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S3:E8 – Jules Park-Robinson – Transitions

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[00:00:00] **Beth Stallwood:** Welcome to the Work Joy Jam I'm your host Beth Stallwood, founder of Create Work Joy in this episode, I am joined by the fantastic Jules Park-Robinson. Jules spent many, many years in senior roles in leadership in the army and is now, or what we're calling a career adventure, having left the army two years ago.

And she's also got a fantastic non-executive director role as the chair of British Wheelchair Basketball so we explore different things like transitions and, um, changing your identity because you've been somewhere for so long. And what that is like as well as thinking about how doing things outside of your we'll call it a day job for now doing that volunteering, thinking about the things that you're passionate about can make a real difference to your work joy. I really hope you enjoy this episode.

Welcome to the Work Joy Jam today. I am joined by the wonderful Jules Park-Robinson, and we have so many different things that we're going to talk about today. So before I introduce Jules, because she'll do it so much better herself, Jules, can you tell us a little bit about yourself? Like the, who you are, where you came from of blind date and Cilla Blacking [00:02:00] how you got to where you are today.

[00:02:03] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Thanks Beth. And sadly I do remember that actually – delighted to be here, so a little bit more about me. I was, um, born in Abergavenny so I have a proud Welsh heritage, but I then also then grew up in Birmingham before returning back to Wales to study later on, um, where I read International politics Aberystwyth, uh, and then stayed for an extra year, um, to do international history.

There's a reason behind that, which was that I was I was wanting to stay for another year to play rugby and that was my, my way around the application for staying for another year. So I was, uh, I decided that I wanted to join the army at quite young age about and I was lucky enough to go through a scholarship scheme, which meant that I had a place to join from the age of 16, but I finally went to Sandhurst when I was 23 and commissioned into the role military police.

Initially my career took me out to Germany for six years, uh, included operations in Kosovo, which was where I met my husband,, Iraq and Afghanistan as. Lots of highlights were in that career, um, including leading the largest deployment of the special investigation branch since World War II. Um, when I went to Iraq in 2003, I instructed at Sandhurst and then led the {?} service police collaboration with the metropolitan police during London 2012. And then a key one for me, which would be commanding the special global {?} branch with global responsibility for the investigation of serious incidents and crime, uh, involving military personnel. So I got really interested obviously from the whole of the whole of the justice system from investigation through to detention.



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And I decided that I was going to do my law degree part-time famously did my finals in a porta cabin [00:04:00] in Camp Bastian in Afghanistan and then I spent several years volunteering with my local prison. I think for me, sport has heavily featured, uh, throughout, um, hockey when I was much younger as a school girl and I found rugby when I was at university and I was very fortunate right place, right time. And having been born in Abergavenny meant that I could represent Wales and played in the rugby world cup in 1998. And then when I had to retire from rugby, I so discovered I needed something more {?} and did obstacle course racing and then decided to start martial arts so TaeKwonDo and Korean kickboxing, when I was about 40 and having had 20 fantastic years in the army, I, I chose to leave in 2019. So I'm now very proud veteran. I do some work as a reservist, uh, and, uh, outside of that, I'm doing a number of different things most notably are currently working for Amazon as an operations manager but also one of the things that brings me joy, is I'm Chair of British Wheelchair Basketball, which were the Paralympics coming up this summer is, uh, something that I'm not only very proud of, but very excited about too.

[00:05:10] **Beth Stallwood:** So that was a very quick introduction to a very interesting and detailed career. And one of the things I'm really interested in, because a lot of people don't have this, and tell me a little bit more about this, but you kind of knew when you were 16 ish that you wanted to be in the army. And so many people who I speak to have no idea at that point in time and really kind of out there discovering things. What was it that made you clear that that was a career path for you

[00:05:38] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Fascinating actually because my uncle was in the Navy, but other than that, didn't really have a huge family history in the military. But we went to a careers fair for my elder sister who's a couple of years older than me, so I would have been about 15. She was doing her Alevels at that time and looking for what she was going to do later on and I saw this recruiting forms for the fources. [00:06:00] And I just always knew that I wanted the job that was outside. I didn't want to sit behind a desk. I wanted to be active, my eyesight wasn't good enough to, to fly. I'm not very good with water, famously every time I drive a car for seven bridge, have to do it with the car window open in case I plunge off the side, which is ridiculous cause I think that it wouldn't matter to me to come out different than that, but it's just become a ridiculous family story now and so that left me with the army and uh, on that incredible female officer who basically said, yeah, this is what I do.

