



Think Big Start Small – Season 4 – Episode 2 - Danielle Thompson – The WorkJoy Jam

Beth Stallwood: Hello and welcome to the WorkJoy Jam podcast. I'm your host, Beth Stallwood, and my guest today is the fantastic Danielle Thompson. And Danielle runs a business that helps organisations, small businesses, people, to think about their profit and their purpose together, and to think about how to become more sustainable, more environmentally friendly, better for your people, better for your local community. It's a really interesting conversation that really sparked some ideas in me, and helped me to consider actually what might I want to do in my business? And I hope it might do the same for you, whether you're an entrepreneur, whether you are a leader in a business, whether you're an employee in a business, and how you might be able to take some of these small things, take those small steps towards becoming more sustainable. I really hope you enjoy this episode. Hello and welcome to the WorkJoy Jam, I am so excited today to be joined by Danielle Thompson of Sustainablee, really excited for this conversation. But before we get started, Danielle, can I hand over to you, and can you tell us a little bit about who you are, what you do? I feel a bit like Cilla Black, like, 'Who are you? Where do you come from?' And a little bit about your story and how you got to the amazing things that you are doing today. So, over to you.

Danielle Thompson: Brilliant, thanks, Beth. Yes, really, really looking forward to this conversation. So, yes, I'm Danielle Thompson, I run a company called Sustainablee, and essentially I really focus on helping businesses to change their business and operating model to be more a force for good. So, how can they still be profitable, but do it in a way which is focussed on purpose and doing the right thing? And really, my, sort of, background, I started off in corporate, so I worked for National Grid, which is a big gas and electricity company in the UK, and that corporate career was a brilliant foundation for learning all sorts of things about business. And in a big corporate, you, kind of, move around a lot and you do a lot of different jobs. Absolutely loved it, and I probably wouldn't have ever left that, because it was a secure, good, progressive job there, but then myself and my husband got offered the opportunity to move to Australia, so we both moved to Australia for three years. And I think it was there-, I worked again for a big corporate in Australia, but I think there I, sort of, realised-, well, the Aussies love life and enjoy life outside of work. And they work hard, but they really work to live, not the other way round, so my whole approach to work-life balance and working in a very positive way got cemented when I was in Australia. So, when I came back I decided I wanted to work more in small businesses, and get some experience in how to run a business, and there's no better way, I don't think, as much as a small business there is.

So, I joined a small company, a small creative agency, ended up running the agency, and all the, kind of, ups and down, and emotional roller coaster that comes with running a small business. But it was a very purpose-led business, so that's where I really started to understand how purpose can play a role in an organisation, and how you can be commercial as well as be good, and responsible, and ethical. So, during the pandemic, I decided, 'Actually, you know what? I want to really, sort of, spread my own wings and do my own thing, and make my own impact on the world.' So, that's where I decided to set up on my own and really focus on using my, kind of, really broad experience that I'd got from all my various roles across the years to help

predominantly small companies change how they work so that they are both profitable and making money, but doing it in the right way. And that's really where I, sort of, focus now, with things like B Corp and helping organisations to do both of those things, that's my passion, really.

Beth Stallwood: So interesting, and what an interesting story. And, like, I can just imagine that, 'Do you want to go and work in Australia?' 'Yes, I definitely do want to go and do that,' how exciting an opportunity to take. And actually, it's really interesting about how that experience changed what you thought about in your career and how you took that forward.

Danielle Thompson: Absolutely. And it was really interesting, when I moved to Australia and we were sorting out jobs, I said-, I was really clear to my husband, 'I'm only going if I've got a really good job to move to. This isn't going to interrupt my career. I want a high-power job, I want to be well paid, that's the only reason I'm going.' When we came back to the UK, I didn't have a role to come back to. I was like, 'You know what? I'll figure it out, it'll be fine.' So, the change in those, kind of, few years, really was quite noticeable.

