Transcript

The Resilient Kid Podcast

Season 8 – Episode 2

Don't take No for an answer

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Do you or your kids take no for an answer? Well, today I'm invited by a really lovely person and friend. I'm very lucky to call her a friend as well. Joanne Goodwin, the editor of Cheshire Life. I'm going to let her introduce herself. Hello Joanne, how are you?

Joanne Goodwin: Hello, Ashley. I'm very well. I'm kind of in press week this week. So on Thursday, the April issue of Cheshire Live will go to press. It's always a busy week, although every week's a busy week. So yeah, very excited to be here and talking to you as well.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: So we've known each other for a little while. I think not long after you became the editor of Cheshire Life and the lovely Sue France, mutual friend kind of introduced us. Didn't she? And I have then kind of charted your progress through Cheshire Life because for me, when I was younger, it was a real thing to want to be in Cheshire Life, to read Cheshire Life, to see there's lots of celebs in there.

and there is still lots of celebs in there, but I think the big difference that I feel you've made is you've brought it back to the heart of Cheshire. You've brought it back to the community. We talk in there about events that are going on and just the people, the cohort that makes up Cheshire because it is an unusual county, in its makeup of people.

We're going to talk a little bit about your career today, but What's made you really, like, I guess go back to that, the thought of Cheshire?

Joanne Goodwin: I started as editor of Cheshire Life in March 2020 which was a fairly eventful time across the world as well as in Cheshire. So just as I started, the pandemic came along. So it completely changed the way that we run the magazine because we couldn't go out to events. We couldn't send our photographer out.

We couldn't go out and interview people. There were no social events. There was kind of page after page after page of events that, have always been part of the magazine. So we had to have a bit of a rethink about content and we carried on publishing all through the pandemic. But it gave me an opportunity, I think, to do the things that I really wanted to do with the magazine, that I'd set out to do when I first went for the job. And that was, as you say, to kind of put Cheshire Life back into the heart of Cheshire. So to talk about the things that go on here, the events, the beautiful places. But primarily to talk about community and the people who make the county tick, and that's whether it's the farming community, the kind of spirit of entrepreneurialism, which is absolutely rife in Cheshire.

and the kind of people, who put on events, the people who support each other. lots of women, I think the kind of female community in Cheshire is wonderful. one of the things I did kind of Book against was the image of Cheshire being all about footballers and footballers' wives and real housewives and people with huge houses and lots of money because that is part of the community. And, you know, we will always have gorgeous houses in Cheshire life and celebrities, etc. But I don't think that's what the county is about. It may be what people on the outside looking in think Cheshire is about, but that's not the reality of it. You know, we are an agricultural county, we're a county of high tech, a county that kind of leads the way in all sorts of things and, you know, wonderful events, gorgeous places to visit. And that's what we try and do every month in Cheshire Life to reflect that diversity but the positive things about the county.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Yeah, and I think that's really evident. And I think for me, one of the big things is how you've kind of charted your career. Now, I've been friends with you for a number of years now, but actually I went to, I think it was a literary Evening, the Northwich. Lit Fest that you did last year. Yeah, last year, and I sat there with a bunch of your friends, as well as, you know, people that we didn't know.

And you were getting interviewed, and, you were, Having this conversation around your career, and I sat there like, jaw open, you know, we've had drinks together, we've chatted together, we've had lunch together, and I was like, oh my goodness, the stuff that you've done in your career, and I think it's, you talk about women in Cheshire, but for me, it's really inspired, and one of the reasons why I asked you on the podcast is because

the kind of career you have, you've moulded yourself, you've carved that out for yourself and I think, you know, we talked right at the top about not saying no, or not taking no for an answer. And I think you've done that amazingly and how inspiring for young girls. Will you tell us a little bit about that?

Please.

Joanne Goodwin: I think I started wanting to be a journalist when I was about 11 or 12. I started reading really early. I was an absolute kind of avid reader from the age of five or six. And by the time I got to kind of high school, I went to an all-girls grammar school. I started thinking about careers and I suppose journalism is all about listening to stories.

And I've always loved having stories told to me and, and reading stories and then writing those stories and telling them to other people. So I'm kind of, you know, career as a storyteller was something that I really wanted to do.

And I was told by the headmistress at my all-girls grammar school that journalism wasn't a suitable job for a woman. That I should be a nurse or a doctor or a lawyer or the kind of, secretary or, you know, something that was kind of really in that day and age more keeping

in terms of female careers at that time.

Best friend's mum at the time still best friend, but her mum was the woman's editor on the local newspaper. And really there were very few women in journalism at that time.

