

Video transcript – Building resilience in business with Rabia Siddique

Rabia: When we share our stories we must be prepared to share the whole truth.

We must be prepared to share the beautiful truth of our lives, but also the ugly truth, because it's only when we bring the darkness into the light.

That we can truly learn. That we can truly connect and that we can truly start having conversations about things that we wouldn't normally not talk about.

So ask yourself in terms of your upbringing, in terms of your formative years.

What experiences did you have? What did you live through? What environment did you find yourself in?

What relationships did you have, that influenced and informed and laid the foundations, the decisions and choices that you made later on and perhaps are still making today?

And ask yourself, "Did you allow those things to have a positive influence on you?" or not.

This time I receive a call advising me that I had been selected to deploy to Iraq.

As the sole legal adviser to support the British contingent on what we call 'Operation Telic' at the time.

And I was to spend the best part of the year in Iraq.

Not only advising the chain of command on international peace keeping and military operations but working closely with my Iraqi colleagues to help them re-establish law and order in their country.

After, let's be honest, we to a large extent, through an ill-conceived campaign had left them in a vacuum of chaos and lawlessness.

And as I'm thinking of all these negative thoughts, "I'm not worthy, I'm not qualified, I'm going to get us all murdered." Suddenly, out of nowhere, my dad's words come into my head.

And dad used to say to us when we were young adults, "That in times of great need, our character will be tested, and will be called upon to step up and outside of our comfort zone."

And I realised, that those words that I had dismissed as a youngster, now had resonance, and that dad was actually talking about this moment.

And so what was I going to do? The lives of these two men now rested on my shoulders, there was only one choice to make and so I stepped up.

And in the tinniest slit of a window in the stone cell where I'm now standing I could see flames were so ferocious that I could feel the heat emanating from the flames.

But what I didn't realise until, much later was that these were the flames of my colleagues on fire.

Because the crowd outside had grown to almost 3,000 and they were no storming the compound having set fire to soldiers, my colleagues, my friends, that had been sent to keep them calm.

And as the crowds stormed the compound, everything changes.

And I exhaust every informal avenue I know of to right this personal wrong until the only option available for me is an extreme one.

Because I know it will mean the end of my military career and that is to mount a discrimination case against the British Armed Forces and therefore the government.

And so after wrestling with the decision for so long, I eventually decide I must continue.

Because otherwise my while life has been a hypocrisy.

And so I sue the British government. And I won.

But the win wasn't in the win. If that makes sense. The win was in the lessons learn along the journey.

And that's when it dawned on me. The biggest lesson from my life.

The power of the one. The power that we all have if we are courageous enough to embrace it, to create ripples of change.

We must be willing to preserve hope, at all cost, and what I mean by that is hope, faith if you will, belief.

Self-belief. That you can create ripples of change in your life and in the world around you. Isn't that after all, the why, the motivator, the drive, for business, for entrepreneurship, for innovation and creativity, for contributing, and living beyond ones' self, a bigger life.