Beth Stallwood: It's amazing, isn't it, how the unexpected can come from one decision in life? Can really actually change everything else that happens in the future.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, completely, absolutely. I think it was just that interruption to the normal way of-, and also just seeing what's out there really, kind of, opened my eyes up to that.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. And I'm really interested-, so, (1) starting a new business during a pandemic, always an interesting thing to think about. And (2)-, well, there's probably, like, (12) and (13) as well within this, is I'm just sitting here listening to you about this idea of profitable and doing it in the right way, and how often we think it's a choice of one or the other, when actually it can be both.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and I think the world has shifted, I think the pandemic has accelerated what was already there, but I still think predominantly there is a feeling that you are either a commercial business, you are a for-profit, you are a, kind of, limited company, or whatever that is. Or, you are a social enterprise, or a charity, or a not-for-profit. And actually, you can completely do both of those things, you can completely be very commercially successful and profitable, but you can do that whilst not damaging the environment, whilst being diverse, while looking after your people. And it's starting now-, people are starting to realise you can do both of those things at the same time. The challenge often though is how, and what does that actually look like? But yes, it's definitely that whole-, they're not mutually exclusive, and I think people are starting to understand that much more.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and it's such an important thing for us all to think about. And I'm just thinking about from a WorkJoy perspective, whether people are running their own business, kind of, in the entrepreneurial space, or whether they're in organisations, I think there is a growing want and need from people in business, in work, however you define your work, to want to do more in this area of doing good work. I think there is definitely, from my experience, a groundswell of people saying, 'Hang on a minute, I'm not sure I want to work somewhere that isn't thinking about these things. I'm not sure it is, for me, all about the, kind of, well-paid job, the profit stuff. I think it might be about more than that, and wanting to have more than that.' But what you're saying is you can actually have them both, we can work on both these things.

Danielle Thompson: Absolutely, and that's the bit, because I think if it's just about doing the right thing all the time at the expense of being profitable, well actually, that's not sustainable in long-term. So, in order to have a mission and to do the right thing, you've got to be able to make money and sustain yourself, and grow over time. So, you know, one definitely supports the other. But again, so I think it's trying to make that accessible, and affordable, and appropriate for all businesses, not just the ones who happen to already be there.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. And, you know, we've got to remember, most of the businesses in the UK are actually small businesses, big corporates don't make up most of the employment opportunities in the UK, it's often smaller businesses that do. But those businesses are often the ones that can't necessarily-, they don't have the big teams who are working on, you know, the ESG stuff, or your sustainability mission, or have people who are there. So, tell me a little bit-, this is where I'm going to get-, can I pick your brains now if you're up for it? Is tell me a bit about where a small business or an organisation might start if they're thinking, 'Actually-, ' so, I'll sit here and I'll say to you, 'I would love to be able to think about my business, to think about what I'm doing, to maybe think about the B Corp stuff.' I'd love to know more about where you would suggest people start, and what we can think about.

Danielle Thompson: Yes. And you're absolutely right, with small businesses I think that they are the engine of the UK economy, and unfortunately, a lot of the attention (TC 00:10:00) has been placed on the big corporates, understandably, I guess. But really to make this, kind of, business as usual, it has to apply to all businesses, and certainly smaller businesses. If you're, kind of, looking, like you say, wanting to start, the place I always say to people is start from what the impact is you want to have. So, like you would write a mission statement, but think about it as to what's the positive impact you want your business to have, and to who? So, is it about you want to do a lot in the environmental space, you want to be really changing your business, so you are a positive contributor to the environment? Is it about, you're in a very male-dominated sector, and you want to improve diversity? Is it about improving social mobility in your local community? And everything in between. So, start thinking about what do you want your company to stand for from a social and environmental perspective. I think that helps to then, first of all, make it quite real, and make it more tangible. Also, again, from a small business, you can't do everything, so it starts to just focus in on where you want to focus, where you want to focus your resources and your effort. So, if it is about environment, then you can focus there, you can start unpicking that a little bit more. If it's about diversity, you can start looking at your recruitment and your employee value proposition.

It just helps to start prioritising where you want to focus, it doesn't mean you don't do the other stuff. And I think having that, kind of, positive impact statement, like you have a mission statement, it then can act as that central reference point, you can keep coming back to it. So, I always, sort of, say to people, just start with what's the impact you want your business to have, and be able to articulate that. Because by default then, it will be easier then for you to work out what that then looks like. It's really hard when you're starting from a blank sheet of paper.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. And I think that's the scary thing, isn't it? It's because, you know, you're talking about you can do loads of things for the environment, and loads of things about diversity, and social mobility, I think sometimes we get a bit 'deer in the headlights' about this stuff. And it's almost there are so many things we could do that finding the next step of what we can do and what we will do feels really difficult. Yet, actually sitting there and really considering, 'What do we stand for?' Like we would in our mission statement, like we would when we're maybe thinking about our organisation's values or different things like that, is actually, 'What is it that we really care about? And what is the impact we

want to have?' And then really considering, 'So, what would the actions be towards that?' So, it's so good to hear you say it's not about doing everything straight away, because, right, everyone has limited time or resources, and ways to make some of these things happen. But I'm loving the idea of just starting somewhere. I mean, it's so simple, isn't it? It's like, 'Well, obviously just start somewhere,' but there is something there about that pressure, easing that pressure means that you get more done.

