from then on it was all a little bit different for me so I really appreciated it.

Ashley: So you finished high school and you'd kind of made some friends and stuff which is, which is fab. Then you went on to sixth form.

Tom: So I decided not to stay on the high school sixth form which was good for many reasons, but it was that comfort zone that I was leaving because it was what I knew but the high school sixth form didn't really wow me in any way, it seemed a little bit behind other schools in, that I'd visited.

So I went to to their open day, and it just felt a different experience. It felt further on, and a new group of people, and due to the experience of bullying, I thought, percentage wise, like there's bound to be more people that like me in this school than there will be, you know, at my previous school, and it was I don't know if I'm allowed to say this, but it was bloody brilliant.

I really, really enjoyed it.

Ashley: You can say what you want.

Tom: Yeah,

Ashley: Do you know what? That is so amazing, but how sad, like, that your thoughts are, and I'm sure you thought, oh, the facilities are fabulous, you know, they get good results, blah, blah, blah. But your thoughts are, percentage wise, there's got to be more people here that will like me than at high school.

Tom: It was, because I remember I, My sister went to university in America and we went to move her into her accommodation and I had to make my decision, it was like the deadline to make the decision whilst I was away in America and I remember thinking it all comes down to, I think there's a higher likelihood that at this new school, because I knew all those people were, you know, Also going to the new school, so all the nasty people were moving over, but even though it was diluted between, you know, 1800 people, rather than in the sixth form, a few of them did stay on, but there was only sort of 60 that stayed on, and I thought, I think I'd rather take maths.

Chances and go to a much wider group of people.

Ashley: Yeah. And, and, you know, thank goodness that you did, because obviously you had a really good experience and, but how, like for me, it, it just breaks my heart to think that that's a decision. That it comes down to instead of, you know, the other decisions, like, is it the course?

I mean, I'm sure you've had all them as well, but that is, you know, any, any student that has gone through our education system, that shouldn't even be a question because we should be more inclusive. We should be making sure that everybody is, is. Safe and well and happy. But so you had a really good experience which is a local college to us and quite renowned for, quite renowned for the academic side as well.

And how was that for you? Because obviously you were diagnosed. Dyslexic, you'd kind of knew, you'd put, obviously stuff had been put into place through high school, because you'd done well at high school. How was it going into a sixth form college that has got a reputation for its academics? How did you find it Tom?

Tom: So I was You go to like an open day and they tell you, you know, if you want to study these three subjects that we'll be expecting these results from you. And it's all a bit exciting because you turn up after results and you take your results and you go through this process. And I had planned to do economics, business, and photography.

They were the subjects that I had an interest in. And I was lucky enough to get those grades that I required to do the, the three options, but when I turned up on the day we were taken in to see a teacher, and then she said, oh, we'll have to pass you to the deputy head, and he took us aside, and he said that he wasn't willing to offer

me the economics any longer, even though I'd achieved the correct You know, grades to do it.

He said that judging by the set of grades that I got, and that I got an F in drama at high school, he thought I was no longer able to do economics anymore. So, we went to, you know, and then he put it back on the table and said he would still offer me it, but by that point I'd sort of become he'd instilled me with a sense of, you know, doubting myself and I thought, I'm not capable of doing that if this important person, you know, has told me so.

So I, I ended up not doing it. Pursuing the economics anymore, and I instead did ICT which it was good and bad. I don't have any interest in ICT, it was what they had told me I should do. So whether that was to make numbers up, or whether that was to cover their own back so that their results look better in case I got an F in economics, I'm not too sure.

But yeah. It was, yeah, it was fine. And I went to do in the end business photography and ICT and I got two A stars and a B. So it was fine.

Ashley: Amazing. And, you know, I think A levels are really, you know, they're the hardest thing ever. Like they're harder than doing a degree, for sure.

And, you know, to get those results, but again, I kind of almost feel like the adults there have let you down. Not, I don't mean like your mom and dad, because I know they're really supportive, but like the, the teacher even just casting that doubt. You know, there's one thing saying, listen, Tom, it's going to be difficult.

Basing it on drama, getting an F in drama in high school is a bit. Ridiculous. But anyway,

Tom: which you can see by my smirk, I was sort of proud of . I was, I, it was, I did, I failed it and I, I didn't mind, an F in drama doesn't impact my ability to study economics, but that's what he chose to blame on. So it's okay.

