

**[CAROLINE: 00:13]**

So hi and welcome to Mind Your P's the Purposeful Leader's Guide podcast. We believe in all the P's: people, purpose, planet, philanthropy and even pizza and prosecco. And this week we're talking to Bruce Walker who's the Chief Exec and founder of FutureX who has 'pioneering' as a key value, we'll find out more about that soon. At just 26, Bruce is a well-established name in the Scottish start-up scene and working with big-hitters such as Facebook, Google and Hubspot and he knows a thing or two about the importance of leading with purpose. And was once quoted as saying that his 'aim is to reach a point where people starting a company are purposefully doing it to solve a problem' and that money is the by product to allow them to do that. So, Bruce welcome it's a real pleasure to have you with us!

**[BRUCE: 00:57]**

Yeah, absolutely, great to be here Caroline! Excited, this is exactly the kind of conversation I like to have. Absolutely love the conversation and where it's got to around purpose and the fact that it's continually moving more into the mainstream and so the more that we can do that, through this podcast as well, yeah I'm excited to be involved.

**[CAROLINE: 01:17]**

Brilliant. Well, look let's dig right in. So I hear you've got quite the entrepreneurial story to share, is it true that you first worked with Alan Sugar when you were still at school?

**[BRUCE: 01:29]**

So I always think that it's a, it's a funny story, I'll tell you the story about it. I think 'work' is really stretching it to as far as it could possibly go, what had happened is that when I was in school I had the opportunity to take part in Young Enterprise Scotland. We had to come up with a business idea, we had come up with a few things and it hadn't worked. But I was reading Alan Sugar's autobiography at the time, and we decided we're gonna host an event for entrepreneurs and we're gonna invite people to share their stories. And I think the naivety of being a 16, 17 year old was 'I'll just ask Alan Sugar if he wants to come and speak!', not really thinking about how I would do that or how that would work. But anyway I discovered who his PR agency was, because it was in the book, and in his autobiography, so I just sent an email to the head of their PR agency and I didn't get a response at first so I then sent an email to everyone in the agency, every email address I could find until eventually I got a response saying 'Hi Bruce, we've received all twelve of your emails, thanks for getting in touch' and said you know, Alan, tell us the dates of your event and we'll see if he's able to come along. As it worked out, he wasn't actually able to make it up to Scotland, but the really cool thing is that I wrote back to them and said "Ok that's totally fine, can I just have a quote from Alan endorsing the event", and this was my first insight into how these things work, at like seventeen, seventeen. They emailed me back and said "yeah absolutely no problem, do you wanna write the quote and we'll sign off on it?", and so I then wrote back and said "YES. This is the most exciting event to happen in Scotland for many many years, bla bla bla". And next thing you know Alan Sugar signed off on it and we had a genuine

quote from them. And that was really amazing because that then opened the doors for many other people, and we ended up working far more closely and intimately with many other people. That was the first thing that I suppose, it inspired me that you can just ask. And that these things are not as complicated as you think they are, and that you've got to take a bit of a risk and you've got to be a bit cheeky sometimes and put yourself out there and expect for people to say no and just be really, really grateful when they say yes.

**[CAROLINE: 03:56]**

I absolutely love that, I've actually got a sticky note on my computer here that has 'just ask' on it, because the story in your head and the conversation in your head that you play through is completely different from the real one isn't it?

**[BRUCE: 04:10]**

Absolutely, and you could tell yourself and convince yourself quite rightly, that "well, why should they want to help you", but it's just not been my lived experience. My lived experience is that people really want to help you, you've just got to find the right way and right time to ask.

**[CAROLINE: 04:27]**

And so, you know, some people could look at that and think that's brave it must mean that you've got tenacity, you've got dry persistence. How would your friends describe you, Bruce?

**[BRUCE: 04:38]**

Em, I'd like to think that they would say I was quite funny, but maybe that's just what I would say about myself. I think that, I think that they would describe me as someone who's ambitious. I think they'd always say that I've always been quite ambitious, as in like, I've a, I have an unusual belief in myself that I can do things, I certainly believe that I can do it before I'm proved otherwise. I'd also like to think that they would say that I was, I really cared about things. So I get passionate about things and I get really, really passionate about them. And that could be anything from, you know, whether it's work, whether it's politics, whether it's the environment, whether it's arguing about sports, or something that's happened down the pub. You know, I like a good discussion on things, I like to get into things and tear them apart. So I suppose overall, they would probably just say I was very curious, interested in things you know, wanting to explore, not taking things for face value.