Danielle Thompson: And I think it is a positive, you know, people genuinely want their business to make a difference. People see all these other companies out there who are doing amazing things, and people want their company to do the same, and it's honourable and brilliant, but especially for a small business, it's just not realistic. So, it's about looking at where can you prioritise? And that's not to say you'll stop there, you'll grow and you'll develop and you'll do more. And also, I think looking at what is important to you, what's important to your team if you have got a team, bringing them into that conversation, because there could be causes or issues that they're really passionate about and can support, sort of, moving forward. So, there's a whole range of ways to do it, but the key point being have a look at what you want your company to stand for from a society point of view, and how can you articulate that? Because that will help you then take those first steps.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. And I think what you're talking about here is something that I'm always banging on about when it comes to WorkJoy stuff is progress over perfection. Like, just think about what progress could you make, and what small steps could you take? Versus the, 'We should have perfect environmental scores, diversity scores, social-', this stuff takes time and effort and things, it doesn't always come straight away. So, actually, that aiming to always be progressing in it I think could be really helpful in terms of a mindset to approach this stuff.

Danielle Thompson: Yes. And I think the other, sort of, barrier linked to that that I see a lot is people are worried about getting it wrong. People really worry about putting something out on social media and getting called out because it's not the right thing to do, or that they go in a certain direction and it turns out not to be right. And what I try and say to people is that if you've got good intentions, you generally make good decisions. So, if you genuinely want to do the right thing, and you genuinely want to be a better environmental company, you generally will choose the right thing to do. If you're doing it for the wrong reasons, that's where you're more likely to come unstuck. But if you're genuine about it, you will-, you know, and we all get things wrong, and things change and develop, but that shouldn't be a barrier to starting.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. So, step one is sit down, think about it, talk about it with your team, talk about it in your organisation. And I suppose, actually, even if you are in a big business, if you've got something like a staff forum or an employee engagement thing, or something that you want where you can go along and try and make a difference to your organisation, this could also be a great way of starting that conversation in a bigger organisation. Get some people together, think about it, what type of impact do you want to have socially, environmentally? In which way? And just see what comes up, and see where that leads you.

Danielle Thompson: Yes. And ideas will come up that you haven't thought about, or causes that your team are really passionate about and can really get behind, because that's what's going to create the momentum. And like I say, this isn't the end, so it's not saying, 'Okay, we're really going to focus on diversity in our industry, and that's all we're going to do,' it's just your starting point, but it just helps you to start by having something that you can get passionate about that will help you start the process, and then you can build from there.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, love it. So, great start. So, here we go, let's do an example. So, if I sit down and we talk about my business, and I say, 'Okay, one of the things I'm really keen to do is to think about what is the environmental impact of my small business?' And I go, 'Okay, right, so that's the thing we want to work on, I want to be a sustainable, environmentally friendly, as much as is realistically possible, organisation.' I'm picking that one because it's one of the things that's in my mind. And I go, 'Okay, so I, kind of, know what my mission is now, I know what I'm trying to do,' and then I sit there and go, 'Okay,' and I know that this is the kind of work that you would do, so you'd be sitting there advising me, wouldn't you? You'd be going, 'Okay, so, Beth, here are some things that you can do.' And I'd love to know just some-, you know, what do other people do? What are some of the things we should be looking at? And, you know, I saw the other day, it might have even been through something that you did, I'll just check this out, people were talking about the impact of things like streaming music and streaming TV, and I was sitting there thinking, 'I have never even thought about that as something that is environmentally not very friendly.' I've always just thought about it as, 'Isn't it great? I can watch some cool Netflix when I want to sit in my pyjamas and do nothing all day.' So, there are probably some things that people don't even know about, so I'd just love to know what are some of the areas we could all be considering?