Ashley: I. I know, I know you a little bit, and I know you probably negotiated your way back for him to put that back on the table, and absolutely fair play to you.

Tom: It was a way of proving he didn't have the last say, but I was too anxious at that point that he was right, but I was able to leave that room that day knowing that it was on the table for me.

Ashley: Absolutely, and I think it's, it's just really sad that, you know, it's one thing if you'd have said, listen Tom, economics is a difficult subject, is, are you sure you're happy with this? But, you know, it is a, they, I do know they, re negotiate, try to re-negotiate a lot on the first day back. I know they did it with Erin.

She picked three subjects and they tried to talk her out of one. And she was like, absolutely not. But that is because we had your story already in advance, so we already knew. And yeah. So because I, I was worried. And I think yeah, I knew that you'd, you'd kind of, that they, that's their mode is to kind of get you to change.

But I think it's a, it's a way that you go about it. And it feels like, you know, it's not just for them. It's might be about grades or even it might be about them looking out for you, but actually for them to cast. Doubt for you, for, you know, to instil a bit of doubt in yourself as a young person. I feel like that's quite a failing then.

That's, you know, that's hard because it takes a lot to come back.

Tom: I, I think the teachers are only there to inspire you and to help you achieve your potential, which he did neither of. And it was this, he, he was the same teacher that I remember it was the last week before, you know, you have to put your five options on UCAS or whatever , I don't really remember.

So I chose my five options. I had no intention of going to university, but I decided these were the five places. So I remember I went into my first lesson that morning and I was told that I needed to see this deputy headteacher by sorry, at four o'clock in the afternoon. And I really thought, oh, I've done something I haven't even realised here, like I've never been called in to His office since that first day, you know, where you take your results in and it was just me and him and he said that he'd been made aware of my options for university, and he really thought it was a concern and that he I should be more realistic and not put any red brick universities down because It's a waste of options as I'll probably end up getting none of the five, and he said you're better applying to and he suggested a few places, and I asked him his reasoning behind why I shouldn't apply to, because one of them was Durham University to study business, because I'd just heard that was a good

university for it, and he said that he had applied and his son had applied and both had been rejected.

So I said you know, thank you so much for your help with this, unfortunately I'm going to politely decline, you know what you've suggested and I'm going to continue on with them. And I got my offer from, you know, from Durham University and I took it to show him and he refused to comment on it. So, he never congratulated me and he, he never said, you know, I'm sorry I suggested that, but.

Ashley: Yeah, and I think that's a big lesson for us adults, and one of the reasons why I wanted to bring young people on is for us as adults who are listening is to learn the lessons, you know, because not everybody's had a fantastic school, in fact, there's very few and far between kids that I speak to that have had a good schooling, but actually there's lessons to be learned and I think there's a bit of a change coming in education and I think the first thing we need to do is listen, is listen to the young people and I think, you know, anybody who A, thinks they know better, we can give advice, of course we can, we've got a wealth of experience with these teachers, but actually to not say, do you know what Tom?

Hands up, I was absolutely wrong then, well done mate, really proud for you, crack on, do what you want. Do you know what I mean? And I just think, to, that says more about him as a person, and Security and confidence in his own thing than it does. Because what if you'd, you know, what if you'd had have changed it? You, you could have missed that place. If that's what you wanted, he could have missed, you know, that had been a missed opportunity there and then. So with your negotiating skills and obviously very good business skills, you then went to set up your own business.

Tom: Yes,

Ashley: because you're, you're to just tell the listeners, Tom, how old you are

Tom: 23,

Ashley: 23.

So you didn't go to university. How long have you had? So tell us a little bit about your business and how long you've had it. What kind of business it is for those who don't know, Layers Streets. Rude, if they don't. But yeah, tell us a little bit about

kind of what made you go, actually, do you know what, I'm not going to university, I'm going to start my own business and why this one, why Layers?

Tom: So I left sixth form and I deferred my place at Durham to do business And I didn't go on like a gap year. I didn't go traveling or anything. I didn't have the money to do that. So that wasn't an option for me. And instead I thought I'm going to just spend a year where I'm not in education and cause it sort of just feels like you get passed on from one thing to the next.