And uh, and I spent lots of time skiing and I do this, I do the other thing. And I was like, yeah, okay. I'll have a bit of that. So, um, that's what persuaded me to join and my parents, I think were a little bit shocked. When this opportunity came up, she said, well, you can apply for this, this scheme. And they went yeah, great do it. And I had all my, um, my interviews and selected, and Paul test at the end of 16, which in hindsight, now 30 years on is quite scary. I can't imagine necessarily well, knowing that I really wanted to do that at 16. I knew that I wanted to join the army. I didn't necessarily know that I want what I wanted to do in it, it didn't become clear to me, I think until I went to Sandhurst. Cause I didn't really know what the options were at that stage so it opened up my eyes to different things, but I was fortunate then that I had this time period where I could do other things, and I didn't have to go until I was at that stage probably 25.



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So it gave me the freedom within that period to explore a little bit and do some other things and university and play the rugby and make, make the most of that opportunity.

[00:07:44] **Beth Stallwood:** It was also fascinating and wants to giggle a little bit about the fact of how quickly you rushed over to the point that you played in the Rugby World Cup. How it was just like, yeah. I played in the Rugby World Cup as if it was just absolutely nothing, tell us about, um, because obviously sport has played a big part, as you said in your career. [00:08:00] And that's a really interesting thing. You did that and yeah. How was it for you?

[00:08:07] **Jules Park-Robinson:** It's interesting because I will always, I'm sort of a late comer, I suppose, but that was quite normal because girls didn't play you know, at school, in the way that they do now, it's just that opportunity. It's certainly not something that was done at, at my school. It was kind of hockey or, or netball and then tennis in the summer. And I just went to university and found it a culture in other sports that I wasn't really keen on. The attitude within the Rugby Club was it's very much, it was the men and the women together.

It was one club we supported each other and I really liked the environment and I just, you know, felt that anyone was welcome and you could just come along and give it a go and I've always been a relatively large individual. So at this stage, I think it was necessarily more brawn than skill but, you know, I was just in the right place at the right time, but really, really loved it.

And I think, um, what the army allowed me to stay with the, have the opportunity to carry on playing. And I was lucky cutting down the army side for five years and then played combined services, um, those leadership opportunities to be the captain of the army side and to take those values that I have on onto the pitch and then use that outside as well, a real learning and development opportunity for me. And I always maintained that I was a much better player when I was the captain because my head was always thinking about other things, but they needed me on the pitch for my organization of other people.

You know, that probably sounds crazy today. In all the other things that I do as well, you know, as an individual, I may not be the one with the most skill but what I can do is I can bring people together in a team cohesion is one [00:10:00] of the things that I really pride myself on, that I can bring together a disparate group of people, give them a purpose and then send them off in a direction where they can become a really high-performing team.

[00:10:10] **Beth Stallwood:** So it's almost like that's been your thing. That's, that's the thing that unites, what you do in your work and what you do in sport is bringing people together.

[00:10:18] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Yeah, it's a theme that runs all the way through actually, and for me now having left the army after 20 years, it's finding those opportunities of where can I use that skill to best effect and, you know, that allows me to give back as well and for me, that's, that's, that's



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really important to be, you know, having been in a public sector role from innate for 20 plus years to feel that I can still contribute in that way. And BWB has really given me that opportunity.

[00:10:46] **Beth Stallwood:** Love it. I know that I'm going to talk about BWB and a little bit, and talk a bit about, you know, leading sport and all the amazing things of that can do. There's also the other thing that I was just picking out from what you were telling us though, and your career is that you seem to be somebody who never wants to stop learning. And I was noticing that you were, I mean, the idea of you taking your exams in a porter cabin in Camp Bastian, like I can, I can picture it in my head right now.

What is it within yourself? What do you do? Because so many people find this really hard is that continuous learning and finding the time and headspace to make it happen. And there's a little bit of me that thinks if you can make it happen whilst you're on tour at Camp Bastian and taking your exams, then for the rest of us mere mortals, there probably isn't much of an excuse not to do some L and D stuff, right?

[00:11:39] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Well, that story. I started doing my little degree on maternity leave, right. As I had this newborn baby that kind of slept and I was like, oh, okay. That's great and then I realized that that was the honeymoon period for about the first three weeks. And then he didn't sleep at which stage I was committed, and I [00:12:00] think lets put it into perspective, um, in the, in being in a military family and a military sort of partnership did spend a lot of time in a house on my own where my husband and I weren't always, um, {?}. And so when you've got kids, you know, you're not really a social animal in the evening, by the time they've gone to bed, what else are you going to do? You can sit and watch television, or you can do something useful with your time.

And I think there's a balance and there's a need for both. You need to have time to switch off and do compress, but also. I just always want to learn. So yeah, that's, that was the third degree. And then I just started doing, um, another Masters in International Human Rights because trying to work out what was the next step.

[00:12:51] **Beth Stallwood:** Three degrees were not enough for you, you needed to go to the four degrees.

[00:12:54] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Yeah. It's slightly ridiculous. And, um, I think my family that I haven't told about it yet when they hear this will be aghast and probably a little bit frustrated, but I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I had to do it, but I just think for me having, um, knowledge and that's not to be clever, but I just think there's something really interesting about learning new things, because we can all. Another aspect that really comes to me. And I love mentoring and I mentor a number of young women in particular but also one of the things we've been talking about as a, as a board is we think we know things because we're a certain age, but where are we taking those information feeds from? And actually, what can we learn from people who aren't of our generation and to understand.