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and I think, again, it does depend on your business. So, again, the first step if you're wanting to work in that kind of area is to look at your business and look where your biggest impacts are. Really, I mean, a way of doing that is just to map out a customer journey, or a production of products you make, and just work out really simply at a high level where is the biggest impact here? Where am I using resources? Is it energy? Which obviously people on computers all day will be a significant one. Is it, I know I'm a product-based business, so I'm shipping products around the country or potentially around the world? If I'm in a firm that uses a lot of paper, we're always printing contracts and marketing materials, you know, paper might be a big one. So, just looking at your business and just, you know, from a common sense point of view more than anything, where am I using a lot of resources here? Then, you can start digging into the research and the advice around, what's the best thing to do? You know, clearing down your inbox, not having loads of emails sat there, sending links rather than attachments on emails, that kind of thing. Again, the first step is to look at your business and work out where is your biggest impact? Then, that will, again, help you to prioritise where to focus. You know, a lot of people talk about carbon emissions and, 'We need to work out our carbon,' well, actually, if you're not an energy-heavy business, that might not be your biggest impact, it could be the amount of travel you're doing, or the amount of resources you're using. So, it's trying to just look at your individual business about where your biggest impact is, and then follow that through into what changes you can make.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. It's such an interesting one, isn't it? Because, you know, if you don't produce a product, it's more detailed in the online stuff, maybe, or as you say, if you print stuff. And I have to say, I'm a person who struggles to read things on a screen, like, I like to (TC 00:20:00) print stuff out, and I always think, 'Ugh, is this awful?' But there's also that balancing of the reality of the business that you have, and which bits do you choose? And which bits are just because it's easier? Could you still do something a different way? That's quite a complicated analysis, isn't it?

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and part of it is just asking those questions of yourself, and you know, if you are printing a lot, or if you are sending a lot of emails with attachments, or you are producing products, just asking yourself those common sense-, 'Is there a better way of doing this? Is there a more efficient way? Could I recycle this in a different way?' You know, it doesn't necessarily need to be steeped in complicated technical

science, it can just be almost a bit of a common sense approach and asking yourself those questions. Because even by going through that process, you will be surprised what comes out because you're just looking at things in a slightly different way.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, I love that advice, like, actually, we're all sensible grown-ups, you know, 'Beth, if you can't read it online, you can't read it online, that's it.' There's a reality to that, but what do you do around the recycling? How do you make sure that your paper is getting recycled properly and that you're not keeping loads of it for years on end and not doing anything with it? And the same, you know, about the online stuff, right? If you've got loads of attachments, if you're doing-, I mean, I have to say, I am not a technologically advanced person, I would put myself in that category, so I have only recently go onto-, in the cloud. I mean, I still don't really understand what the cloud is, but I realised I was keeping copies in the cloud, and on my desktop, and somewhere else, and here I'm like, 'That, in itself, is wasting resources, right?' You don't need all of those things. But the change there, it's more of a mindset change, isn't it, about, 'But what if I need a back-up? What if I need this?' That's a scary thing.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and like you say, and that's the process of whatever the change is you're trying to go through, that's the, kind of, process of trying to work out, 'What is it I'm trying to get to? What's the, kind of, almost the change I've got to create in order to get to that outcome?' And again, taking it in steps, doing your research, working out what's right for you and your business. And also, the balance, you know, it's not about never printing anything ever again, it's just saying, 'Do you need to print everything you're printing right now? Can you be more efficient in how you're doing that? Can you look at how you can read things online more?' It's not saying, 'Printing is bad and should be banned.' So, it's just asking yourself those questions, and working out what's the right change for you and your business.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and that's a really great take, because I think so often we think it's an all or nothing process. And that's just not true, it's not true in anything in life, really, but there's that consideration I had of, 'Well, if I can't do that, I can't do anything.' And it's like, 'Mmm, that's very rarely true.'

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and that goes for, like, this whole-, whether it is environment, whether it's about diversity, whether it's about social good, it's not about absolutely nailing it from day one and being the exemplar company. It's about taking those small steps, and you doing what you can at that point, but trying to constantly build on it, and that will move you forward. Not doing anything is where you don't want to be.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, I love that. And just, like, drawing some steps out and thinking actually, that advice of taking those really small steps actually also helps people build momentum, doesn't it? If we set ourselves too big a task and we think we've got to do everything, that often is where we end up with an, 'Oh, I feel like I've failed, and I haven't achieved anything.' But if we break it down to really the small steps of things we could do, then actually, once we've done those, we get that feeling of, 'Oh, this is really great,' and then that helps us to do the next thing, and then the next thing on the list.

Danielle Thompson: Yes. And also, I think especially in this space, not all the time, obviously, but often, especially when you're starting out, a lot of the things you can do are common sense that we all know. You know, most people understand some of the things they could be doing, and so they're the ones you can start with, you know, the obvious ones you can, kind of, get started. It's only when you get maybe into the real nitty gritty and you've done the first actions and you think, 'Actually now I need to go and get some help, or, I need

to dig into this a bit deeper.' But certainly to start with there's always quite a lot of stuff we can all do relatively easily.