And I thought just to have a year out to sort of. Figure out what I want to do is most probably the most appropriate option. So I, I did that and I say, luckily, but I know for lots of people, it was unfortunate, but that's when lockdown occurred and I felt it was sorry quite fortunate that I didn't go in the end cause lockdown meant that a lot of students went online to learn and I think that would have been a disaster for me.

I think struggling in a classroom is one thing, but struggling through a, you know, a laptop and having no one to talk to would be not brilliant for Tom. And so I, I tried to figure out what I could do next. And I first of all, try to figure a way out to get into property. And I, cause it, it's often, advertisers very glamorous, you know, and easy to get into. And I went and did a property course and this is only my own experience. So don't let me put anyone off who thinks they can do it. Cause I'm sure you can do it better than me, but I found that unless you had a significant amount of funds to get started with It was awfully difficult, you know, to get your first foot on the ladder and, you know, keep climbing from there.

So I, I decided after that, that I needed to have a way of getting that money for the property. And I felt like I was ready to move on to the next thing. And the property has always been something for me that I think I'd love to come back to when I've got enough funds to do it. But I. I definitely didn't at that time and so I pursued my next thing which was, I started off doing little cups, you know, of like, desserts with like, cakes in and whatnot, and I found them too messy, so then I moved on to like, chocolate bits, and I ended up with Through trial and error, doing like little chocolate bars.

And I remember I went to Sainsbury's like every day and bought their chocolate and melted it down in a little like plastic bowl. And I found it the most exciting thing ever for me. I just really enjoyed it. And then I ordered my first chocolate mould because I was just doing it on like pieces of parchment at the beginning.

And I really did start it with. No money. I, I didn't, I didn't have, you know, 2000 pounds to throw at it or something. I was just going to Sainsbury's and buying one bar of chocolate and melting it down into my own shape that day. And then I started in October, 2020. So just before Halloween. And then, each year it's got a little bit better and a little bit bigger and a little bit easier but then I always find ways to make it harder again.

Ashley: So, so you started October 2020 for Halloween.

Tom: Yeah.

Ashley: And then was it the following kind of 21 Easter that you Started with the eggs.

Tom: Yes. So Easter 2021. So I did Halloween. I was a bit too; it was too short notice. So I did Christmas and then I did Easter was the first one, and that was the first time I'd ever gained a little bit of traction with it.

Which something. And it, it sold really well. And I've found that that's my, that's what I'm good at, is those easter eggs. I've really tried the Christmas and Halloween before and I just don't get anywhere close to it.

Ashley: And it's funny because your eggs, I've not seen anything like your eggs out there.

I'm sure there's, you know, I definitely know there's copycats out there, because I've seen them after you've done yours and stuff. But, Your, your eggs, and I'll say this for the podcast and Tom knows this story, is I never bought Easter eggs for my kids ever. It was just not a thing. I always even though, like, we were Catholic and Easter was massive in, in the church and, and, and stuff like that.

It was, it was never the chocolate that I would buy. I'd buy them, like, a puzzle or a book or, you know, and I might buy them, like, a chocolate bar, but it was never an egg. And then your first Easter I seen these eggs come out and they were just, like, Oh my God, they're amazing. And obviously to support you, we were like, okay, well we'll buy the kids one, you know, we'll get it.

And now I'm not allowed, like I have to, like the minute, is Tom's eggs out yet? Is Tom's eggs out yet? And I don't know why they say that because everyone always

has exactly the same one. And Finn always tries something new usually, but yeah, she always does it, but they are desperate to, when are they being released?

When are they being released? And just tell us how you, how you make your Easter eggs, because anybody who goes to say, you know, a supermarket and they see like a Cadbury's egg, and I know that their eggs are made kind of before Christmas. Because I used to know a Cadbury's rep, like anything Easter time for them is they're making selection boxes and before.

So they look really simply, you know, when you crack open one of their eggs, it's just like a shell. But tell us what yours is, Tom, because yours are so special, like, they're beautiful.

Tom: So we're called Layers Treats because I, my favourite chocolate when I was a kid was stuff that had like a filling in it, because I found it much more exciting when I was little to eat the gooey centres of things, so I think we ended up calling it layers treats because each chocolate had a different layer in the middle and different layers to it So it might have one or two and so the Easter eggs We decided to because we did have originally a different egg that we started with which was you know Some of those like posh examples where they're painted on the outside And I was super-duper proud of them.