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I like to think I'm cool and down with kids. I didn't know what it feels like to be a 30 year old or a 20 year old in workplace or in a sporting event unless they tell me, cause I can't [00:14:00] experience that myself. And so actually, any opportunity you can get to learn new things means that you can pick up snippets of information that you can use in a different environment.

It's not just about, oh, I want to learn about this subject. What does that mechanism of actually applying myself to something and there's it, there's a discipline to that as well. Um, and I've been famously known to say it's 24 hours in the day so what's your excuse for not doing something. It has come back to bite in the last 12 months. And we will talk about that later, but you know, isn't there between prioritizing a bit of self care and a bit of sleep versus actually, this is really interesting. To be honest, I've only really picked things that I'm interested in. I don't, I struggled to acquire myself to learn something if I think that I can do it, if I think it's going to add value, but I do it if I'm just thinking, oh, actually I'm really not interested in that. I'm doing it cause I have to.

[00:15:06] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. And before we go on to talk about leaving the army and talk about the other things, you mean again, like the transition, et cetera. Your job in the army leading globally, the Royal Military Police, uh, having, you know, many, many people under your command in that zone. So there's a few things that spring to my mind, I'll get to a question in a second, just wait for it.

The things that come to my mind is there's a lot of people involved in that. It's a very serious subject because the stuff you're working on a serious, they're obviously kind of very big risks and issues. And you're sometimes doing this in war zones and in really difficult circumstances. And there could be some people out there including myself who sit there and think blimey how do you find some work joy when there are all of those difficult, challenging things coming. So if you could put yourself back in a time [00:16:00] machine to the times when you were in that zone, how did you manage to create some work joy for yourself and for the people in your command when you were doing that really challenging work?

[00:16:13] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Gosh that's a hard question.

[00:16:14] **Beth Stallwood:** I know.

[00:16:19] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Okay. So there's a number of things. So, um, yes, we dealt with some really difficult things and really unpleasant things, and in some ways they are the ones where you're able to get really motivated to do a good job, because there's a victim at the end of that, or it could be that there's a victim's family and you want answers.

You want the truth, you want them to have a degree of closure. So that really does, you know, motivate, not only me, but a team. So I think that that is really important, but I think broader than that, it's about, um, what thing other people learn and grow and develop and, achieve their own successful, achieve their own level of confidence, but any, I mean, any leader in any environment is



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going to take work joy from that. And you know, one of the things we want to be really careful of is how do we make it for people to be vulnerable harder, we make it okay for us to... you can't normalize some of the things that people agree on, but what normalizes some of their routine and teach them the coping strategies to deal with some of the issues that we're facing and become more resilient.

And so I think, you know, providing people with that, that opportunity and, and those experiences are really important, but that only really comes if you've got a really clear mission statement that everyone is bought into [00:18:00] that there's a vision of where you're going. People find what their priorities are that sit within that and therefore you have effectively a unifying purpose that everyone can get behind. So people are really driven and really focused, um, because they have to be, um, but that absolutely can, can give work joy.

[00:18:20] **Beth Stallwood:** It's really interesting because everything you talked about that. And I think that's just limited to the military place is it, you know, getting people behind what you're trying to do behind the purpose.

I love what you talk about. There is the stuff that can't, you can't normalize, what's the routine that's wrapped around it so that life seems normal as normal as it can be. I think those coping strategies, there will be people out there in the wild doing lots and lots of different jobs here ho are listening and going, okay. How does that apply to my world? And I think it is easily applied isn't it. What do you have in your life? Not just in your work that makes you feel, um, resilient, that makes you feel like you're able to cope with stuff that makes you feel able to get on with the tough stuff when it comes. So that you can feel the joy of the result of that, or you can feel connected to the purpose. It's really good that it's not just a space, that's not a special, military source here. It's a really good leadership and thinking about how do you bring people together with that one purpose?

[00:19:23] **Jules Park-Robinson:** And some of it can be on a, such a basic level can't it – you know what are those foundations are the building blocks in terms of, you know, um, health in terms of, um, exercise and things of fresh air in terms of food, in terms of sleep, all those things that, you know, certainly during the pandemic have really come to the fore for people that they become more important than ever, um, sort of normalize that, but also recognizing that, you know, I would imagine for a large swathe of the population, they aren't necessarily in a job that brings them work joy all the time. [00:20:00] if at all. So how do you then understand what that joy is in the wider parts of your life. So if you're in a, if you're in a job that is not, um, necessarily fulfilling you, how can you, what, what makes you tick and how can you add that fulfilment on in other ways?