Beth Stallwood: Love that. And it's little things isn't it, like, I was just thinking, one of the things that I've done in the last two years since I've been mainly working from home, rather than working from other people's offices, is, like, this sounds really silly, but I love a fizzy water, it's my favourite thing, it's my favourite drink on earth. Which people are, like, 'Surely you'd choose wine or champagne?' No, I love a fizzy water. And I've gone from buying fizzy water in bottles which is horrendously unsustainable and awful, to having a Soda-Stream and glass bottles and fizzing it myself from a tap. I'm, like, right, so, that is progress in my opinion. That is something that you can do. But I probably would never have thought about it as that that's something that actually supports my business, that's about sustainability. I'd have just done it because I'm, like, 'Oh, this is terrible for the environment.' Actually, it's those little things if we could all think about them are probably the little things that do add up in the bigger picture.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and I think what we all, kind of, underestimate I think sometimes, we're all guilty of this, is our power of being a consumer or a customer, whether that's in a business or as an individual, in that, you know, the more people that switch from plastic bottles to Soda-Stream, guess what's going to happen, suddenly they're not going to need as many plastic bottles-, water sold in plastic bottles, it's going to be much more in glass, you know, the, kind of, DIY options. So, we have such power as consumers, whether we're buying for our business or we're buying for ourselves, and that's what's going to make change, more people who ask those questions, who take those steps, even the small steps, that's what's going to create a wider change. So, it might seem a really small thing that we're doing but it does add up and it does have power. And we forget sometimes the power as a consumer that we do have.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and that's so true isn't it. But the thing is the power of the consumer doesn't change quickly, it changes overtime, like, that impact there. But I love that. Can you tell me a little bit more, so, I see a lot of this and I'm always really keen when I see a company that I love that are certified B Corp. I think, 'Oh, that means I know they're good.' And then I sit there and go, 'I only think I know that's good because of the marketing around B Corps. And I actually don't necessarily know enough about what a B Corp is. And you know a lot about this, so, can you tell us what does that lovely little B Corp thing, and I go, 'Oh, it gives me the warm and fuzzies.' I always think I'm being a good consumer when I see a B Corp thing, so, I think, 'Yes.' Tell us a little bit more about what that really means?

Danielle Thompson: So, when you see that little badge on, whether it's something you buy in the supermarket, or, you see a company that you're working with, basically what that means is they've been through a very vigorous intensive assessment process across their whole business. And the reason why I like B Corp so much is because it looks at your whole business. It's not just about the environment, that's a big part of it obviously, but it looks at your governance, at your reporting, how you treat your people, how you treat your customers. It looks at how you look after your data. It looks at how you contribute to society. And, so, basically to have got that badge they've gone through an assessment and they've had to demonstrate how they work in a very positive way across all those things. So, they'll ask you questions about your policies you've got in your employee handbook, the kind of policies you've got in place for maternity leave, for shared parental leave, for diversity. It'll ask you about your environmental management processes. It'll ask you about how you contribute to society. Do you do charity giving, all those kind of things. And it covers a whole (mw 28.21) and it's a beast, it's an absolutely beast of a process to go through because it's so comprehensive.

So, if you see that badge that means that a company has been through that process and have been validated to say they do all of these things. And basically they have to have got to a certain level. And to give you an idea, kind of, a normal company would probably score anywhere between 30 and 40 points in their assessment. In order to become B Corp you have to get 80 points. So, it's quite a step above the norm, if you like. And I, kind of, say you've got normal companies who are working in a very traditional way and they might be at the 30 to 40 mark. You've then got B Corps which have gone up even further above that, and, so, it's quite a stretch. So, when you do see it, you can be confident that that business has been through that process and has looked at how they operate in a whole wide range of areas. It doesn't mean they're perfect. So, a B Corp has to re-certify every three years and the idea is that you improve year on year. You're constantly improving and trying to better your score basically. But what it can give you confidence is that company has really looked internally at how they can be this force for good from society and environmental perspectives. So, they're really, kind of, paving the way, I would say, in terms of how hopefully businesses will, sort of, work in the future.

Beth Stallwood: So, in my little brain, before you told me (TC 00:30:00) that, I had interpreted it as it was just about the environmental stuff, not that you've got this wider pictures. So, thank you for educating me because I'm, like, 'Oh, right.' And then in my head, when you're talking about it, I'm thinking here going, 'Okay, so, the people who are looking for jobs who want to work in organisations that genuinely care about this stuff, a B Corp search would be a good place to start if you're looking for organisations to work with, right?'

