



QUESTIONS FOR TOM TOUMAZIS MBE

Monday 20th April – 2pm

1. What was it like struggling with spelling and what advice could you give to those who face this challenge? A) I think you can get better at spelling if you read more, something I didn't enjoy for a very long time. Be honest about what you are not good at and tell the people around you to help you. I always ask someone I can trust to read through important emails or documents for poor grammar and spelling mistakes.
2. Isn't 'if' the same as a maybe, which is closer to no? A) I don't think IF is the same as Maybe. If is a word with conditions and I am much happier with a response that tells me that the answer is a YES, IF XXXX happens. So, I like IF and hate MAYBE
3. Do you think it was luck that got you into London South Bank University? And how did you gain the confidence to approach people such as the course director of the degree you took in order to further your education and career? A) They say the harder you work the luckier you become. I do think hard work is an important characteristic, keeping going, being persistent (but not a pest!) are all helpful characteristics. Keep on trying at things. I am a fan of face to face meetings. If I had phoned the Course Director, I doubt she would have called me back a few days later to tell me that there was an opening. It was the connection we made when we met. I think, being an immigrant, always feeling slightly outside the norm, I had to be more persistent to get heard and noticed.
4. How did you find the right balance between social life and schoolwork? A) Well, I failed at School, so spent too little time focussing on it! I should have spent more time but was distracted and struggled to complete my homework.
5. And what would you consider more important: mental health or getting along and doing well in school? A) Your mental health must be a priority! Stress is good for the body and mind at times but in a managed way. We all experience it but there needs to be an end to it, otherwise your long-term health will be at risk.
6. Coming from an immigrant family, did you feel pressure to succeed, since your parents worked so hard to provide a better life'? A) Yep...that's for sure. I think my Mum and Dad would have been happy for me to go into the family business but I didn't want to do that. I wanted more, I wanted to prove to them and me that I could provide a better standard of living for my family.
7. What was it like to work with ITV and Disney? And what have you learned from working there? A) Two of the best places to work. I loved them both. Both companies, as well as Bauer Media believe in coaching their people and making them better skilled and better co-workers. If you EVER get a chance to work in one of these companies...take it!



8. What is the best way to get into the creative and media industries considering young people may not have a lot of experience? What are some of the obstacles that might occur throughout the process? A) Try looking at apprenticeship schemes. Many of the media and entertainment companies have openings. Think about your network and find people that might help connect you with people in the media industry. I would also ask you to write to the companies. Write to the CEO's (handwritten letter please!) and ask them to give you a chance to be interviewed for work experience or if you have qualified, a temporary or full-time role. I am sure someone will reply.
9. How do you stop yourself from procrastinating during lockdown and motivate yourself in things that will help u in life during this time? And how do we stay passionate about something? A) Find someone to bounce ideas off and ask for help from people to look out for you. Try learning something completely new. I took to Chess. I am bad at it but it's a chance to every day, spend some time trying to get better at something.
10. What type of experience or activities can we do or create that will help us in the future and with our CV's? A) It doesn't matter what the experience is so long as you've got something out of it and can share that story. I mentioned in my talk volunteering is a great way to learn something new and help others. A local charity always needs help.
11. What is your best advice for setting up an online business as a beginner? And what kind of entrepreneur skills would you say is the most important? A) Check, double check and then triple check if the idea is out there already. If it is, ask yourself how is your idea better. If your idea is completely new, ask the big question....why hasn't someone done this before! Also, run your idea past your growing network and ask them questions to find weaknesses in the idea. That way you can prepare the answers to those questions. Over time you will be more persuaded that your idea has a chance to become a business. Another key ingredient to becoming an entrepreneur is to find people to work with you that bring skills you do not have.
12. When you leave school what are the first steps you must take to get your dream job but also be better than your competitors to win the job role? A) Very very very rarely is your first job your dream job....Say yes to many opportunities and gradually you will be better equipped to be prepared for the interview for that dream job. Prepare your 3-minute TED about you. Make it engaging. Use stories to illustrate the things you've done and are interested/curious about. Be the best you can possibly be.
13. Could you give your opinion in following your dream or going into a career which would make you much more financially stable? A) Enjoying what you do must be the place to start. It is always a balance but I would start there. The more you love something, it usually follows the better you become, which leads to expertise and greater rewards, financial and non-financial!
14. I have no idea what I want to do in the future, but I want to go to uni. What would you recommend in terms of subjects/courses I should take that leaves the door open for opportunity? A) Pick something that interests you first and foremost!



- Please don't do a course that you think an employer will be impressed by. Be passionate about the subject, after all you will be consumed in it for a few years!
15. I want to be a writer but I am told it's not easy to be a successful one for a living, what is your opinion on this? A) True....but that shouldn't stop you from believing that you can be a successful writer! As a stepping stone to that, think of all the jobs that are connected to writing. Working in journalism and publishing but supporting the writers could be a good learning ground for you.
16. How can I put myself into a work setting at such a young age? And what is the best way to build a platform and market for ourselves? A) I'm not sure how old you are but there will be age restrictions due to health and safety and safeguarding provisions that protect you and the employer. Asking your school to help you arrange visits to companies in industries you are interested in would be a good start. I would write to them directly. Go online and search for companies within a reasonable travel distance that will let you spend a few hours seeing how things work. Local companies are always going to be keen to help.
17. I have an interview tomorrow with a media/marketing company, what tips could you give me? and what do they look for in a candidate who wants a career in the creative industry? A) Well I hope the interview went well! A few tips for next time would be, first, do your research on the company and the people you are about to meet. Be a detective. Search them online, become familiar with what they do and who they are. There is so much online that you will be impressive if you do your homework. Prepare your 3-minute TED about you and smile and prepare a couple of questions that show you're thinking about the business/industry. Lastly, dress accordingly. Be clean and tidy. These things matter.
18. Do you think education is the route to success? If not, what skills do you need to succeed? A) No, but in today's society it can help you enormously. I couldn't rely on it, I had to use other skills. Show someone you are not lazy; show them you have curiosity and energy but in different areas. Show an employer, that you can work with other people and give examples of the human you and not just list your qualifications. People love stories.
19. If you were not in your current position, what would be your dream career? A) Performing in Les Misérables as Jean Valjeans in the West End. Dream Job...Problem is, I can't sing!
20. If you could go back in time what would you change during your career? A) I can remember times when I should have thanked more people who helped on my journey. You can never say Thank You to people enough. However, regarding the choices I made, even the jobs that didn't work out the way I expected, I always took something from them.
21. If you did a TED what would you discuss, and why? does it have a significant impact on you as a person or someone you know? A) I have! It's called We Need to Talk About Maybe. I hope you say and yes and watch it!

Books:

- The Little Book of YES by Noah Goldstein, Steve Martin and Robert Cialdini
- How to Sell with Complete confidence by Gavin Pressman
- The Joy of Work by Bruce Daisley
- Podcasts:
 - Eat Sleep Work Repeat, a Podcast series hosted by Bruce Daisley
 - The Media Show, The Briefing Room and Desert Island Discs. All on Radio 4

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