[00:20:17] **Beth Stallwood:** And it's one thing that I always say about work joy is this isn't about finding. Joy 100% of the time. They're always going to be a bit of your working life for a slightly frustrating or that you don't want to do, because there's no such thing as the perfect job. That's my opinion on it. And if anyone has found the perfect job where they never have to, you know, do the stuff, they don't like, um, I'm well impressed, but it's, it's about sometimes it's about knowing that.



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And I'm just, I, I really believe in tracking it and understanding what it is that brings you joy and doing more of that stuff. And then making decisions about careers about if this, what you want to keep doing, or do you want to change what you're doing? Is it, is it enough for you? Is it too much for you and kind of really calibrating where you're at and that's where I'm going to like lead us nicely there now.

So after a 20 year career, you decided to leave the army and to go exploring on different things. So this is a big transition, right? From military life, very structured, very much a part of how you live your life, as well as the work. And tell us a little bit more about the transition that you're in.

[00:21:20] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Oh, I'm glad you said "in" because it's not over. And my last day in {?} was July 19. So we are two years into it. And it was a huge decision for me to leave and a very difficult one, but one that I was really confident about in the sense that I knew that I'd have such, such a good time and achieved everything that I wanted to achieve, that I felt that if I stayed, I would have potentially fall out of love with what I was doing. And I didn't want to do that. I wanted to be able to look back and say, actually, that was [00:22:00] brilliant. I've {?} career, but actually there's a big wide world out there. And I think in a military, um, sort of environment that, you know, many people are leaving there mid-50s that's quite a hard time of life to get it. Um, we'll start a second career. And so it was almost, if I give a bit early, then I've got a bit of a buffer in terms of time to explore a bit and find my way and actually understand what's out there. Cause let's be honest about that. I don't know how to proper job.

[00:22:32] **Beth Stallwood:** You did have a real job in a very specific world. Right. Which is an all encompassing world.

[00:22:40] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Yeah. And it is all vocational, I believe. And, um, you know, if, if it was just a job, people wouldn't do it would they. It's much more than that. It means much more than that. And therefore the transition is as much more difficult, like often to athletes when they retire from sport.

And I've described it on a number of occasions as, um, you know, you're part of a club and you wear a uniform and then suddenly you pull the uniform off and no one knows who you are and more in a completely lost your identity. And that wasn't to say that being in the army defined me. But I guess if I'm honest, it probably did.

That's who I thought I was. I was, you know, I was this rank as I went through and it wasn't about, you know, well, who is me? Who's the person underneath, what do they stand for? What are their values? And actually, what, what do they want to do? What can they do? And trying to unpick all that, um, it's really hard. And then you get chucked into a pandemic.

[00:23:40] **Beth Stallwood:** Just to make it slightly easier.



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[00:23:43] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Do you know what it's been a fascinating, cool worlds because I've learnt so much about myself. I've learnt so much about. Um, when I think I'm resilient and perhaps where I wasn't as resilient as I thought I was, but I really, um, hold most dear, um, what I will tolerate and [00:24:00] what I won't and where I want to be. What I'm still not very clear on is what are those stepping stones to get to that point, but that's work in progress. And actually I have, you know, luckily a little bit of time on my side to, to do that work. And to get some experience doing different things along the way. You know, if you've, if you've worked for 20 years, military, and you've never worked in the corporate environment or, um, you know, never worked in the city or you've never worked in retail or, you know, just didn't have any other experiences to be able to use as a frame of reference.

Yeah. I've been really fortunate to be able to do some different things and go, oh, I wonder what this is like and in each of those experiences, I've found things that, um, or have taken away from that, whether they're positive or negative, that helped you grow and help you shape the next adventure. I'll do a bit more of that and a bit less of the other thing.

So, you know, everything, everything that I've spent, the last 8 months working night and I would say that that is a young person's game.

You know, I have the utmost respect for people who work day in, day out or night in night out for years and years and years. Some people it really suits but actually that's been really interesting for me. It was something despite, you know, being in the army other than being on exercise or an operations I hadn't really experienced that before. And yet lots of the people that I led did work shifts. So it was really interesting to see, you know, how did I feel about that and, and draw from these experiences to how the past and the present collide.

[00:25:50] **Beth Stallwood:** It's really fascinating. And I love the way that you, you, you agree that you kind of in this transition, I'm going to call it a career adventure cause that sounds like exciting. Like you're exploring [00:26:00] all these different areas, and the thing that was coming to mind when you were talking about it is. It's almost like you're a fresh graduate going out and exploring the world, but with 20 years worth of experience,

[00:26:13] **Jules Park-Robinson:** You're absolutely right. And the one thing that I suppose, um, I've been wanting to me is while some potential employers are really interested in what you've done before and what you're capable of and what your level of experiences and can really see the benefit in having someone who's got 20, 25 years of career behind them. Whereas others just, it is like you're joining at the graduate level and actually everything else you've learned before doesn't have doesn't hold value for them. And so that's been a really interesting experience in itself, you know, because I have worked actually in the last two years with a number of, um, graduates, which I find fascinating, I'm deciding that it keeps keeping me young.