**[CAROLINE: 05:43]**

Have you ever asked them?

**[BRUCE: 05:45]**

No, I dare to, I daren't ask them Caroline I wouldn't like to know the answer.

**[CAROLINE: 05:49]**

[laughs] I was thinking about that pub conversation there, they're always best after a few gins. So what, what, just to dig a bit deeper into that and who you are as a person Bruce. What on your CV do you think your family would be most and least proud of?

**[BRUCE: 06:07]**

Em, it's a tough question you know. I think, I've done, you know, I've had the fortune of getting started very early and young so lots of the things I managed to achieve in the early stages, my parents were exceptionally proud of, you know, whether it was just even our first ever event at school. Putting that on I think they were, that was something that was a big achievement that people didn't really expect us to do. I think the first time we ran a program in Silicon Valley, it was like, 'what's this nineteen year-old doing?'. I think, increasingly though, the thing that I would hope people are most proud of is that we're proving that you can build a company that is good for people, good for wider society, and can be sustainable, can be economically sustainable as well. So I hope that's what people would be most proud of, I'm proud of the fact that, you know, I've never really been employed by anyone else. I had month I worked in a bar during the Edinburgh Festival one year, and that's the only employment I've ever had. Before that I was a self-employed magician, believe it or not, in school. And so, I've always had that kind of, just do your own thing. What would they be least proud of? I don't know actually, maybe because I've not got much of a history of employment that there's nothing for them to be least proud of!

**[CAROLINE: 07:33]**

I love that! Self-employed magician, what's your best trick?

**[BRUCE 07:37]**

Oh I, my best trick probably was, I would do some mind reading - I would predict the card that someone had picked and it would sort of be on the wall somewhere around them. Yeah, there was lots of good stuff! My first job actually I was working in a pub in Falkirk, but I was actually on sixteen – they had no idea I think they thought I was eighteen – but I was only sixteen. I was going 'round doing tricks to very drunk people in the bar.

**[CAROLINE: 08:07]**

[laughs] Who thought it was great!

**[BRUCE: 08:08]**

Yeah, who loved it!

**[CAROLINE: 08:09]**

[laughs] Brilliant, see the things. That's a great question I'm gonna use that one because you just, you just never know! But listen, tell us about the business then. Why did you build, why did you build FutureX and I think you've got a couple other brands. Talk to us about all that, and I know I know you've got a lot in there around people and purpose, all the P's that we love, so, tell us a bit about that.

**[BRUCE: 08:32]**

So, when I got started, it was really because I really didn't know what entrepreneurship was and I really didn't know what a start-up was. I really liked the idea that when you're passionate about something you can make something out of nothing, you can materialise things from nothing. So, the very beginning of my journey was really about learning. All I wanted to do was learn how these things worked and the more I understood about entrepreneurship the more I realised it's the perfect model to help people and to empower people, not just with opportunities but sustainable opportunities for growth. And then I did, I got involved with some organisations that were very much around kind of personal development as well. And I realised that the biggest changes we can make is how we as individuals treat other people. That's the beginning of, of being purpose driven for me is how you treat people. I then became very excited by the model that if all businesses were purpose-driven and cared more about just the economic function of making money, but the reason for existing, being something far greater than that. Actually, you can impact not just your life, not just the people immediately in your life but the knock-on effect can be massive. And then if you use the tools of business to reach scale, then you can use the model to reach hundreds of millions of people and you can really affect change at scale. And that's what FutureX is really all about, we're enabling. I suppose, we're an ever-evolving project that cares about making business for good the default mainstream approach and we want to teach people how to do that in a way that is economically successful as well as has a positive impact.

**[CAROLINE: 10:27]**

You know, it's pretty insightful for you to do that as the first entrepreneurial 'go', I suppose. You know, we speak to and meet lots of people who have tried things and it hasn't quite worked out and they've learned from it. And then they've done something you've just described. So what do you think is it in you that wanted to do this right from the start.

