

SheHer

Tech GIANTS

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I'm **Gemma Telford**, Founder of She/Her Ltd, and I specialise in human marketing for technology businesses. My work redefines and evolves traditional marketing in the IT sector through a more collaborative, flexible, human-centric approach. Cultivating partnerships that deliver mutual value by starting real conversations and delivering work which excites, inspires and connects people.

I started **Tech Giants** to celebrate some of the great people I've worked with in the channel over the last 20 years and to share their wisdom and knowledge with others. I hope you enjoy reading about them!

Gemma: OK. Right. Are you ready, Mr Tubb? Let's go for it. Question number one. Even with this first question - I'm intrigued to see how you answer it! What is your current role?

Richard: All right, so the short answer is that I guess the majority of the industry knows me as the self-professed IT business growth expert. What that actually means in reality is that I run what is effectively a media company aimed at managed service providers. So, as you know, I started off in this industry as the owner of a managed service provider business, and I started blogging and at the time when I was writing the blog, it was sharing my experiences of being an MSP owner. The good stuff, the bad stuff, what I charged, what what worked, what didn't work. And it was basically, you know, part of that journey. It was like a journal that I was that sharing with the industry and as time went on, people started to know me more for the blog. Thus, the Tubblog.

Then when I sold the MSP business, which was I think at the end of 2011, I might get mixed up with the dates there...a really weird thing happened. Or I certainly thought it was a weird thing! People, other MSPs, including many of my competitors from the Birmingham area, started picking up the phone to me and saying, 'Look, I've been reading your blog and now that you're no longer a

competitor, can we call you in to share some of the secrets with us?' So that was where I started out - with the blog - and I carried on writing the blog. It was like, OK, here's what I've learned. And from that point onwards, my role I guess in the industry became one of where I shared all of the mistakes that I'd made in the industry to help other other people, the owners of other MSP businesses to avoid them.

That morphed over the years. Where I've got to now is it's not just me as a one-man band jobbing blogger. I've got my own podcast - Tubbtalk and we've got a video series, and every Friday the Tubbservatory videos go out and we've got social media and I've written books and all those sorts of things. And it's not just me anymore. There's a team of ten of us now scattered all over the world. And the team are doing a really good job of supporting me in not just publishing the content that I put out there, but then promoting it and polishing it and making sure that it gets to the to the right people.

And so, it's gone from being a one-man band jobbing blogger, an MSP owner to fast forward 20 years and it's a media company of which I am what the team refer to as the talent. I do interviews with people for the podcast and I record videos and I write articles. But then we've got a whole team of people who also produce content and make sure that the content that I produce is polished, scheduled, published and then promoted afterwards.

Gemma: I love that - 'the talent'. So, in fact you are now media mogul.

Richard: I wouldn't go that far. But yes, it's much more on the media side of things.

Gemma: OK. And so how did you first get into the channel?

Richard: So I've always worked in the technology industry. I'm a massive geek, you know that. But you I've always been in tech and as we were talking now just off camera, I've got a tonne of tech. I've got retro tech in my little retro museum here. I've got Ataris and Spectrums and all sorts of Commodore 64s and all sorts of machines. So, I've always been into

technology, and I've often thought I don't know what I would do for a living if I wasn't working in tech, cause there's not many other things I could probably turn my hand to!

But yeah, thankfully I was very good with technology from an early age. I sort of picked it up intuitively. And then when I started out working, it was in the corporate IT sector. So, I work for companies like Ernst and Young and the NHS and Capita, people like that. And one of the things I picked up was the fundamentals of managed services. I picked up, you know, scalability, systems, processes, standardisation, those type of things to deal with at large scale.

And after I'd worked in corporate IT for a number of years, people who I had worked with at those organisations started leaving the companies and started spinning up their own businesses and they called me and said, 'Hey, you know, you're really good at the IT stuff. Would you come in and give us some advice with my new business?' So I actually started out moonlighting to begin with. And then it reached a point where I was doing the small business thing rather than the corporate IT. So I went out as your typical solo IT person, crawling under desks and fixing cables and doing all those sort of things. I'm trying to remember the timeline. It was maybe around 2004-5, something along those lines.