Danielle Thompson: Absolutely, yes, completely. Yes. You know, because there is a whole section about employees, and again it's not saying that if you don't have B Corp you don't treat your people well, what it's saying is that a B Corp goes over and above what you would expect. So, it's really quite a high bar to reach. But, yes, absolutely. And people do look. And I think there's even a jobs board for B Corp companies because people want to work there, because they know you're going to be working for a company who has a purpose, who values society, values the environment and will look after them well. So, it's a very easy way to tell you're a good egg, you're a good company and I'd like to work with you.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and I think, you know, with-, and I don't like to generalise the generation because I think everyone is, there's a lot of putting people in boxes which isn't my favourite thing to do, but when you look at the research on different generations and how the stuff around social governance, around the environment, becomes more and more important for every generation that comes along, not saying that it's not important for older generations because it is, but it becomes a decision making tool for people about whether they're going to join an organisation. So, I'm looking at this from two angles, the first one is if you are an organisation and you want to attract talent and you want great people to come and work for you and be engaged and be interested and do their best work for you, that could be an amazing tool to help you do it because it looks at that side of the business. And then on the other side if you're a potential employee wanting to go and work for an organisation then that is something that you might want to look at as a test and an assessment that you're going to, kind of, be in an above and beyond type of organisation versus your average organisation. And then if you run a business, if you're in the entrepreneurial space, you're running a small business, it's about actually how could this attract customers and, you know, as well as the, kind of, you think it's important.

So, I imagine again as a consumer I'm, like, I feel I get the warm and fluffies when I buy something from a B Corp. And now I'll get even more warm and fluffies. I'm, like, 'Oh, it (talking over each other 32.41) what I thought it was.'

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and I think Waitrose and Boots now have got, you know, B Corp aisles in their online shop so you can search for and buy B Corp brands for exactly that reason because people are looking for brands that are ethical and responsible and it can be really hard to tell, you know, it is a bit of a minefield. So, at least with something like B Corp you can be much more assured. It's not 100% but you can be more assured that that company has been through that process. But absolutely to your point, employees are looking specifically for those kind of companies and are willing to, you know, sacrifice the big salaries and all the perks if it means they work for a company that really genuinely cares. Again B Corp is a way of being able to, sort of, shortcut that and go, 'Actually I know if they're B Corp, they're going to be good to me. I'm going to be well looked after and developed.'

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and for me, there's something you're saying there that I think hits deeply is this idea that they'd have to have cared about it enough to go through quite a rigorous process, right, and there is something about if you couldn't be bothered you probably wouldn't if it's that hard.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and it is. I think anyone who's thinking of B Corp, don't underestimate it. It's a big process, but both commercially and ethically and morally it's worth it, but, yes, like you say, you've got to really care to go through the process, you wouldn't get to the end if you didn't, I don't think.

Beth Stallwood: Yes. And as you say, it doesn't mean that they're perfect but it means that there is really good intent, there's good governance around it, there are things that are going on. So, amazing, thank you for that education, I'm loving it. And I totally didn't know that you could search by B Corp organisations, so, I'm totally going to get on that and have a little look at how that works.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, it's fab. It's a really good tool.

Beth Stallwood: Love it. So, I'm thinking about timing and I think we're going to need to move on to our quick fire questions if that's alright with you?

Danielle Thompson: Yes.

Beth Stallwood: Right, are you ready for these?

Danielle Thompson: Go for it.

Beth Stallwood: They're not too complicated. So, obviously you have had a really varied career. You have worked in a, kind of, corporate, you've worked in small businesses, you're now running your own thing, I would love to know from you what is something that's always guaranteed to bring you personally a little bit of work joy?

Danielle Thompson: For me it's about helping others to make a change whatever that might be. So, it's very much around educating, sharing my knowledge with others to help them. That's where I get the warm and fuzzy feeling, and it's definitely where I feel like I'm doing my best work if I'm helping others to make good positive change.

Beth Stallwood: Love it. So, you are perfect in your job you're doing now because that's what you're doing every day?

Danielle Thompson: Yes, it's definitely a good match. I think I picked well.

Beth Stallwood: You did pick well. I love it. Right, second question from me. What book are you currently reading?

Danielle Thompson: So, at the moment I'm actually re-reading a book I've read a few times and it is actually a business book and it's called Traction by Gino Wickman, and it's basically a book about how to operate a business and it's, kind of, got an operating model for high growth businesses. And I'm re-reading that because I'm really interested in how profit and purpose can work together. So, that book is quite driven around commerciality and building a profitable high growth business and I'm really interested in looking at with the lens of how can you bring those two worlds together more. So, I've read it a few times, I'm now going back to it with a different mindset to go, 'Okay, how could these two worlds come together even more successfully?' So, I'm actually in the middle of re-reading that.