We're talking kind of early 1980s I went to journalism college I was kind of absolutely determined that I would try and have a career in journalism. And it was that kind of not taking no for an answer thing really. So I went to journalism college. Started working on a weekly newspaper then eventually got a job on my hometown evening paper.

Um, and on my first day there where I was expecting to kind of either cover a murder trial or go to an inquest or an important kind of council meeting um, I was told by the news editor to go and fetch a dozen eggs from the local shop down the road. It was a very hot summer's day. And to try frying them on the pavement. And, you know, clearly that's what they thought a female reporter was worth. And so I made the front page on my very first day on an evening paper, but it was not for the reason that I was hoping.

But pretty quickly I kind of proved myself. I think, you know, in those days you had to stand up and prove yourself. And there was all sorts of misogyny and all sorts of kind of odd things going on now that if I related to an 18, 19-year-old girl, she would be absolutely horrified. And a lot of, a lot of that has changed. And I'm really proud to say that a lot of the females I've worked with have gone on to have glittering careers on the national press and on television, etc. So it is a changed world. But when I started it was, you know, you had to kind of absolutely prove yourself.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: And what do you think, well, I guess, how easy is it for women specifically? Because we know, you know, you and I have had conversations around like local newspapers, just not having the resources they used to be. Lots of stuff has gone online. how easy is it for girls to get into journalism now?

Joanne Goodwin: No, absolutely. I mean the group I work for, I think there are 16, 17 life titles across the country. Cheshire Life is the biggest. I think there's one male editor now. So all the other editors of the life titles are females and it's, you know, total change from when I started. I think when I was working, certainly on big evening paper, there were perhaps two or three, four female reporters. There were no female photographers, no females on the sports desk, no female sub editors, certainly no female kind of news desk or editors. And that's a completely different world now.

And it's also a different world in terms of the openings that are there. So, you know, journalism isn't just about print anymore. It's about social media. It's about podcasting. It's about broadcasting, TV, radio. Huge, huge kind of influencer type work that I think females particularly are attracted to. And you know, when you look at the role of journalism, I think stock of journalism has gone down a lot in recent years, partly because of the way national newspapers behave and the way that they're kind of biased one way or the other. Newspapers are no longer kind of looking for the middle line and giving a balanced view of things.

Most newspapers have political leanings one way or the other. But thank goodness for journalism, especially in the world that we are living in now. You know, who would be holding power these days if it weren't for journalists? And a lot of females are leading the way, both in this country and in the United States, I think. So yeah, go for it, girls.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Yeah. So there's a few things that you kind of said there that I wanted to pick up. One is absolutely, I think there's been a change in maybe the status quo where girls are, you know, standing up and, and talking. You know, holding big leaders to account and, and talking more, whereas, you know, a few years ago, we wouldn't have been encouraged to do that.

And now we, you know, we're encouraging each other, which is, which is really good. What would you say girls would need to do to get into journalism? Like what, you know, what kind of route? I guess you went traditional route, you went off to university, things like that.

Joanne Goodwin: I didn't go to university. I just desperately wanted to get on the job, you know, to start. So I did a one year, after A level, I did a one-year pre-entry course. In those days, there weren't any media degrees anyway. You know, so if I'd have gone to university, it would have been to do a more general degree. When I was in my Fifties, I did a degree while I was kind of working, editing magazines, just because I wanted to have that luxury of doing English at university. So I did a full-time university degree at the same time as working full time, which was just wonderful. But I didn't do it when I was 18, 19. So yeah, there are media degrees which, you know, lots of different kinds of media degrees. But I think it's about the qualities you need, really, to have an absolute curiosity about life, you know, no matter what strands of journalism you're interested in, whether it's politics or fashion or health or beauty or, you know, all sorts of strands, broadcasting, radio got to have a curiosity and a real interest.

I think you've got to have an interest in people. You've got to kind of like talking to people and, you know, I've, I think that's something that I've It's helped me because I find people endlessly interesting and I'm privileged now that the people I deal with on Cheshire Life are all really nice, interesting people.

And that wasn't necessarily the case when I was working in newspapers. but you know, sometimes people ask us how we fill Cheshire Life and I could fill Cheshire Life 20 times over every month. If it wasn't going to give the postman a hernia delivering copies of the magazine. If you in print journalism, you've got to obviously have good knowledge of English, good spelling, they were to put an apostrophe, etc.

And I think you have got to have that kind of confidence that if you're interviewing people, you've got to listen to what they say and follow up rather than just asking questions, you know, the worst Interviewers are the people who think it's all about them. You know, you can see that on television sometimes. You know, it's, it's, you've got to be interested in the person that you're speaking to.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: I think one of the things that I really love about the magazine as well is that you've brought on kind of a couple of women columnists even. Is that a character you need actually being able to speak properly? I think, is it Claire McIntosh and Susan Holder? Is that right? And yeah, and they, you know, they come from very different backgrounds, don't they?