I read a book called *The E Myth Revisited* by Michael Gerber, which is a super famous book. It's not about IT companies per se. It's actually about building any business that can be repeatable and scalable. McDonald's and Ray Crock is one of the great examples that's included in the book. But I read that book and I was like, OK, the idea of building a business that is not just about me, that can be scaled, that I can effectively take myself out of the business and it will still run without me, really appealed to me. And so, from 2005 until I sold the business in 2011, it was all about, right, let's make this business a systemized, automated, scalable business. And then of course as I said, I sold the business and carried on sharing that philosophy with the owners of other businesses leading to where we

are today.

Gemma: You know, I used to work at Ernst and Young many years ago as well! I worked in the corporate M&A sector. Wouldn't it have been funny if we'd worked there at the same time all those years ago!

Richard: Yeah, I still have tonnes of friends from Ernst and Young - really close friends. In fact, one of my team, Steve, his girlfriend is one of my oldest friends called Dawn and she worked at Ernst and Young with me as well. And so interesting how it goes round in circles.

Gemma: So... when you first got into corporate IT and I'm sort of asking this for people coming into the industry now..did you do A levels or an apprenticeship? Or you just got a job straightaway?

Richard: I got a job. It's interesting actually. You know, I've got two step-sons, who are 16 and 18 and they're making up their minds about where to go and what to do at the moment. And one of them actually works for an MSP. Their Dad runs a managed service provider. But you know, they're sort of talking about should they go to university or what do they do. And actually, I'm not a very good example because I dropped out of sixth form.

I was doing an A Level in Business Studies, and I dropped out of it. And the really interesting thing was, I dropped out of it because I'd started writing computer software at that age of 15-16. And I was too busy making money writing computer software to actually go along to the business studies class! My business studies teacher at the at the time used to get furious with me, like phone me at home and say, 'Why weren't you at class?' and things. It wasn't until a couple of years later, my younger brother, 2-3 years younger than me, he was in her business studies class, the same class. And on the first day she said, 'Are you related to Richard Tubb? And he was like, 'Oh God, here we go yeah, that's my older brother.' And she professed how proud she was of me! She'd got newspaper clippings of me on the wall, in the class and everything! She never shared that with me personally, but she

was clearly proud of what I had gone on to do. But in answer to your question, I was always into IT, but I didn't go to university. I dropped out of school. And I've always been more about you know, jumping into the school of life sort of thing, getting the job done and learning on the job.

My first proper job was working for a company that was called IT Net, which is now called Serco, which is one of the biggest outsourcing companies. I got a tonne of experience there from a junior help desk position, just learning loads of different systems, learning how to speak to end users, how to be patient, how to listen, to be observant, how to follow processes. And at the time they dealt with companies like Cadburys and Magnox, the nuclear people and Credit Lyonnaise. So there was such a wide variety of companies that it was not dissimilar to the managed service industry where it isn't focused on just one type of business. You end up working with loads and loads of them. But yeah, I'm not a good example of following the university course.

Gemma: That's good though! I think people need those real-life examples as well, don't they? You know, I didn't go to Uni after my A levels. I ran away to Nottingham, got married and didn't go to Uni until I was 30. So, you know, we all have a different path!

Richard: I will add to that. From the education perspective, obviously I did a lot of learning on the job, but fairly early on in my career, I then started doing qualifications. So, before I'd ever really heard of CompTIA as we know them now as a trade association for the IT industry, I was doing the CompTIA A+ certification. I was one of the first to do that and then there was the Network Plus. And then I've got my Microsoft exams. Yeah, and you know, I did the Novell exams. I'm showing my age now, but I was certified in Novell. I've always been a believer that if you've got the skills and there is a certification, you should do it. And actually, if I jump in a bit ahead in the timeline; I actually clashed with some of my engineers when I ran the IT business because they would say things like 'Ohh, I don't need to do the exam. I know it and I don't know why I

need a piece of paper.' And I explained that the exam is there is like a measuring stick. And secondly, the exam shows that you can do things by the book, not just by the seat of your pants. So, I've always been a big fan of the exams and the certifications - CompTIA, Microsoft and others from that perspective. So, I'm not completely without book smarts as well.