**[BRUCE: 10:53]**

Well, I think it's a couple of things. I look at me and Zoi, my co-founders that we've got very different life experiences that lead us here but a similar thread I suppose. So, for background Zoi is from Greece and she was in Greece during the economic collapse and she saw the way that the system isn't sustainable and doesn't serve people and the disasters

that it can create and so she really wanted to move into business as an entirely different model. For me, I think I grew up with this like injustice complex, where I hated seeing injustice and I didn't really understand why everyone else was standing by while we were operating in a system that didn't serve people and it didn't serve the planet either! You know we're actively decaying lots of the systems around us, I just as a young person, naïve enough to wonder, 'why? Why are we just not doing anything about it?' In the same way as when I was leaving school we were told that there was no jobs out there and we're in a recession and you're gonna have to go and work for free for lots of different people in order to prove yourself and once you've proven yourself maybe you'll be lucky enough to get a corporate grad scheme that will take you on and so on and so on. It just sounded like it wasn't for me, and it wasn't gonna make any change. And so I guess, I never had this lofty belief that I was gonna change the world but I just thought 'I'm gonna do something, I'm just gonna do something'. And then one steps leads to the next step, to the next step, to the next step, and other people want to get involved. And all people telling you this is a good idea, so I didn't have any grand masterplan. I just knew I didn't like how things were at the moment, and I was just gonna keep taking steps to try and remedy it.

**[CAROLINE: 12:45]**

I love that. So you know there's a couple of things there, how do you live it and embody it at FutureX? How do you ensure you're a purposeful leader and second to that as part of your offering, how do you teach others to do the same?

**[BRUCE: 13:00]**

So, In FutureX, it is, the major focus is put on listening. Zoi and Annie and our leadership spend a lot of time listening, and really authentically, actively listening to what people are saying. Not just waiting to speak, which is a really common thing is that, you know, we're just waiting to say the next next thing. And then reflecting on it, so taking time to process it. And that helps massively, because it reminds you to see everyone as human beings, as flawed individuals who come with baggage and, you know, and the thing I often do is I just look back at myself and say, 'well I come with baggage, I come with preconceived ideas', so you know, how would I like to be treated in an ideal world. And I read a great thing once that was talking about how everyone is someone's most important person in the world. So whether you're friend, daughter, a partner, whatever it might be. You mean something really important to someone else. And then think about, how would you want the most important person in your life to be spoken to? How would you like them to receive feedback? And I try to embody that as much as possible, thinking about, you know, what's the best way to get the positive result here. And I'm almost always prepared to surrender my own ego to get there, because it's the easiest thing for me to give up. It costs me nothing, except y'know the perception of pride. I can give that up easily in order to get – so I think that's a big part of it. I think there are more practical things behind that which is, we provide flexibility, so there's flexible working. We actually work a four day week, that for me is all very important because it's about making sure people have free time, because that's when they're able to create creative space, they're able to think more laterally. If we try to cram people into working every waking hour, then it's just a zero sum game. They can't - no

one can keep up with that, so that's some of the practical ways. Then, as a business we're trying to be an example so one part of it is trying to be transparent and talking about how we make decisions, but then the really exciting thing is we're able to tap into brands and leaders from all over the world and share their experiences as well. Because there's no point in us all trying to learn on the first principle basis, we might as well try to learn from people who have done this already and it's working for them. And they go through, from being a sole trader individual to employing thousands of people. And how you keep that idea of purpose and values inside your organisation all the way through. And it often involves transformations at different stages, y'know, turning things upside-down, but if you do that with a consistent purpose and values, then it should be much easier.

**[CAROLINE: 16:03]**

And Bruce there's something there that really resonated with me. I did a Conscious Leadership short course with Saltire Leaders Entrepreneurial Scotland and one of the things in there was around treat every employee like your precious child, which is exactly what you're talking about which really reframes everything that you do. So you know, I've got two daughters, how would I like them to be spoken to in work, how would I like them to be spoken to by whom, and all those things really help to reframe. So, y'know, who does this well? Who, y'know, have you got any specific examples of people or organisations that do this stuff really well that the listeners can really tap into.