And you know, I'd managed to Replicate what other people were doing But then that lasted about a week before I decided to give it another go and then I ended up just trying to replicate what we'd done in bar form as a easter egg and I thought well no one else, no one else, sorry, has done like a filled shell in the easter eggs, so ours have two layers of chocolate with like the, if it’s a Biscoff one it will have Biscoff in between the two layers or kinder or marvellous creations will have like smarties, jelly tots and popping candy but they all have to be made quite a bit closer to easter so we can't make them in as early on as say Cadbury's because of the fillings they don't have as long.

Ashley: And, and to look at. To kind of look at your Easter eggs. They are so aesthetically pleasing because, and I know because my eye couldn't get my head around how you did it, because like it looks like, so you've got, you've got like a layer of chocolate, a layer of filling, another layer of chocolate, and then you've got the two shells that come together.

But then at the front you, it looks like you. Smashed whatever the filling is on the front. So I know you've done like jammy Dodgers before and that smashed in our Lotus biscuits, which is Erin's favourite white chocolate. That's what she always has. And so, yeah, whatever that filling is smashed on the front, which is, it looks fabulous.

I imagine that takes forever.

Tom: Yeah, and I think that they're definitely the things that sell it, so the filling is, you know, what sells it, and that decoration on the front. But they're also the two things that stop me, you know smashing through the glass ceiling and being able to do a lot more than I am, because they take so much time, and The fillings I can only make so far in advance so there are two things I often play around with and think, well if I don't do the front bits anymore or if I change the fillings, you know, so that they're more like a Cadbury's one, but then I sort of use, lose what's unique about Our chocolate.

So

Ashley: yeah,

Tom: I don't, I, I think we're quite reasonably priced, but I've always wanted to make sure that our chocolate was something that everyone can access. I'd hate to be something that only a few people can enjoy as a treat. I'd much rather make smaller margins and more people be able to enjoy it.

Ashley: Well, they're absolutely value for money because, you know well, there is just no comparison with, with like a shop bought one because they are absolutely gorgeous and they're really, really good value for money. They last, they last the kids so much longer because there's just so much to it. So when you've been talking there, Tom, like there's a couple of things that I want to mention.

One, that joy. That's the one thing that you talked about when you're creating, like when you was, you know, kind of your product development, is that what keeps you going? Because I, I know that you must work really long hours because you've only got a small team. You've not got this massive factory or anything, but you've got a small team.

Now, roughly. Like you're, you know, you're not selling like 50 Easter eggs, are you? And before we hit record, we were talking about you're the only person I know that released another batch of eggs after Easter and sold out like really quickly, but when you're. You know, when you're making those, is it the stuff like the joy of creation and stuff when you, you know, when you've got 12-hour days, 15-hour days trying to get all your orders out, is it that that keeps you going?

Tom: I did another like podcast thing for, I don't know if I've mentioned to you the, they're called Sensational Tutors.

And they order from us each Easter for all of their tutors across the UK. And I remember they asked me a similar question and I; I sort of discovered what it was that made, Me, you know, get up each morning, then the excitement.

And I think it's a really big game of monopoly. I don't know if that will make sense, but I'm not really too bothered about any particular aspect. It just feels like a really. Big life size version of a game that I would play as a kid were

Ashley: that's amazing

Tom: I don't know if that answers that at all but it feels like the most realistic version of a game that you can play which is Trying to get more people each year to buy it trying to save enough money to get the next thing trying to buy the next thing that helps you make them quicker and hopefully not going broke by the end of it. It just feels like a big gain.

Ashley: That is so amazing. Just to give the listeners, if, if you're happy to share this, this is Tom, and don't feel like you have to, but after Easter, you released a set of eggs and you did it. The marketing behind it is absolutely amazing. And I am sure your A level business was really good, but they, I'm sure they did not teach you this, but your kind of.

Only you kind of closed your order book and said we can only make so many that's it and people were trying to bribe you Weren't they because you'd gone wild on tik tok at the time You were getting like millions of views and different things like that and that in itself is no small thing but people were trying to bribe you to open your order book, weren't they?

Tom: Yeah, I said we did. Oh, sorry

Ashley: No, go on.

Tom: No, so we, we closed them off, I think it was February and you get lots of foul emails and people calling you and saying disgusting things on the phone. I think they forget that it's a piece of chocolate at the end of the day. And you and a

human.