And their columns I just find really fascinating. Like, because they write about completely different things, and they bring their own quality. So I guess it's not shying away from being who you are, but allowing that to come out in the work that you do.

Joanne Goodwin: Life every month. we've never, ever got a shortage of people who want to write for Cheshire Life. And I think you said right at the beginning of this conversation, people want to be seen in Cheshire Life, seen with Cheshire Life, but seen in Cheshire Life. And every month, you know, I get people saying, oh, it's been my lifetime's ambition to appear in Cheshire Life, or my mum appeared in Cheshire Life in a social in 1975, and we've still got the cutting. which is fantastic. And when I first got the Cheshire Life job, someone really respected said if you have any idea, you know what this job entails not in terms of being able to do it and to produce a magazine every month, but actually what it means to the community. And I don't think I did at the time.

I don't think I appreciated how important it is in Cheshire that it's kind of does represent the views of the county and that people really do feel honoured to be part of it. And that's brilliant, because every month you're making people happy. And when the magazine comes out, there's lots of emails and lots of social media.

from people saying, you know, how great it is that they're in it and you know that they're going to keep that magazine forever and keep the cuttings from it. So it's, it's a job that actually makes people happy. It's really nice.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: And how many journalists make people happy on a, you know, on a monthly basis.

Joanne Goodwin: yeah, yeah.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: That is just fascinating.

Joanne Goodwin: Is my, this is going to be my journalistic swan song and you know, it's going to be a good point to kind of flutter out by eventually, I think.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: yeah. And yeah, but what a swansong, like absolutely what a swansong. It's really funny. And I've, I've said this to you before that. I just started subscribing to Cheshire Life because friends were in it or people that I knew was in it. Then I got to know you and every month when it comes through the door, and it does come through the door, everyone who's listening, our audience members, it literally gets delivered through the door.

And it's so lovely because it's, yes, it's glossy, yes, it's heavy, but just to flick through the pages and understand your county a little bit more and understand, you know, and there's, As Joanne says, there's lots of life titles around the country. So have a look, you know, if you're a bit further afield, have a look.

But actually for me to see what's going on your doorstep is, is a really lovely thing. But then also I used to then hand mine to my mother-in-law when she came to visit. Now she has her own, so I get it back. So, you know, so I can keep my own copy, which is just brilliant. But I guess that's the other thing is, it is for all ages, you know, she's, she's 25, nearly 30 years older than me, and she finds some of the stuff in it, like, fascinating, as do I, and I think that's really, you've really hit that mark of widening the demographic of the readers, I think, for me.

Joanne Goodwin: I think that's an interesting point because print, you know, the way that print has gone in the past 15, 20 years because of digital you know, newspapers, newspaper circulations have dropped dramatically because people consume their news in different ways. Cheshire Life subscriptions and sales have gone the other way.

And I think when I first joined Cheshire Life, there was a bit of a move, which I absolutely booked against to make it a digital first publication. And you know, that's not what, what the magazines about people like to kind of sit in the sunshine with a glass of wine or a mug of tea at night time or I've got somebody who I know looks at it when they're, when they're in the bath.

You know, and it's that kind of feel of it and you can put it down and you can pick it up again. And it's not something that you want to kind of see the pages on the screen because you don't get the same feeling from it. So I think we, you know, we're lucky. I think

that we've got really a niche

publication but that has a broad audience. Obviously, we need to bring the age range down. And I think social pages to that with a lot of young people who want to be on the social pages. We have a huge number of younger people in Cheshire who are doing really well, whether that's in the community, they're doing stuff for charity whether they, you know, starting up their own businesses. And they, you know, again, they like to be in Cheshire life. They can see that as some kind of accreditation, really. yes, got a good future, I think.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Absolutely, absolutely. I think, um, my daughter Erin was in Cheshire Life and she was like, you know, showing all the friends and they were like, oh my goodness, you're in like a real-life magazine, you know, cause it's glossy, it's aesthetically pleasing. And they were like, Oh, that's amazing.

You know, and that was so lovely because, you know. She's 17 and she's, she's chuffed, she's pleased, you know, and it's quite funny because some of the events we go to, one of your photographers Kurt is really lovely. He now goes, Hi Erin, come on, let's get this picture so we can compare it to last year.

And, you know, just things like that, that, you know, the younger generation, I think appreciate the aesthetics of it, but also appreciate the, what it means to be in there as well, which is really good. One thing I wanted to kind of return to Joanne is, is how many times do you think you've not taken no for an answer and that's been to your benefit?