Gemma: And I think that's important for people to know, isn't it? Because I think there is a lot of emphasis placed on that now and nearly all vendors have got their own certifications, haven't they? And I think it shows a commitment to that vendor as well if you're properly certified.

Richard: Exactly.

Gemma: OK. Thank you. What is the best thing about working in the channel, Richard, apart from the fact that you got to meet me? I mean there must be other things!

Richard: I would say well actually you know it's not too far from what we just jokingly said about meeting each other, but it's the people. It's not just the channel but the managed service industry specifically is absolutely unique I would say in the world of business. I've got friends who work in finance and healthcare and all sorts of things. And they don't believe me when I tell them that we in the managed service industry, go along to events like CompTIA and the Tech Tribe and others, and it's a room full of essentially people who would be considered competitors, but we get together and we exchange ideas and we help one another and that whole idea of a rising tide lifts all boats.

We take it for granted almost in the MSP industry or in the channel, but it is absolutely mind-blowing to other industries where they would not dream of sharing their ideas and their best practises and what makes them successful with their so-called competitors. But we do that in the MSP industry and it makes for just a wonderful space. But you and I have known each other for a long time and I consider you a very good friend and I've learned a lot from you. But there's so many other people in the industry that I would

consider really close friends. Yeah, because of the industry. So, I think that's the first part of it. And the second part that I really enjoy about working in this space is the constant change. There's some stuff that's evergreen for the likes of you and I, who have been in it for maybe longer than others. But then the technology side of things is forever moving on. And interestingly, that can be a double-edged sword for some people working in the industry because I speak to lots of MSP's on a daily basis and they, the business owners, share with me that their teams can often be really resistant to change.

And I find it fascinating because, we all work in this industry, and the one constant in this industry is change. What you know this year in technology terms is going to decrease in value, for next year. It's like buying a brand new car, as soon as you get that knowledge or as soon as you buy the car, it starts to depreciate and perhaps in 18 months, or 2-3 years' time it may not be worth anything at all. So, the technology side of things, is continuously changing. But that's also really cool because it means you are just constantly learning and constantly being curious and seeing what's going on, what's new, what's around the corner and things. And I actually credit part of my longevity and success in this industry to realising that actually I'm really curious person. I'm constantly looking 12-18 months, 36 months into the future. And so part of what I bring hopefully to my writing and videos and books and other things, is giving people a glimpse and saying 'Hey this is coming round the corner, you need to prepare for it now.' And I think that's part of what's enabled me to do it for a long time and to be successful. I am continuously curious. I'm always looking for new ideas and bringing that to the audience as well. So...people and the change are the best things about this industry.

Gemma: What's your biggest frustration about working in this space? We've talked about the good things, but what? What gets you down or annoys you?

Richard: I've been reflecting on this a lot lately, Gemma and part of this, is about

mental health. I've been on a personal development journey for a number of years and accepting mental health and things of that nature. Part of that is you're looking inwards and ask what frustrates me about myself. The things that may be hampering me and what I've realised is, that I'm a people pleaser and I'm way too self-critical and I can have a tendency to put the needs of others ahead of my own. I think that that could be a summary for so many people within the managed service industry. I think a lot of us got into the IT space because we enjoy helping other people, whether you're working in technical, marketing, sales or whatever, you enjoy helping people and that's brilliant.

But if you don't look after yourself and don't do it properly, it's not sustainable. You can't pour from an empty cup as they say, and you can't keep serving other people if you don't look after yourself. So, the biggest frustration I see, is when I speak to the owners of some MSP businesses and they've got themselves burnt out because they're giving, giving, giving all the time, but they're not being commercially sensitive, so they're not charging what they're worth. They are not putting boundaries in place. So when clients ask them for things, they'll be jumping and just, 'Yep, I can get that done.' They're constantly just serving other people, but to the detriment of their own health and well-being.