**[BRUCE: 16:48]**

Yeah absolutely, I mean it's loads of people. I believe in, it's not just what you do but it's how you do it, so for some of the people it's about how they do it, famous brands like Patagonia are very good, very brand activists, very clear in what they believe in. Brewdog this year has been a great example of, at least living their purpose whether it's your purpose or not, many people might be on either side of the camp but it's very clear what they do. We had the managing director of LLS Kitchen which is baby food brand, all sustainable, they're great. They talk very much about this, they're a B-Corp company but also maybe in the more local ecosystem. I see people like Talking Medicines, who are a tech-for-good company. And it's also the way that they operate as a business. And one of my favourites at the moment is actually Olio, which is the food-sharing app. I just think that they have perfectly combined really slick technology and experience with reducing waste, sharing more and their purpose and values come through. And I actually had the chance to speak to Sasha who's there co-founder the other week and did an interview with her and she just spoke about as a company as well. And one of the cool things that she actually mentioned was that when they're hiring, they don't specifically ask about their value or purpose but that's what they're listening for. And I just love that, that's a really authentic way to get people, find out whether people actually care. You don't ask them a question about it you

wait to see if it comes through their stories and anecdotes and things. But increasingly there are so many, and I think that's, that's a really encouraging thing that there are role models out there, the final one I would add is a woman called Claude Silver who is the Chief People Officer at Vaynor Media, and Gary Vaynorchuk is the kinda famous founder of Vaynor Media but Claude is their head of people. And she talks about how it's her job, she works for the 900 people in the company, rather than the 900 people working for her and it's a good way to showcase how she thinks about it.

**[CAROLINE: 19:10]**

Yeah, I love that. And y'know this stuff isn't easy is it. What about if you're a company who's been around for, I dunno, 40, 50, 100+ years and you're in an employee now who's come into this company and y'know is well established, but they haven't really had any kind of people and purpose focus. So we speak to lots of businesses as you know Bruce for Social Good Connect, and some of them, a volunteering culture which is what we provide, is really tough some of them have never done it before. So it feels awkward, it feels like you're trying to shoehorn something into their organisation. But there are those within those organisations who are really championing changing. Where should they start in terms of changing those companies culture?

**[BRUCE: 19:57]**

I think that the challenge with why it's really difficult is that it does require an element of personal transformation or kind of personal awakening I suppose in that, like the things we've said earlier the kind of traditional style of leadership, particularly I would say the male-dominated style of leadership is not to listen, it's to dominate, it's to project and get commanding control-style structure and that is not the most effective way to nurture empowered leaders within your whole organisation. And I think that's what people should think about, leadership is about cultivating more leadership skills within everybody, even if they're not a manager or, they don't have to occupy that position to relate leadership skills. And I think that's what more organisations could think of. It's how do they empower each individual to be a mini-leader within their organisation? And then think about, well, how do we do that. People need to be heard, that's a really big thing is that people want to feel like, if they're going to make a contribution, that it's not just dismissed. Even if you don't agree with it, the job is to hold the space for it to be shared and explored and it's little things like this it's often really subtle changes that are required so people feel like they're valued. There's so many times that people feel cynical towards corporate transformation programmes where y'know 'we're going to adopt a new culture', it has to be consistent. It has to be everyday, that this is something you're doing, you're modelling really. And I think that's the big thing, because it's not easy. You're going to have to model and pretend a little bit and act out almost, what would the best boss in the world look like and then act that one out. And I think what you'll see is that you'll start to see changes, and then you'll just nurture those changes. And the big thing is that, rather than punishing the behaviour that

you don't like, it's really about rewarding the behaviour you do like and making that an obvious thing and I think that's a good way to start to evoke change in bigger companies. It's start to reward the contribution that was really valuable rather than the contribution that was not valuable. Rather than shutting people down, make more of an effort to big people up when they've made a good suggestion.

**[CAROLINE: 22:33]**

Yeah, y'know, and that's just so, it sounds like common sense doesn't it. But actually for some people that's really tough, especially if you work in a sector that you've sort of described, probably financial services where I worked which was very much like that in the day where, sort of, really led by people who didn't listen. I'm so intrigued by your listening comment because I really really struggle with this Bruce. Which is why I always why, I always exactly like you said at the start I'm always thinking when someone says something, immediately, I've got things in my mind rather than really stepping back and authentically listening.