Yeah. And you sort of start to feel the wrath of what they're saying and you think, oh gosh, I'm a terrible person because their child really wants it and I'm denying them, you know what I mean?

The chants of having it, and then you go to bed and you wake up the next day and you figure out it is just a piece of chocolate and it's not the end of the world but it's it can take its toll on you a little bit because you feel really guilty for not doing what other people do. Expect our view, but I think they do expect it to be a much bigger thing than it than it really is and people are always so much smarter than me because they suggest that we should have more stuff and they suggest that we should make them earlier and that we should be able to send out twice as many as we did or release twice as many.

And I wish that was the case, but I can only do what I can do. So we unfortunately sold out in February, which I say, unfortunately, because it meant there was still a couple of months before Easter where people were able to discover our products for the first time. Cause we had. Some influencers get in touch and ask if they could review our eggs and I said yeah but by the time they released their videos we sold out already and that wasn't we'd sold out and then had 2, 000 eggs on the shelf, you know, that we didn't want to sell.

It, it wasn't that. I was trying my best but we ended up with we put a button on the website to subscribe to like a waiting list and we ended up with in the end I think 17, 400 people had subscribed. So I say that's brilliant in some respects because it means that this year, I'm able to, you know, let them all know that the eggs are available in January again, but I suspect I'm setting myself up for failure again where a good chunk of them are not going to get an egg and they will let me know how disappointed they are.

Ashley: And, and do you know what? Some people can be vile, because you're right, you know, they are, it's not just an egg, they are amazing eggs, so yes, of

course, everybody wants them. But, but also, you know, you are Yes, you're young.

Yes, you're, you're 23, Tom. But the, the, one of the reasons why I am so kind of really wanted you on the podcast, but also so proud to know you is because you do think outside the box. You, your eggs are already, well, they're in the box, but you know, they're already different than what's on the market. You then, you know, create this and you, it's, it's, you've got a very small team, like I know, like, your auntie and uncle.

Tom: I like that you keep calling it a team. That makes me feel better about myself. It is just me, Tory and mum, but you can keep calling it a team.

Ashley: Yeah, but it, but you have, it's tiny, you know, it's family run. This is a family run business that's headed up by you, Tom. And you know, I just love the fact that you, you Constantly, just like with your products, you're constantly thinking of new things or how to make the process or the, the system better or bigger or different or faster or whatever.

And you know, these people who know nothing about eggs are going, well, why don't you just double your staff? Now, hold on a minute. It doesn't work that way, but you know, this is not you producing 50 eggs. Even that would blow my mind. When you decided to have that Subscriber button and you go, okay, well, if you're still interested, I might open the orders.

And actually you, you ended up after Easter this is, so after every, we've had Easter Sunday, we've done the whole Easter egg thing. You've gone, who wants an egg? I've got so many and re, like, Started the production again. I'm so down.

Tom: I was planning on doing 2000 because I thought that sounded like a nice round number, but mum said, oh, I, I, I doubt 2000 eggs will sell, you know, after Easter people most probably showed an interest, but, you know, it will dwindle afterwards.

So convinced me to do a thousand instead. But I, wake up each morning and think, I should have done 3, 000.

Ashley: So, just tell the listeners, this is, so just like to be clear, this is after Easter, after everybody's already had Easter eggs, right, and done their thing. You go, I've got Easter egg, who wants one?

I'm limiting this to a thousand. You put it on sale. How fast did you sell out, Tom?

Tom: It was 14 minutes, which was very exciting.

Ashley: It is. I cannot, I would have loved to have been in your kitchen at that point when you just watching the orders like fly in.

Tom: Oh, I've got the videos of it, you can watch them.

Ashley: Oh, amazing.

Absolutely amazing. And you know what, Tom, you absolutely deserve all the luck in the world because you are very, you know, you're very humble. I know how hard you work and you have. You know, it's not just Easter eggs. It's, you know, you have like Halloween boxes, you do Christmas stuff, you do a lot of corporate stuff, and I just think it's absolutely fabulous that, you know, this Tiny, is tiny in comparison to most people, tiny family run business headed up by a 23-year-old who actually, you know, didn't have the best education with regards to experience, but has gone, do you know what, I can do this.

