

Straight From The Horse's Mouth

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This month I visited the Great British Business Show at the Excel with my nineteen year old nephew Aaron. He is currently considering his options for University after taking a gap year to set up a small fashion design business which he can continue to maintain. I believed this would be a great opportunity for him to likeminded professionals.

Before venturing in, over breakfast we discussed what he wanted to gain from the day. He kept it simple; meet other entrepreneurs to learn how they grew their businesses, network and enjoy the day. We shook on it.

Our first speaker was Daniel Murray Co-Founder of Grabble a multi award winning fashion app for web and mobile which helps users to purchase the latest fashion. From the moment Daniel started speaking Aaron was fixated. Daniel talked us through how his internal entrepreneur was ignited from the successful sales of a simple deck of cards onto developing the concepts of the fashion app which he is now so proudly a Co-founder of. We learnt in great detail how the process of the up and downs always yielded two things, lessons and success. A fair amount lessons learnt from oversights and miscalculations which led to stepping back and asking why, how and what before improving things which of course in turn led to huge success. One of our biggest take aways was that you must never get disheartened when you get pushed back, you must always ask why and what you can do differently which in turn will allow you to change or rethink your strategy. Be brave.

Before the next speaker was due we mingled, visiting a spectrum of stands from 4networking, digital marketing, promotional gifts, lawyers, accountants, website creators, social media experts, event's organisers and many outsourcing companies from HR to learning and development.

Soon we headed over to see Brad Burton one of Britain's most successful business men who changed his life from being £25,000 in debt to a multi-million pound 4networking business. Our hopes were dashed of being able to get in after seeing the longest queue. Astonishingly Brad was preparing outside so we managed to shake hands and say hello, I then asked if he could shout as we would have to rely on standing outside. Then all of a sudden there was a commotion and the queue headed off in the wrong direction. Aaron and I were amazed as we now had a front row seat to a presentation that we previously had no chance of getting into. The room was soon after full to the brim. Brad didn't disappoint even though he presented himself as a simple man it was clear that this shrewd entrepreneur could use his charm and emotional intelligence to win over the crowd and sell his brand which was ultimately him. An energetic brand which displayed the most sincere honesty and reality of 'just' being himself to communicate his message which is what networking is all about! Interestingly his story was similar to Daniels when it came to building his business from developing the concept and never giving up through setbacks and challenges.



It had been a long day so we decided to do our review on the train. I asked Aaron what he felt he had learnt from the day. He told me that being an entrepreneur meant two things for him, 1) It didn't happen overnight and 2) you had a put a lot of effort in. He also said that attending this event was one of the most productive things he had done to assist in his decision making.

He desperately needed to talk to likeminded people, learn about the sphere of opportunities and help understand some of the challenges that may lie ahead and who could help. We then relaxed and enjoyed the rest of the journey talking about art which we both have a fondness for.

After getting home I sat with a lovely cuppa, anyone that attends exhibitions knows how exhausting they can be so sitting down without your shoes is a real luxury. I did some reflection myself. The most powerful careers advice you can get is from the horse's mouth. Straight from the horses' mouth comes from the 1920's meaning of getting information directly from a person or place; it's your best chance of getting the most reliable data. The information is obtained first hand, direct from the source or origin. I remembered when attending a course with the London School of Journalism back in 1982 my tutor told me to speak to other journalists. He said 'Neena if you want to be a



journalist get into a journalists skin!' I then sought out as many journalists as I could, my local newspaper, writing to the big names in Fleet Street and visiting radio stations. I struck up conversations and made copious notes. The knowledge I gained led me into local radio and one of my highlights was to interview John Davis Managing Director of Pinewood Studios followed by a personal tour of the grounds. Even though this experience is something I shall never forget I decided that I didn't want to be a journalist at all but a writer.

I felt today Aaron had learnt a similar lesson and eventually this experience will help him make the decisions which are looming and I know he will choose wisely.

And whether it's growing his current business or going to university, the journey to any place is never easy unless you use the energy from the ups to get you through the downs.