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But, you know, it's really interesting to see the, the job market from their perspective as well, more than, you know, and it's tough out there. It really is, and also. It is tough, but we've also so many options. I don't think we know when I was growing up. I don't remember being faced with that, that wealth of choice about what do you know?

It was kind of, we were placed in buckets of type of activity it, you know, whereas now if you were to go onto it, you know, one of the infamous, you know, uh, job search engines, I mean, where do you start? If you've got a degree in, uh, or at some or any kind of higher education or training in a particular area that's vocational kind of, that's really easy, isn't it? Cause it channels you down there, but you know, if you on, they didn't want the history right now. [00:28:00] And in some ways that's great because it gives you the freedom but it doesn't help. If I think of that, I didn't join the army at 23. I have no idea what I would have done.

[00:28:09] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah, I suppose this is a, you didn't do it when you were 23 going, exploring, because you had your career that you knew what you were going to go and do. You were just waiting for the right time to go and do it.

So it's almost like going back in time, but into this, into a very, very different world of jobs that didn't exist two years ago and, um, careers that didn't exist five years ago and new jobs and new things coming up every day. So it must be a really fascinating and in some ways massively scary adventure.

And I just wanted to say actually thank you for being so open and honest about how it's so easy, isn't it, to see the end part of a story versus the middle part, the difficult things. And it's so nice to hear people sharing that your, you haven't necessarily found the exact thing yet.

[00:28:58] **Jules Park-Robinson:** No. Um, I think when you leave the army, the military full stop, there's almost a fair much a focus on that resettlement to get you the job.

And if you don't know what that job is, um, or you're not sure what it would be, then it's having that level of confidence actually. It's okay to try different things. And it, you know, gosh, it has been, it has been scary also because I'm not a graduate. And because I am in my mid forties, I have responsibilities as you know, I've got a mortgage and two kids to bring up and, you know, bills to pay.

So although I do have freedom, I don't have the freedom that. I might do if I was 22 and I could still live with mom and dad. And actually my salary is great, but I'm going to buy a car with it or go on a nice holiday when we can travel again. Um, you know, that's, that's been really unfair. I'm not tiring, all all graduates with, with that brush.



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I didn't mean it in a, in a negative way, but actually I've [00:30:00] had to be really hard, a lot more as much freedom as perhaps I would have wanted to because there are those requirements upon me. Yeah, that makes it a little bit. ...

[00:30:14] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. So there's some necessity there, right? That's the, we, can't just, I can't just spend two years, like the figure around waiting for the perfect job to come.

I need to go and earn money. I need to find a job that works for me and my family, and I need to, so there, and I think this is so true and take out the army context or the military context. There are many people out there who get to. I think it happens often between kind of 35 and 45. That's the experience I have with people who people go, this isn't the career I want anymore and I have spent 15, 20 years building this career and I thought that's what I wanted, but actually the goalposts have moved and I actually want something different now and I don't know exactly what it is, but I've got that, you know, that kind of real in a knowing that real feeling that this isn't what I want, but I haven't got the answer to what I do want and that going and exploring, having a career adventure - however scary it is actually may and you up in a really, really good place. But the idea that we just know that we just know exactly what the job is when there were so many jobs out there, so many different options and being employed or self-employed, or being an entrepreneur that the options are almost too much to make those decisions.

[00:31:30] **Jules Park-Robinson:** When I embarked on this adventure, I thought, I would know instantly what I wanted to do. That was completely wrong.

And then, and at that point then I struggled a little bit with my confidence, to be honest, because I sort of went in one direction, thought, aha, this is it. I'm all over it. And then decided that, oh actually, maybe this isn't the right environment for me, I'm not necessarily feeling as though I'm thriving [00:32:00] here. I'm not necessarily, um, one of the things I struggle with is feeling that I'm not being used to my maximum sort of capability you know, the same inquiries that I can offer my earlier comment about some employers being keen to understand what you can do and others really not necessarily. Um, taking a view, they'll mould you into their own way of thinking, but, you know, I want to be fulfilled in what I'm doing from a work perspective.

Um, and therefore, you know, finding that right environment of finding where I fit. I want to recreate that sense of belonging that was when I was in uniform and I might never find it in my working life. And therefore, how do I create that outside of my normal sort of full-time employment. It's really important me.

[00:32:55] **Beth Stallwood:** And this is where, nice Segway there Jules into the stuff that you do outside of your job.



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And obviously big part of that is being Chair Of British Wheelchair Basketball. So tell us a little bit more about how that came to be.

[00:33:15] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Well, I was really fortunate to go on a leadership development course a couple of years before I left the army. And, one of the other individuals experience was the CEO of Chair Of British Wheelchair Basketball and I've been thinking that when I leave the military, maybe I'll look at sort of a portfolio type career and then an opportunity came up to join the board and so I went through the application process and interviewed for that. And for me, we talked at the beginning didn't we, how sports has been real important to have.