Beth Stallwood: Wow, sounds great. I'm totally going to-, this is the trouble when I do the podcast that everyone's giving me amazing books, then I just have massive piles of (talking over each other 36.45)-,

Danielle Thompson: Yes, it's a really interesting one, yes.

Beth Stallwood: And I love the idea of re-read, and I do this sometimes, is I either re-read or I'll listen to it if I've read it or vice versa to get, like, a different perspective on what I've heard or read, because that sometimes just really helps you go, 'Oh, okay, I could totally take this in a different way.'

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and I think something like Traction, it's a model that a business can follow, so, it's very, kind of, similar in B Corp in terms of how it's laid out, but I think again I'm reading it with a different lens and I think that will bring different messages out and how you bring those two things together. So, yes, I agree, I often re-read books because you always learn something new I think.

Beth Stallwood: Oh, you totally do. And, you know, this question about the-, it comes back to that beginning thing around it doesn't have to be either commercial or purpose, bring it together and see what doing it together can do. Love it. Right, what's the best or most useful bit of advice that someone has given you in your life that you find yourself going back to?

Danielle Thompson: So, I think the best one is from a friend of mine called Sarah King, and she said to me when I was, kind of, trying to work out what I wanted to do and what I wanted to set up and what it would all be, and I was getting lost in the fact that I wanted to save the world, she just said to me, 'Think big, start small, but just bloody well start.' And coming back to our earlier conversation, it's so true, because you can get so lost in the big picture and that can be so overwhelming, and actually it is just starting small, but just do something, even if you're not quite sure where it's going, just do something, just move forward. So, I do have to keep coming back to that.

Beth Stallwood: That is a really good bit of advice actually, wherever you are, whoever you are, isn't it, is that we all can get stuck in a zone of overthinking stuff and trying to have a solution for everything. And it comes right back to the bit you were saying about, actually with this stuff, just start somewhere, do something and build that momentum from there. Don't worry, don't overthink about it being perfect, just do something.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, completely, completely the case.

Beth Stallwood: Brilliant. And what is one super practical little bit of advice that our listeners, whether they're working in an organisation, in a big corporate or a small organisation, or, if they're running their business, whoever they are, might be able to go away and do something tomorrow or the next day, something really simple and small to help them maybe think about sustainability a little bit more?

Danielle Thompson: Yes, so, I think coming back to what I said earlier around you've got a huge power as a consumer and the, kind of, best example I think is-, which most of us have got now, is your pension. So, whether it's a company pension or a personal pension, they invest a huge amount of money on your behalf and they invest your money. So, one of the best things you can do from a sustainability point of view is to speak to your pension provider whether it's your company or your personal pension, and ask them where they're investing your money and is it ethical? So, there is a growing now wave of (TC 00:40:00) pension companies and investments that are looking at ESG measures and ethical investments, but generally the market's quite slow to switch, so, the more people that ask those questions, the quicker that's going to happen and that's probably, you know, the most money you're spending, apart from buying a house, most of your money will often go into your pension. So, simply asking that question, even if you never change, but just by raising that as a consideration will help to drive change. So, if I was going to suggest anything, just ask that question of your pension provider. Where are you investing my money? Is it ethical?

Beth Stallwood: Yes. It's actually something I did a few months ago. I hate talking about stuff, like, sensible things like pensions and stuff. I proper had to put my big girl pants on and have a proper grown up conversation about the future and money and I was, like, 'Oh, gosh, I hate this.' But it was one thing that I was insistent on, is that if we were going to change anything we would change it to be an ethical fund. And what was really interesting in the conversation I had with the pension provider, is that I started the conversation, I want it to be invested ethically because, as you say, over time it becomes the biggest investment you make probably apart from property isn't it, is that I said it and I said the following words to him, I said, 'And I don't mind if that means it's not as successful in terms of growth or money.' And he turned round to me and said, 'Beth, they're all possibly even more successful now.' And I think the messaging is starting to change. But in my head I was thinking, 'If I'm going ethical I won't make as much money.' It's the same conversation about profit and purpose isn't it, it's, like, actually some of those funds are now performing better because they're getting some traction, because consumers are starting to swap to them.

And that doesn't mean that I won't sit there and review them regularly because I think also again a bit like, things aren't perfect are they? But it did feel good to actually have that conversation and to go, 'Right, what can I do as a consumer?' And I totally forget about this, and I'm sure many people do, but as a consumer we do have power. I was under using my power there and actually (talking over each other 42.18)-,

Danielle Thompson: Yes, and most people do.