**[BRUCE: 23:04]**

I think that's a really really important point because I'm you know I'm similar in that you know it's not always I don't do it naturally all of the time and that this is these are not things that if you don't, aren't able to do every single time that you've failed at it. This is something that is all of us just trying to be aware of all the time. You're not gonna get it right one hundred percent of the time, any of the time. You're just gonna have to, you know it's almost like catching yourself when you're doing it and be like 'wait a minute, what are they actually saying' because I find that, I used to be terrible at names, and it was really because I probably wasn't listening, I just wasn't listening and then I had to really go through a process of being like I'm listening to their names, and then using their name really quickly so that I get into the habit of actually you know remembering it. And I think it's the same with these things you've got to just practice it out. Sometimes it feels like you know it's a bit obvious here ,but it's often not obvious it's not as obvious as as we think and you know. I think that's the lesson is that none of us are perfect it's it's all a journey, and we're just trying to get better, you know as as we go.

**[CAROLINE 24:08]:**

I think that you know and that's that's what a purposeful leaders is all about it's not about knowing it all and having all the answers and doing things right now. It's about trying stuff and iterating and changing and you know it's all that really isn't it. A

**[BRUCE 24:19]:**

Absolutely.

**[CAROLINE 24:20]:**

And so has anyone ever surprised, you with you know their philanthropic efforts, I suppose you know unlikely candidates or volunteers or business leaders.

**[BRUCE 24:36]:**

I mean a lot of people have helped me along the way in lots of ways whether it's-. I remember a guy at Brian Williamson spoke at my event when I was at school, I invited Brian to speak at that event and he said yes and then a year later I said to him I'd like to take this forward Brian and he agreed. He wrote me a check for, I think five hundred pounds or something just to get me going you know at seventeen. And that for me was a massive vote of confidence that was you know a small amount of money but it got me my business cards, it got me feeling like a business person em all the way up to - how I met Sir Tom Hunter is a is quite fun story. I had, I'd actually tried to meet Tom a couple of times before this point. Em so I'd been at events and things I'd gone up - I don't know if he knows this part of it but I got up and spoken to him a few times and you know he's a very busy guy everyone wants wants a word with them and so I never really went any farther than just you know very good. Until we were both at an event at Holyrood Palace and we just so happened to be leaving at the same time and I noticed he was walking down the stairs and so I thought oh here's my opportunity looked like he was sneaking away and so I use this opportunity -

**[CAROLINE 25:51]**

You were stalking him Bruce, come on!

**[BRUCE 25:53]**

Honestly I actually it was just complete luck walking down at the same time and the car park's quite long from the you know the palace to the to the gates it's quite a big car park. And so I had a captive audience for at least a good three minutes, and so I just I just I tried to picture him without pitching him this time I just told him a story and it was a story about how you know I got over to Silicon Valley and and got that started and at the end of it you just he just said that's really interesting and I'd like to

hear more about that and he gave me his email address and then end up actually going down to his house in London. I met him in his house in London and I would say about, maybe twelve months later he essentially like invested about a hundred thousand pounds in FutureX through the Hunter Foundation through the philanthropy, venture philanthropy so he didn't actually take a stake in the business. He essentially gave us a hundred thousand pounds to really launch FutureX and that's what enabled us to create the impact summit. And so that was that for me is you know I've always been blown away by how generous he is with his time, with his wisdom, and you know he has been with with investing his money as well.

**[CAROLINE 27:13]:**

Yeah it's so important and you know that when you talked about what Brian did that kinda quick check that you know 'I believe in you' it's that belief, isn't it, so if you believe in someone that gives you the confidence to keep going because I think I've spoke to you before about this Bruce but you know I I was about to give up on Social Good Connect - it was really tough, it was really tough to trying get start-up funding to get people, you know engaged in it. It felt like sometimes people for you know that having a culture of employee volunteering was a 'nice to have' rather than something that should be part of the DNA. And Craig, Andy Danni and I ended up in a virtual pub where I think I said all great things happen. But you know it was about that belief, them saying 'we believe in this - keep going'. Sometimes that's all it takes isn't it.

**[BRUCE 28:03]:**

I think that such a massive massive part of it is that we need others to believe in us and to show that they care just to validate our own feelings sometimes because it's really hard when you're you know you're up against it and you're seeing it at you know point blank detail, and that perspective is not always great and sometimes someone coming in and saying like I can see it a bit, you know from a bit of a clearer picture and I think what you're doing is great. We all need that from time to time and that's why I never really see is my job to tell someone that their business idea isn't good enough. That's not the way it works. People are what make businesses thrive. So the business idea in of itself is is never going to be enough it's the conviction of the individuals behind it and that's why I always see my rule is that people come to see me - I always try to get them leaving feeling energized because there's always an opportunity, you know. You could take something like Airbnb and you know you would rightly say that on the face of it on paper that sounds like a terrible idea - but yet it's a great idea, do you know. So I think that you know we need to always catch ourselves to remind ourselves that it's people that make businesses happen - not not just the ideas.