It was just like everything, all the stars aligned. There was a [00:34:00] sporting opportunity, whereas a leadership role that I could be involved in, I could give something back, and you know, inclusivity is hugely important to me. Not only from my own personal experiences with my daughter growing up who was born profoundly deaf and you know, that experience and has really shaped the way I think as a society, you know, how we genuinely live those values every day, um, how to make sure that she is included in everything that she does and given those opportunities as a young girl. But then how do I, you know, how do we expand that and broaden that into, um, the world of sport and life and careers in general?

You know, really fabulous opportunity, to work hand-in-hand with Lisa as CEO, who is a huge, huge talent, um, has been really, really rewarding and particularly we've had such a tricky 18 months as, as you well know, um, Trying to navigate through significant risks in terms of , but then prepare for Tokyo, uh, on all white means and then Paris and the strategy for Paris and beyond.

But wider than that you know, it's not just about the elite athlete. Well, they are a huge part of what we do it's about how to expand that in the, at the grassroots level, how do we double participation in the support? How do we give people the opportunity to have a go at, put his wheelchair basketball and we've just secured a huge investment for our inspire a generation campaign, which is just a joy to watch people across the community, becoming activators and inspiring, um, you know, young people, uh, and you know, more senior people that opportunity to go at something that they would [00:36:00] never have even considered before, it's just, it's hugely rewarding. It gives me some, some work joy in my life, as you can probably hear in the way that I talk about this.

[00:36:11] **Beth Stallwood:** It's very interesting because the way you talk about your kind of career side, the job side, so we're calling it your job versus your work here. So the job site is still kind of that adventure, that exploration, that not knowing the finding out, it sounds like on this side of your life, in this bit of work and in the work joy theory of everything work is anything that you do, where you expend effort, energy, experience your skills. It's not about whether you get paid for it or not. So volunteering and doing work such as you're doing here in that kind of non-executive type role at boards and support and trustees definitely fit into work joy. It's just the work that you don't necessarily get paid for.



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So I totally get it. Your voice, really your voice lights up. That doesn't quite make sense. You knew what I meant, right? If you get some real energy behind your voice there. So it sounds like on this side of your life, you've really found the place where you can get that work joy.

[00:37:13] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Well, it's more than you can make a difference and it's always that, so it was such a trite thing to say, but I know that I can help. I know that I can lead that I can bring the team together, that I can support that I can offer advice that I have, you know, a background in sort of strategy and governance has all those things that we need to, to help us move forward and to, and to take the organization into the next 10, 15 years and beyond, and how do we make BWB baby a force for good outside of what people might think. The narrow parameters of an NGB are. It's much bigger than that and having that opportunity to be involved and help shape some of that is just incredible.

[00:37:57] **Beth Stallwood:** I love it. And for [00:38:00] people who haven't yet been following brushed wheelchair basketball game, I take love it can you tell people a bit more about it so that people understand what it is your working for

[00:38:17] **Jules Park-Robinson:** It's difficult apart from anything else is absolutely nails. And it's, it is it's seriously, my background, obviously in rugby and obstacle course racing, and then, um, you know, martial arts, I've always been attracted to those sort of physical contact sports. I'm lucky in that I live at the moment quite close to London Titans, and quite often, you know, when I could, was able to go and watch them play and, oh my goodness, it's just brutal. But the smiles, the joy on their faces is just an absolute pleasure to watch. Um, the Commonwealth games is going to be fascinating because normally play five versus five and for the first time we're going to be doing three versus three. And so that's been a really interesting thing to see how that's progressed. Uh, three, a lot of people being reluctant and thinking, oh, this isn't good for the sport. and then other people saying, well, actually that provides us a huge opportunity they play differently - what skills would we learning three versus three that we could take into the ordinary game. Um, so, you know, and you know, we've got a huge membership clubs all over the country, um, able bodied and disabled so there are plenty of opportunities for people to, uh, go and have a go. And, you know, if you, if you want to get involved, um, you know look it up on the internet and inspire a generation.

And there's a huge opportunity right now to, to be involved in this program and to give wheelchair basketball, to go, and also obviously follow the team through the Paralympics because. Incredible men and women's team. Uh, they're good. I'm going to do fabulous things. I really feel for them [00:40:00] in terms of going to take it, it's been a really tricky road to get there but, uh, they are raring to go and, uh, they're going to do brilliant things and can't wait to watch them on the big screen back here.

[00:40:13] **Beth Stallwood:** Here's the interesting thing. This podcast will come out after they've played. Oh, I really want to be able to maybe I'll be able to come and record a little outro at the end that tells everyone how they did, but I I'm so excited to see where they get to.



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And, um, how, you know, overcoming what has been a really tricky 18 months of training, you know, delays and very different games to what they were expecting potentially because of all the regulations and who's going to be there and not going to be there is, um, what resilience, those athletes must have to be able to make that happen.