Beth Stallwood: -people are doing it, and doing something about it. And as you say, if you're in an organisation pension scheme you can't always change everything, but you will have the opportunity to ask questions, to see where people go, to get people thinking about the thing. And even if it's just a question on whoever the pension trustees are, so, that they know that people are interested, the more

people that come along and say, 'Hang on a minute, where is this invested?' The more likely they are to do something about it.

Danielle Thompson: Completely. I think that's it. I think even just asking the question, even if it doesn't result in suddenly your company pension scheme changing, if you're in a big organisation lots of people are asking similar questions, guess what's going to happen, someone somewhere will be looking at it. And the same as if your own personal pension. But it is, it's a hugely powerful thing you can do. And, like you say, the chances are will probably perform better as well.

Beth Stallwood: Yes, and it might just be that-, I mean, I don't know the answer to that question properly, but I was really surprised that that was the (mw 43.18) that came back to me, not a, 'Yes, you might not get as good a percentage on these things.' So, it was a delight to hear that obviously. But I have to say it again, and it's also probably a good thing for all of us to do is sometimes you have to put your big pants on and do the stuff you don't want to do to make it happen. And there's some other stuff I probably need to do when I do the looking at the business stuff and looking at my sustainability to, kind of, go, 'Okay, you might not like this but this is something you're going to have to change or (talking over each other 43.44)-,

Danielle Thompson: Yes, but you do get a warm fuzzy feeling afterwards, so.

Beth Stallwood: Oh, yes, I'm totally, like, 'Right, I've done something good for the world today in doing that.' And in comparison to a lot of people it's probably only a very small amount of money but it's something. And we can so get lost in the idea that the big things are someone else's responsibility and we can't control everything. You cannot control everything in life, it's impossible, but there's stuff that we can do. And for me that's a really big message of what we're taking away today.

Danielle Thompson: Yes, completely.

Beth Stallwood: So, final question from me, because I think lots of people are going to want to find out more about you and what you do. So, tell us, where can we find out, follow you, understand more about all of this amazing work you do and sustainability?

Danielle Thompson: So, the best place really is LinkedIn. So, I'm quite active on LinkedIn. I'm very happy to connect with people on there and, you know, I get a lot of people, sort of, asking questions and I'm chatting to people there. So, that's probably the best place. So, Danielle Thompson on LinkedIn, and I'm always posting, kind of, advice and tips and things on there. So, I'm happy to connect and hopefully share as much knowledge as I can in this space.

Beth Stallwood: Excellent. So, we will put that link into the show notes and on the social so that people can click straight through. Danielle, it's been amazing talking to you. I am going to spend some time thinking about this stuff and I'm clearly going to be in touch with more how can I do some of these things in my business, because I'd love to do more in this area. So, thank you so much for being a brilliant guest.

Danielle Thompson: No, thank you. Really really enjoyed it.

Beth Stallwood: Well, I really loved talking to Danielle about sustainability, her business Sustainablee, and how we might all be able to consider taking those really small steps towards becoming more sustainable. And it's a really interesting one from an employment perspective and thinking about actually is this, things like the B Corp stuff, things that could help you choose your next employer in a way that makes you understand and know that they've been through some rigorous assessments. Is that something to look for? Probably something I've never thought about before and I'm loving that that is in my mind now. And the idea that just having a conversation about what is it we stand for environmentally and socially with our people. And thinking about all of those ideas and where do we go. I love that we're totally aligned over everything we talk about in work joy is this progress over perfection stuff. Let's just do something. Let's take a small step. Let's build up momentum and to really consider mapping out where our own biggest impacts are in terms of our impacts on these things. And that that's going to be different for different organisations with different business models with different customer journeys. And that's definitely something I'm going to take away and do and consider all of those different areas for my business.

And it will be interesting to see where you would take this. And also thinking about that, things that we can all do, things that we can consider. Think big, start small, just blood well start. Great advice from her friend Sarah there. I'm going to take that as well. And even little things like considering our pensions, our investments, where are these things invested? And how can we as consumers take on the power that we have. So, lots of great things for me to go away and think about. I hope that you've enjoyed it too. If you are interested in finding out more about WORKjoy, do head over to our website at createworkjoy.com where you can find out more around the different programmes that we offer. We have Club WorkJoy which is an amazing community of people who are working towards getting more joy in their lives. It's amazing, so, do come and join us there. Lots of different podcasts with loads of different conversations with amazing different experts in different areas. So, do have a little listen. It was lovely to be with you today and I will speak to you all soon. (silence 47.46-48.24)