Joanne Goodwin: Oh, every day, still, you know, I'm not afraid of putting my head above the parapet and I will always say what I think. And I think that's probably stood me in relatively good stead, although not always. But you know, I believe in kind of quality, I believe in being exacting in standards, you know, and we don't always get things right. I think having that kind of standard sees you well in the long term. and I've always kind of judged myself, I think, against my own criteria as opposed to what other people think of me. You know, wanting to do the best job I can because I couldn't not do the best job that I felt I could do. So it's kind of judging myself against my standards, I think. And you know, Cheshire Life is Okay.

Okay. personal to me

and deciding what's going to go into it, that it's things that they may not actually interest me, but it's things that I believe are readership will find interesting. So I don't compile the magazine for myself, even though I'm probably the right demographic for a reader, I compile it because of, you know, what I think

I read our market. I try and read the markets and think what the people of Cheshire or Cheshire life, potential readers will be interested in.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Yeah, and I think, I know that you take feedback very seriously. We've had conversations where people have either phoned up yourself or written in and give you feedback on the magazine and you, you really take that on board and, you know, and welcome that as well, don't you?

Joanne Goodwin: Absolutely, that's how I do things. We don't do things that are controversial or doing people over. I've told this story many times before, but a few years ago, a couple of years ago, Susan Holder, who is one of our regular columnists and who is married to a guy called Noddy Holder.

who is a kind of superstar rock band, singer

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Institution. British institution.

Joanne Goodwin: national treasure. So Susan writes a regular column for us and quite often writes about her family life. But she is kind of an absolute career woman in her own right. she's a journalist.

She's an author. She appears on television a lot. She's a broadcaster, a dramatist. And she dropped her column into my email on Sunday afternoon and I just picked it up and started looking through it. And just of my blood run cold for a second because the intro to this story was something like I was really proud to see my husband Noddy Holder on stage again for the first time in many years recently because A few years ago, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and given a very short time to live.

And I thought, hold on a minute, apart from the fact that I kind of got to know Susan and a little bit, I had no idea that was the case. And I thought, well, I'm sure this story hasn't been out anyway. You know, I keep up with the news and if that had been in the public arena, I would've known. So I phoned her up and said. is this a breaking news story?

Is Cheshire Life breaking a story here? And she said, yes, we wanted Cheshire Life to tell the story because we knew you would handle it sensitively. So we broke the story in Cheshire Life, and to his absolute credit, Noddy then gave an interview to The Big Issue, which was just brilliant thing to do every newspaper, every television station picked it up.

Some handled it well, some handled it in the way that, you know, you would expect them to. Noddy Holder dying of terminal cancer when actually he'd been kind of given the okay. you know, so there's a bit of clickbait stuff on there. But I think that's a source of pride as well, that we are trusted.

We're trusted by people. That, you know, people are not going to know that we're not going to exploit them in any way. We're not doing stories just for clickbait. So, yeah, it's something that kind of

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Absolutely.

Joanne Goodwin: and something, again, that has been part of my raison d'etre as a Gillian List, I think, throughout my career.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: I think that's where I kind of want to finish this podcast on really, because it is for me, everything about you is integrity. It is exacting standards and it is, you know, the love of your job shines through every month when that magazine drops through the door, without a doubt. So I guess what I would ask you as a last question is, what would you say to women, but young women particularly out there who maybe trying to carve a career that's not always easy, you know, whether that be in journalism or something else, what kind of advice would you give them?

Joanne Goodwin: You've got to work hard. You've got to really want to do it. You know, there's no point kind of pursuing something that you're kind of perhaps not sure about. I was lucky enough, you know, and I know that this isn't the case with everyone and people can change careers 20 times now. When I was, you know, leaving school kind of, it was almost, you decided on a career and you stuck with that for the rest of your life and that's definitely not the case now. You know, if you really want something, stick with it and don't take no for an answer. There's kind of examples of that. I think most people who succeed in life have to be resilient and have a word that you know very well, Ashley, you have to show resilience.

I feel as if I, you know, I have, I have been resilient and I still, I'm resilient every day in my job. It's, it's a long, long hours and, but there's so much pleasure in it. And it's paid, paid me back in spades really. So I've got a lot to be thankful for.

Ashley - The Resilient Kid: Joanne Goodwin, editor of Cheshire Life and friend of the podcast. Thank you very much for joining us today. I really appreciate it. And I appreciate your time, because I know you've got to get the mag to bed this week. So I really appreciate your time, but more than that, I just want to say thank you for encouraging young women in.

your advice, in being a role model for what you do and, you know, saying it how it is, because it does take hard work to get where you are, but you've got a job that has been like a dream job for you and you do it really, really well. So thank you very much for joining us today.