And you, Tom Newey, to use your words, you're bloody smashing it. You are smashing it, and I am so proud to know you. What would you say to young people out there who are thinking about, you know, maybe not going down the conventional route of working for somebody else or going to university. What would you say if they wanted to be a young entrepreneur like yourself?

Tom: I think taking that year out was something that really helped me decide which was the best route for me. And I And lots of people take a year out to travel, but I, I, I wanted to be able to one day travel, you know, once I'd figured out what I, because otherwise you spend a year living your life how you want to, and then you've got years afterwards to live it, unfortunately, how you have to.

And I think maybe using that, maybe using that as a year to discover what you've got interests in. Cause I definitely enjoy that with my business, I get really excited about it. Cause I think unless I got excited about it, I most probably wouldn't do it.

So maybe anyone that's able to find something that each morning they get really excited about and they spend all day trying to figure out how they can do it. Better or quicker or faster or that's something to go by not sure what else, I mean, that's it really.

Ashley: Okay, one last question, and this is the kind of question I'm posing to all of the podcast guests, the young people. Podcast season. If there was one thing you could change about education right now, what would it be?

Based on your experience. Yeah. I know that's a bit of a big question to end on.

Tom: Yeah. Well, I hope this answers it, but I think it wouldn't be anything to do with the, the bullying I experienced or the teachers maybe instilling a sense of doubt in my choices because I think that's inevitable and too big of a task to take on and sort now, but I really, really Despite that they don't teach you anything about like life skills.

Like I came out of school and when I started my business I was learning as I went, but like about money and managing it and ending up in debt or not ending up in debt or what to do when this happens or you let a customer, not, it doesn't have to be about business, but just, I, they didn't really teach me any, I know how to solve.

What's this angle of a triangle? But I don't know what happens when you end up in overdraft, for example. So I don't know, maybe some better life skills about how to manage money perhaps.

Ashley: That is, yeah, and so needed. So, so needed. And you know, because it doesn't matter what you do in life, you're gonna, you're gonna need to know about money.

So yeah, that's brilliant. Tom, tell me, without obviously revealing any secrets for Layers Treats, what's next, what's next in the, in the Layers Treats kitchen? What's coming up next?

Tom: We're doing Halloween eggs. So we're gonna do like, eggs that are, aren't like Easter, but You know, like a ghostly type one.

Ashley: Oh, that's amazing.

Tom: Yeah. And I thought I'd give that a go. And then at Christmas we're going to do some, like, we've got some wrappers that have been designed for us. So previously we've used other companies for their wrappers, but we're going to give it a go where we've got our own this year and then Easter, hopefully we'll be doing double the number of eggs that we did last year.

Well, that's the plan. So I've ordered new tubes. You know like, I've actually got an example here. So you know the boxes we've had?

Ashley: Yes.

Tom: I've ordered 10, 000, obviously bigger than this, but they're like, when I can get it to fit. I'll just show you the top. It's like a tube. Yeah, so that will fit inside.

Ashley: That would be beautiful.

Tom: Yeah, but my mum wasn't impressed that seven palettes are coming to the house soon. Sorry.

Ashley: Yes, I bet, I bet. Yeah, you, you do realize that slowly, slowly, she's just, you, you're just gonna take over the house and like, mum, dad and l are just gonna move out.

Tom: Yeah. Well, we've already got three of the, you know, 20-foot shipping containers that I feel. So I've rented a fourth one for this year.

Ashley: Wowzers. That's amazing. And do you know what, Tom, I am so excited to see not only your Halloween eggs and your new packaging for Christmas, but just to see what you do, because everything from, you know, getting an Airstream and going round and selling ice cream in the summer, to, To, you know, your new designs and you just the way you think Tom is so amazing and I just love watching your journey and I really If you haven't got yourself on the subscribe list for layers treats get on it He does post around the country.

So it's not just a local thing here in Hertfordshire because I'd really like to keep you here but yeah, if you haven't got yourself on the subscribe list, get on it. Follow Tom on Insta. We will put all the links and everything underneath. Tom, can I just say thank you so much for your honesty about education and for sharing your story.

And honestly, I really just wish you the best of luck with layers and everything else that you do, whatever you turn your hand to. I feel like we started with you are the You know, the local Willy Wonka, but I want to kind of finish with, I think you're going to be the next Stephen Bartlett, in my eyes.

Tom: How exciting.

Ashley: Thank you, Tom. Take care.

Tom: See you later.