It's been many years now since I ran the MSP business. But I reflect and I think some of the worst times in my life is where I've got myself into such a terrible state because I was giving, giving, giving to my clients and giving, giving, giving to my employees and everybody around me, but not looking after my own needs and not putting boundaries in place. And unfortunately, I see that quite a lot in the industry which led me a few years ago to write this book called the IT Business Owner Survival Guide. It was as born out of the feedback from so many MSPs getting in touch with me and saying 'I'm at the end of my tether. I'm not earning enough money. I'm working all the hours that God sends. I've got relationship problems because I'm not spending enough time at home with my partner,

with my children. I feel, you know, I can't even afford to take time off sick, go on holiday.' And the book was written because I wanted to enable people to realise that, first of all – I was in that situation. And here's the strategies I used to get my head out from underwater, get a bit of clarity and think right, what's the next step?

But you know, the biggest thing I want to get across to people, as I said earlier on, is that I share all of my mistakes so other people can learn from them and hopefully, you know, avoid them as well. You can run a successful managed service provider business without sacrificing your personal life, without sacrificing your health, without sacrificing your well-being, but you've got to put the boundaries in place, and you've got to be true to yourself and look after yourself first and foremost. You are not going to be able to serve anybody if you're burnt out, if you're broken, if you can't pay the bills because you're not charging enough. And so that's why I'm saying to MSP owners – you've got to do these things. It's not selfish. It is the right thing to do so that you can serve people over the long-term.

Gemma: Yeah, you're right. Also as a self-employed person, and a people pleaser, it's really, really hard to put those boundaries in place, isn't it? You and I have spoken about this over text and we've spoken over glasses of wine and all sorts of things when we've had downtime – about how as business owners, you can be constantly tired. You can be constantly like worried about the future. Are people going to pay on time? Are you then going to be able to pay your members of staff? What's around the corner...and all those sort of things. And if you don't look after yourself, those strains can just absolutely break you. So, you've got to put yourself first. Yes. Thanks for that. What are you working on right now that excites you?

Richard: Well, I mentioned that we're in the process of actually de-emphasising my involvement. Tubblog by Richard has morphed into being Tubblog, the hub for MSPs. It still retains the name, but it's no longer Richard's blog. I mean, we've got

some other people on the team. We've got Stephen McCormack, our community manager. He attends lots of events. He writes articles, more articles than me in fact for the for the website. We've got Gudrun, we've got Lara, we've got a whole team who are producing content that's really valuable for MSPs and of course I'm there, you know to give direction and look after things in the background. It is now a hub for MSP content. So that's the first thing I'm excited about and I think 2024 is the first year that we've come of age as a media company. We've got the podcast, we've got videos, we've got social media e-books books that I actually think wow, we're we are producing a tonne of really valuable free content. We don't charge for any of this stuff. It's just for the industry and I wish it was around when I was starting out because life would have a lot easier!

So that's the first thing I'm interested in, and the second one is tied to what we just talked about previously, which is the mental health aspect. So, I mentioned I wrote the IT Business Owner Survival Guide four or five years ago. I included snippets and sort of breadcrumbs and little bits and pieces around mental health. But four or five years ago, discussing mental health was just emerging. Not say taboo subject as such, but it was awkward and difficult for people to speak about publicly. Thank you to you Gemma, because at the time you were saying that I should 'come out' on this and share a bit more. You know I struggle with clinical depression, which can be like a chemical imbalance in the brain. And like so many people, creative people and so many people in our industry, I'm way too tough on myself. So, thanks to you, I left more and more bread crumbs up until the point that during 2023, I actually got up on stage and talked specifically about my mental health. I did talks in Las Vegas and London and it went really, really well.

Gemma: Yeah, it did! And let me just say because obviously I was in the audience in London...you could hear a pin drop. People weren't checking their emails or looking at their phones. With you and the other people on stage there literally the whole room was focused on what you were saying. And I could see afterwards

the effect it was having on people in the room and on you guys and also afterwards how much it was talked about. So well done for doing that.