**[CAROLINE 29:14]:**

Definitely definitely and em, so tell us about your value 'pioneering' what is that, what is it and how do you live it?

**[BRUCE 29:21] :**

So pioneering for us is about taking risks really. It's about saying that we're prepared to do things that others might not have done before and we're prepared to kind of furrow the paths for others. And kind of pioneer different ways of doing things and that's a really important one to us because, particularly as you start to grow it is easy to think that you know 'we've seen this model over here I'm just gonna replicate what they've done and and tweak it a little better' or it's times when you say to yourself you know, why can't we work a four day week? You know who says you can't work a four day week why doesn't that. To be fair doing a four day week probably before it was cool, you know. Proves popular we've been on a four day week for years now and it is great for us I personally love it but that's what it's about. That's what pioneering is about for us it's about being the example that we want to see um and being prepared to take risks every now and then to trying to furrow that path.

**[CAROLINE 30:20]:**

And do you work, do the team work five days or y'know full time hours in four days?

**[BRUCE 30:29]:**

No so we take, the work they work four days ultimately, they'll work. We we we used to be everyone was off on a Thursday but that doesn't work anymore in that way so people can choose Friday on Thursdays to take off and we just work the four days. I mean we've also got the culture of we're all here for a reason we're all here for the purpose which is that at times people put in significantly more hours than a normal working day or normal working week. And that's the point of flexibility is that it doesn't have to be fixed. The other side of that though just to be fully transparent is that what we've also learned is that sometimes we need to make sure people do take time off because they care so much that they'll work more, or they work too much and I think that some that's something that everyone needs to be aware of is that you know you need to take their holidays and sometimes when you don't allocate holidays people just don't take them so that's the other side of us being responsible and recognizing that but sometimes we actually say to people 'take time off please'.

**[CAROLINE 31:32]:**

Yeah no absolutely, and listen and what what's next for you Bruce what's next for you what's next for your Futurex?

**[BRUCE 31:41]:**

I want to create the number one service if you like for people who want to build better businesses. And by better businesses we mean businesses that are sustainable they are good for people and good for planet. I think that we were going to do that it's going to be a combination of a really powerful digital community that has access to all the resources, tools that they need online but that is brought to life at real world events and programs throughout the year we bring people together. Hopefully that's in there in a post-Covid world when we can get people together but I think the digital tools is an amazing way to reduce the barriers to entrepreneurship and particularly reduce the barriers to purpose-led entrepreneurship, but that getting people together in in in real life in the physical world always has a special element to it and we want to embrace that again we can.

**[CAROLINE 32:43]:**

Yeah and you know what I mean it sounds brilliant. So who who is who is it for talk to me about your ideals of client?

**[BRUCE 32:54]:**

So that's what we that's what we're trying to create is different levels for people to engage. Our traditional bread and butter start-ups, so companies that have got an early bit of traction so they're getting going, they're beyond idea stage. And we're going to create, we still do have at the moment but we're gonna improve it, it is a free kind of newsletter information for people who are at the very beginning of their journey and they're just looking to get an understanding of what is your ecosystem where can I go to learn and that's a very kind of basic easy to consume. The next level up is actually providing that community where you can tap into events and programs for free as because you're a member. You can read from you can read resources but what's going to be really powerful is when it's the community sharing their experiences back. So I want to get to a place where people are thinking about you know I need a, shareholders agreement that we can crowdsource shareholders agreement from across the community and create something that is purpose driven

for our group and if people are looking at you know contracts or they're looking at you know interview questions or whatever it might be is that we start to curate this from a purpose driven community and we reshape the tools and resources that people go to when they're starting a business and then our dream is eventually that that'll be all that people can find you know. That that becomes the default, the mainstream and any other style of business is seen as the as the alternative.

**[CAROLINE 34:36]:**

I mean yes that's that sounds fantastic. I'm I'm pretty much in awe of what you've achieved from such a young age I think you said it was sixteen when you first seventeen when you first started and to where you are now is is absolutely fantastic. What's been the toughest part?