[00:40:49] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Yeah. I mean, I'm also, how do you measure success? How do you measure success this year? Because it's so different. Yes medals are important. That's what everybody wants, but actually, you know, for me, the measurement of success is getting everyone there safely getting them home safely, um, in the current environment and actually if, you know, if they bring home anything, then that's fabulous. It's the icing on the cake. But to be honest, the achievement is getting them there and back, um, and giving them that opportunity and that platform to be able to expose to everybody else what they've been working so hard for, um, back here, um, you know, in their own living rooms, in their own gardens and, you know, having to carry on training. I mean, just incredible resilience as you can imagine.

[00:41:37] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. And isn't it interesting how. Obviously you talked about, it's not just about the elite end of the sports, but inspiring people, but how, when you get that amazing stuff on the TV back here, when you see people play, how much that contributes to that inspiration of not just young people, but anybody who might be interested being able to take that and go and do [00:42:00] something and play locally and find a team, or just try it out. And it can be amazing for getting people interested.

[00:42:07] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Kind of absolutely huge. I mean, you look at the legacy of London 2012, but if you think of sport like ours and what we're trying to achieve in terms of importance of providing that opportunity for, you know, young to play who might be excluded from other types of sports, you know, um, you know, giving them that opportunity to be able to do the same as everybody else. That's just fabulous to be able to think that they can have that platform to do that. And you know, our athletes, our elite athletes have, have a really, um, huge role to play in that and are massive role models for the next generation.

[00:42:43] **Beth Stallwood:** I cannot wait. Oh, what is it? Five weeks away or something at the time of recording. I'm definitely going to come back on and talk about what happens off this we'll I didn't want at the end. So we have been chatting for a while and I could talk to you obviously for another three or four days, but I'm going to move us on if it's okay to get your quick fire question answers.

Are you ready? Right? Question One. For you as an individual, what is always guaranteed to bring you some work joy?

[00:43:20] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Being empowered in anything that I do. So, um, not only myself, but being able to empower other people. So it allowing others to earn my trust and allowing them the freedom to develop and thrive.



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Translates across everything I've done in the military and beyond, um, giving people that opportunity to grow and develop. And knowing that actually as a leader, you take that responsibility and people have to learn by making mistakes and, um, you protect them. You're the, you're the magnet that sits in the middle. You're the filter that sits between them and other people, uh, and allowing them to, to grow. I think for me, that gives me a huge work joy.. [00:44:00]

[00:44:00] **Beth Stallwood:** Amazing. What book are you reading?

[00:44:04] **Jules Park-Robinson:** I've got two. Well, actually I've really got three, but I'm going to just go for two, cause I try and read something that I think what that I ought to read, but I know what you mean. I normally have sort of something else on the bulb. Just, I don't know whether you're in the Linda Riley fan, but I'm just finishing The Missing Sister, which is the last one of The Seven Sisters, which is fabulous. My mum has finished it and I haven't, which is really frustrating. Um, but a very dear friend and a colleague from BWB also sent me recently and I just started reading so I've got quite Captain Toms Life Lessons, which are amazing, really, really good. And also You Do You by Sarah Knight. And someone who, you know, has gone through this experience for the last two wars, um, this colleague and friend of mine, or recognized that that was a book that could probably help me and give me that, bring your confidence to a place where you can do you, but actually it's just written such a fabulous way. So I'm, I'm part way through that one as well. Depending on what mood I'm in.

[00:45:15] **Beth Stallwood:** And I think that's it. It's so interesting that that's the book that somebody sent you when you talked about, you know, who are that, that journey of discovery.

Oh, that sounds really cheesy, but just go with it. The discovery of who you are when you're not in a uniform, who are you when you are not in the army. And how do you feel competent and great about that being you?

Question three, what's the best or most useful bit of advice that someone has given you in your life that you always come back to?

[00:45:48] **Jules Park-Robinson:** This is an easy one for me. This is my dad. And I had the same conversation with my son recently before his end of school year exam, which is Read The Question.[00:46:00] It goes, deeper than that. There's something that we all aspects of a problem. So my dad always used to say, What are they asking you? What will tell you? What do you know? And if you pull those three things together, then you can get through most problems. I like that ah, it's good isn't it?

[00:46:23] **Beth Stallwood:** Um, totally applicable in many, many situations.



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Right. And to stop and just think, ask yourself these questions and see where it goes from there. Love it. Great advice. What is one super practical go and do today, tomorrow the next day, really easy to do, bit of advice that you would give to people that would help them get more work joy.