Richard: And thanks for encouraging me you know to get out there because you never know how people are going to take it. But I think the world has changed to a point where we appreciate that now that everybody at some point in their life is going to have mental health challenges. It's not something that I lead with – I don't say 'Hi, I'm Richard Tub the depressive'. It's just something I've got. I've got asthma as well but I would never say I can't go running play football or something. It's not a label. But I wanted to start sharing that and you and other close friends encourage me to do that. And as you say, it's been really well received and I've had so many kind messages from people, or people have spoken to me in person. Some people getting very emotional saying 'I thought it was on my own'. So the next book I'm writing is, about mental health for geeks. And it's going to be all around my journey. Here's how I've coped. Here's what you need to do in the modern day to begin to look after your mental health. Whether you've got a depressive episode that's ongoing, whether you struggle with stress or whether you've got an ongoing mental health challenge that needs medication. So that's the book that I'm writing this year. And so, I'll put a shout out if I may! If anybody's listening, reading, watching this or whatever, and has got a story to share and they work in the IT industry, feel free to get in touch. Because I'd love to feature as many people from our industry within the book as I can. To let everyone know you're not alone. There are loads of people who are struggling or going through these challenges as well. So we can we can deal with it together when we put it out into the open.

Gemma: Brilliant. Ohh, I'm delighted to hear that. Well done! I shall look out for that and expect my signed copy of course!

Richard: Not a signed copy because you'll want get rid of it on eBay as quickly as possible, surely?

Gemma: Haha. My next question is – what was your biggest mistake? We talked about some of the challenges that you've had but is there anything where you think that ohh **** I've made the wrong call or the wrong decision in the moment?

Richard: So you know I'm a bit of a sci-fi geek – and if Doctor Who has taught us one thing that it's you can't go back and change things because it has catastrophic effects. There's nothing that I'd ever said 'Ohh, I'd go back and change that' – because you are a result of all of the experiences that you've had. I'm a real believer in that. With that said, I think probably the biggest mistake that I made is, I think possibly trusting people too much. I'm talking about employees, colleagues and other people.

So for many years, I would work without contracts with the belief that everybody is going to hold the same values that you do. As a good person you find it really difficult to get your head around that. But not everybody's built the same way. And so, I think the biggest mistake that I made was trusting but without any controls in place. So fast forward to today and I am talking about trust but verify now. So when you're doing business, whether it's with employees, suppliers, whoever it might be, have it documented, even if it's just to clarify, that this is what we've talked about, we've got a handshake agreement on this. Here's the e-mail just clarifying. Having those boundaries in place, having those agreements in place just makes it clear for everyone. And then if people do misbehave or perhaps don't meet the same values that you do or whatever, it's in black and white and you can say, 'Look, we agreed upon this. It's clear that you have not followed in that agreement. What are we going to do about it?' It's become really apparent to me that sometimes I would be too hard on myself and question myself too much when things broke down, when relationships broke down and I would blame myself for the breakdown of the relationship. Whereas if you've got the agreement in place, you can say, well, this is what we agreed. So, I think my biggest mistake was trusting but not verifying. Which is something I've learned from.

Gemma: Yeah, that's good. Same for me. And that was a very, very painful lesson. And expensive! OK. What's one piece of advice that you have either had passed to you or come across that you found useful?

Richard: I've been really sort of blessed within this industry. I've had the smartest, most successful people, including yourself, give freely of their time and experience to me. I mean, all joking aside, I've had like, you know, millionaires and super, super successful people that have just sat down with me, given their time and experience to me and hopefully I'm in a position where I passed that on. I think one of the top pieces of advice would be - don't try and do it on your own. So, don't do it on your own. I think another piece of advice that's been given to me is - get stuff documented. I'm a massive believer in this and I talk about it all the time. Get information out of your head and get it down into documented systems and processes. We all have calendars and we note things in the calendars. We don't try and remember it all, but yet people try to keep their to do lists and emails and conversations, everything in their head. You know, IP addresses for certain client sites, passwords and things like that. Get it out of your head and get it into a system because it frees up your mental space. Then you can do what you do best - think of great new ideas and think how you can move things forward. See how you can help your clients. Document it. Get it out of your head. And I again, I'm a geek so I've got technological solutions for this. I use tools such as Evernote and I use a To-Do this task manager. Anyway, we could talk about that sort of stuff forever, but the point is don't keep stuff in your head.

Gemma: Good tips. OK, cool. Is there a little-known fact about you that people don't know, bearing in mind they do know quite a lot about you, you being an industry magnate and all?