**[BRUCE 34:53]:**

The toughest part is the mental the mental pressure that you put yourself under so you know that stress, you know you said earlier Caroline about 'is this going to work is it worth it?' You know it all those kind of things and comes in waves and it comes in waves constantly. In fact, it's been very strange for me because I've done lots of really fun and exciting things but every year I get this I get this at least one point in the year when I question myself, I question is this the right thing to do is this going to work the way I wanted to and so that's quite that can be quite draining and so I definitely think that's hard I think at times like financial instabilities been hard you know growing your own business it's not easy and so that the pressures that come from that have definitely been tough but I think the key is to make sure you find enough moment somewhere like how we're doing this for a really good reason. And that's what spurs you on. You also need to just be good to yourself and remind yourself is that we all feel this way sometimes and we need take time off and chance to breathe and process and and all that good stuff. It's easier said than done but you know it's it's something that is something I'm increasingly doing more of is is not particularly in the world of Covid is trying to take more time off because otherwise you could just spend your whole life on the screen.

**[CAROLINE 36:31]:**

Yeah absolutely I think we're all feeling that this year in particular aren't we. Like the constants sort of, someone was telling me that the other day that we don't blink as much when we're on a computer screen all the time. So I've been to the optician the last couple weeks for two appointments and she said they've never been as busy because people's eyesight start to go so that's pretty scary. But the mental stuff hardest it's back to the original thing you talked Bruce where are it's is really the

conversation you have in your head is much harder than the than the reality I think and sometimes voicing your views and your thoughts on 'you know I'm having a I'm having a tough time at the moment I'm really struggling with this' is normal it's just normal it's how we all feel.

**[BRUCE 37:14]:**

I mean one of the funny things I was just thinking as well as the other thing I find quite hard sometimes is that is the balance between when you know when difficult things happen or you know frustrating things happened is responding based on how Bruce Walker might respond you know as an individual and then how Bruce Walker CEO of FutureX needs to respond. I find that constant battle and I'm trying to find a middle ground somewhere in between and so I think that's that's just the conditioning that I need to work on %HESITATION of what my knee jerk responses sometimes versus what kind of professional mind has to has to write back.

**[CAROLINE 37:55]:**

So so what would Bruce Walker the person, what advice would Bruce Walker the person give to someone who's a leader who is struggling with this, you know what we have to make money and we've got to think of our people and we have to keep our purpose on track and we've got to consider the planet, and oh my god is all too much.

**[BRUCE 38:18]:**

Well the Bruce Walker side to me is actually much more fiery than the CEO version of me and so that is part of what I say is that, is that why are we doing this? And we're doing this for this reason which allows us to be quite fierce sometimes so at least to make feirce decisions so people think that being purpose-driven somehow makes you soft I mean for me is the absolute opposite makes me really quite fiery because I know why I'm doing it go I've I've gotten much greater reason justification behind why I'm doing what I do. So I think we all remember that is that you're looking after people because it's the best thing to do. It's the best thing to do for your business for them and for the greater good but if you have people who are underperforming or are not right for the team then you still need to be pretty focused on the fact that, you know, the way I might exit someone from the business will be compassionate and kind but it doesn't mean I won't do it. And that's the key, is that you know the way I approach things through compassion empathy, you know, greater consideration but it doesn't mean I won't make hard decisions, and I won't make quick decisions it's just that and I have to make those decisions because I am conscious of the greater good.

**[CAROLINE 39:38]:**

Yeah you're right there is this impression that oh gosh it makes us a bit soft we're not focussed as much on the money and I think you and I both talk about the fact that if you get the stuff right if you get the people stuff right if you get the philanthropic efforts right that the money will come. And profit's just as important at foot for a sustainable businesses isn't is. But listen Bruce, it's an absolute pleasure to speak to we're running our time today but thanks for joining us on one of our first ever Mind Your P's podcasts and I think there was lots of P's that you talked about: people, pioneering, purpose, popular, planet em and I love the fact that you have said right at the start that if you don't ask you don't get and and you know being pioneering is about being brave but you're also not afraid to make those tough decisions and so it's been great getting to know you thanks so much Bruce and I look forward to hearing all about the Bruce Walker versus Bruce Walker CEO antics of 2021 and beyond.

**[BRUCE 40:37]:**

Yeah, I'll have to write a blog!