[00:46:46] **Jules Park-Robinson:** So I would say, accept that it's not selfish to put yourself first and I'm really bad at doing this. I know that I am I did it last week. I ended up declining an online session with, um, a group of friends, um, which was actually going to be really useful, but I knew they were recording it. So it was a kind of compromise and I had to prioritize what I'm going to go to sleep, or wasn't going to join this session, or could I watch the session back later, which wouldn't be a such the immersive experience, but I would probably still get an awful lot from it and I think it's just, yeah. I don't think that's selfish to put yourself in self-compassion is really, really important. And I think that, you know, that's something I've put to the bottom of my pile over the last two years. And it took me getting quite poorly to actually realize that it needs to be me first. And that isn't a selfish activity because you were saying, you need your own life jacket on don't you, before you put your one else's on, but that is genuinely true. You can't lead other people. If you're not capable of functioning. [00:48:00]

[00:48:00] **Beth Stallwood:** I also love that you're sharing the one thing that you were actually still trying to work on yourself and not the one thing that you'd be going, I'm the expert in there. It's like, no, it's hard. I'm still working on it.

[00:48:08] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Yeah, because actually I think, you know, sometimes saying thing, no, I'm usually quite generous with my time, but you know, working nights at the moment, sometimes I've had to say, actually, I'm really sorry. I can't do that because. Do you do that, then it means I'm only going to get three hours sleep and that's not fair on everyone else. Certainly not that people have to live with me.

[00:48:31] **Beth Stallwood:** Oh yeah. I totally get that. So it's actually, it's not, and it's really interesting because what we, I I've been saying this for ages that we needed a different word for selfish. We need one that hasn't got so many negative connotations with it because looking after yourself, is the role model that you want other people's too. You want other people to go to the cars and stuff you want to be at your best? You want to be well slept well nourished, well hydrated, well read. Well, you know, all of these things and fitting all of those things into your life is actually quite hard. So you have to say no to some things, or you will not be at your best.

[00:49:04] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Absolutely. But it's really difficult to do so difficult

[00:49:08] **Beth Stallwood:** So difficult in practice. Yeah, we could. all see with helping each other with that one, supporting each other with it. Right, final one. Where can people find out more about you and your work.



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[00:49:21] **Jules Park-Robinson:** So I think from my perspective, I would want to push people towards exploring more about BWB, um, where they can get involved in watching British World Basketball at all the different levels where they can get involved in having a go.

Can you support, you will have supported. I know the Paralympics, but actually there's the Commonwealth games too. So, and it's at home. So we'll have plenty of opportunity for people to go and get involved.

[00:49:52] **Beth Stallwood:** Hopefully in a world where we can all go and actually be with other human beings in a stadium and enjoy ourselves.

Thank you so much for today. Thank you for coming along. Um, it's been great to hear your story and the transition part and thank you for being so open and vulnerable with actually the fact that. It's not all there yet, and you're still working through it. And I think for many people, including myself, it's really inspiring to hear the journey part of it again, slightly cheesy, go with it for a second versus the head of the shiny outcome and the fact that you're still working towards some of those things. So thank you very much, indeed.

[00:50:31] **Jules Park-Robinson:** Thank you Beth.

[00:50:37] **Beth Stallwood:** Well, a huge site here to Jules for coming on this episode of the Work Joy Jam there are so many interesting things that I have taken from Jules's conversation with me. And I think one of the really interesting things is about this transition around. It's not just about whether you come out the army or about whether you changing your career or you are thinking about a different role is that sometimes if many times, many people, you don't have the exact answer, you don't know exactly what you want to be doing, but you know that you want to be doing something different to where you are now and that restless feeling I think we sometimes get. And if you identify with that, this episode hopefully would have resonated with you and to perhaps think about you don't have to know the answer. You can go on a bit of an adventure. You can go and experience different things and to learn things and to try out different careers and see which one really fits you well. And that doesn't mean that you have to find something that is 100% joyful all the time that's probably really unrealistic in the expectation, but what are the things that really light you up in an organization? What are the things that you don't enjoy so much so that you can steer your career in the direction that you want it to go in? You can find the roles or the organizations or the type of being an entrepreneur that really, [00:52:00] really work for you.

I also think it's great the fact that Jules is talking about the things that she does outside of work outside of the paid job that's still work and her role as the chair of British Wheelchair Basketball and how much joy that can bring you using your skills in something that you feel really passionate about and something, when you feel you are giving back and can help other people.



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So huge thank you to Jules for coming along. Do you go and listen to the other episodes that we have? We are on season three now, so there's plenty of different people, different backgrounds, different experiences to hear about them and what they think about work joy and where they would recommend you could go and have a look for some of it.

And if you're keen on developing your levels of work joy, if you're thinking this is something you want to spend some time working on, why don't have a look at Club Work Joy. It's our club. It's all groups that are an amazing community of people who are all trying to create and cultivate more joy in their working lives and the joy and the working lives of the people around them.

We have events, we have networking, we do everything online. We've got an app where you can connect and collaborate with people from different organizations, different backgrounds, different experiences. If you want to find out more, go to www.createworkjoy.com. Click on Club Work Joy, and come and join this fantastic community.

Thanks very much for listening. [00:54:00]