Richard: There's a couple that might surprise people. I think everybody knows like I'm a retro computer geek. I'm sat in the studio at the moment, which also doubles up as my retro museum, so I'm

really into that. A couple of things that people might not know about me is I've played for England. But the sport that I've played for England at as a kid will make people laugh. I've played at Wembley a number of times....I've represented England at Subbuteo! So yeah, I used to be really, really good as that as a kid and yeah, played for England and had a great deal of success. The other one which is more modern but I think hardly anybody would know this about me, but over the last 12 months I have been studying and I've passed my diploma in cryptozoology.

Gemma: I did know that you did know that!

Richard: For the benefit of people who don't know what cryptozoology is, it's the study of borderline mythical or mysterious creatures such as Bigfoot, the Loch Ness, Monster, Mothman, you know, things of that nature which may or may not exist. And so, I got my diploma in cryptozoology. So, there you go, 2 facts people wouldn't know about me until now.

Gemma: They're pretty good. You got me on one of them. I didn't know about Subbuteo. So let's talk about what's next? What's next for the channel? You talked about, you know, keeping an eye on the future. Do you think AI is going to come in and take everyone's jobs? What else should we be looking out for? What do you think?

Richard: Yeah, we'll address the elephant in the room. First of all, it's absolutely exploding. I remember it was probably about three years ago -pre Pandemic actually, I did a tour of UK MSP community groups and other events and that. And I was talking about artificial intelligence for managed service providers. And I'll tell you, I got polite feedback on it but it totally fell on deaf ears. Nobody could give two hoots about it. They were like, yeah, it's all in the future. Don't worry about it. Of course, you know we're recording this in in 2024, but 2023 was the year of ChatGPT; it just sort of exploded. Everybody got on board with it and it was like, right, it's going to take our jobs. It's going to do this, that and the other. It really isn't. Of course it's going to

change things. Everything's going to change.

But for people within the tech industry, what it should mean is that we can automate more of the things that we really don't want to spend time doing. You know, from a societal perspective, there's going to be huge changes because it's going to be able to do things a lot faster, a lot cheaper, a lot of the things that perhaps we couldn't even dream of doing before. But in the IT industry, it's not going to mean people losing jobs, I don't believe. But it is going to mean that we should have time freed up to concentrate on the more important things that we should be doing - interacting with each other as humans. Also, from a cyber security perspective as well, the bad guys are using AI to find loopholes, to get into systems, to trick people into giving away their information. But AI can also be used to look for changes in patterns and to look for ways to plug up those holes as well. I think one of my big predictions for 2024 and beyond is cyber security has reached such a frenetic pace now that very few MSP's are going to have the in-house skills to keep up with the wild pace of what's going on.

My advice for this year is to partner up with a cybersecurity expert. It might be that you partner up with an Managed Service Security Service provider to help provide you with the cybersecurity coverage for your clients or it might mean that you partner with an outsourced security provider who provides a SOC, a security operation centre. Some of the companies that I've seen coming up, you know there's Huntress that I've done a lot of work with. But these are people who live, breathe and do cyber security day in and day out. They know it inside and out that are at the cutting edge of it. MSP's just can't keep up with that pace and that's a reality check. So, I would be partnering up with an MSP or partnering up with a SOC to give you the cybersecurity coverage. Because the last thing that you want when it hits the fan - not if, when - it hits the fan, one of your clients is breached or whatever. Trust me, you are going to want to have an expert that you turn to

and say, 'Crap, what do we do? What do we do to manage our reputation? What do we do to manage the breach? What do we do to get our clients safe again?' And having somebody the other end of the phone to deal with that and to mitigate that ever happening is going to be an absolute necessity.

Gemma: Yeah. Also, if you haven't read it, or if anyone watching this or reading it and hasn't read it, I really, really recommend *The Coming Wave* by Mustafa Suleyman, He runs Inflection AI, and he was a founder of Deep Mind. And he really, really knows what's going on. And it is equal parts incredible and terrifying.

Richard: OK, I'll have to check that book. I didn't know about that.

Gemma: On that note then, have you got a favourite book or film or piece of music? What are the things that you turn to?

Richard: Let's start on books first of all. I'm constantly reading books like yourself. I read a tonne of books. I've already mentioned *The E Myth Revisited* by Michael Gerber, life changing book. For me, the other two books that were life changing were a book called *Getting Things Done* by David Allen. That was life changing for me because I'm the world's biggest procrastinator. So, now I've gone from being the world's biggest procrastinator to being somebody who doesn't want to do the work but has got a system that forces you to do the work.

The third book that was really life changing for me and I cannot recommend highly enough, is a book called *The Go Giver* by Bob Berg and John David Mann. And the book is a short read. It'll take you like 90 minutes to read over a pot of coffee. Or a bottle of wine. It's a business parable. It's a short story. We've all heard of go getters, you know, you've gotta hustle, you've gotta do it. A go giver is what happens if you put other people's needs, other people's values and what they need first. And I'm not talking about being a walkover, not talking about like nice guys finish last and all that stuff. I'm talking about -if you really listen to

other people and if you meet their needs with the services and solutions that you provide within your business and in life in general, what happens? And I can tell you, you're a go giver, Gemma. We know other go givers in the industry. It just has a magnificent impact. You become somebody who's a connector of people. You become somebody who is sought after, is valuable to others and you do it all through helping other people. So that's the book that I give to other people most often. So those are the three books that sort of changed my life.

Movie wise, obviously I'm a sci-fi geek, so I like Star Wars, Return of the Jedi, Star Trek I watch regularly. Lord of the Rings, obviously I'm from Birmingham, the accent will give that away. But you know, The Two Towers was based out of Moseley in Birmingham and that where I was brought up. And so, yeah, Lord of the Rings holds a big part in my heart.

Gemma: I agree with all of those. They're very good choices. Well done. I've just read Patrick Stewart's autobiography as well actually, which was really interesting. He grew up in a 2 room house in Yorkshire with no running water.

Richard: Did you? I don't know if you got to this part in the book, but he grew up not too far away from Brian Blessed as well.

Gemma: Yes, that's right. They went to acting classes together.

Richard: I love Brian Blessed. I think he's an absolute British national treasure. Absolutely mad as a box of frogs, batshit crazy um. Or eccentric as we might say in England. But I went to see an evening with Brian Blessed and he was talking about growing up with Patrick Stewart. What remarkable careers they've had.

Gemma: Absolutely right! Well that is the end of my questions. Mr Tubb. Thank you very much for your time and your answers.

Richard: My pleasure. Can I ask you a question? We've talked about books and we've talked about lots of things, but who are people that you consider mentors

and coaches, people that you've learned from?

Gemma: Ohh that's a question. Well, it's actually true that probably biggest influence, especially when I was younger, was my mum because although that sounds a bit of a weird thing to say, obviously I grew up in the 70s, Hard to believe I know, but she had a, you know, big high-powered job for a woman - in industry, which was really unusual at the time. She was someone who didn't go to Uni, you know, she worked hard, she was bright and sort of got on with things. So that was that was a really important thing for me. And then there there's a guy that I count as a friend now but he was my business coach for quite a long time called Roger Thomas. He's a Welsh guy, used to be a big area manager for NatWest back in the 80s, responsible for about 4000 people. He is 80 something now and we still meet up for lunch and chinwags and swap books. He sort of transformed the business at NatWest by getting into coaching and then teaching managers in NatWest to be coaches and work differently. That was a radical thing back when he did it. He's really great at listening to you and asking the question that you don't want to answer or reflecting something back to you. Apart from that, I've been in the channel now 20 odd years and there's people like you who I count as really close friends and there's people I've worked with who that I'm still in touch with who I know could pick up the phone to. And I love working in the channel. And it's exactly the two things that you said, it's amazing people and it's always changing and I love that. So yeah, thanks for asking!

Richard: I asked because I absolutely love the concept of the Tech Giant series that you're doing. You speak to not just the smartest people, but those that we just love spending time with as well. Yeah. Thanks for having me on and just keep it up because I love reading all those different profiles.

Gemma: That's good to hear, thank you! And I love doing them because they're all with people that I know and I've worked with and it's a great way for me to sit down with people and I have nearly

always found out something. I don't know! I didn't know you played Subbuteo for England, for example. I'm not familiar with that one there now, am I?

Richard: Well thanks for having me, Gemma. Appreciate it.

Gemma: It's been brilliant. Thank you!

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