

For The 1 Podcast by Freedom2: Episode 6

Host: Mel Manning **Guest:** Gavin McKenna, founder of Reach Every Generation

Mel 0:03

I'm Mel Manning Welcome to the 'For The One' podcast. This week's guest is Gavin McKenna from reach every generation.

Gavin 0:12

Systems don't allow for that systems are built for them. I mean, unless you're trauma informed and you practice that, that work, you're never really going to dig deep enough to see the fruit of the issue, you're going to continue dealing with the consequences. This is season

Mel 0:26

one of our further one podcasts. And I'm Mel Manning, the founder of the charity Freedom2. We are an early intervention service helping teenage girls to know their worth and significance so they can reach their potential and empower others. Why for the one? Because we can all make a difference and reach out to help at least one person. It doesn't require you to be qualified and you don't need to be an expert. This podcast celebrates the stories of individuals and organisations that have seen a need and reached out by helping the wall had been instrumental in making changes in their communities and beyond. Join us as we journey through their stories.

McKenna is the Pioneer behind reach every generation Gavin's journey from gang membership in London to a born-again Christian using his past life experiences to set about influencing societal change the truth of his life combined with his

development professionally, what makes Gavin a valuable asset to organisations for educational training on serious violence and crime.

There is a warning with this podcast as there is talk about serious violence and crime. Please take care of yourself.

Thank you, Gavin, thanks for joining us this morning on for the one podcast.

Gavin 1:45

No problem. Thanks for having me.

Mel

How are you today?

Gavin

Yeah, not bad. Thank you. I mean, the office hence the background.

Mel 1:52

yeah. No, that's great. And so the last year has been quite a year, hasn't it through the pandemic. How has it been for you and what have been your moments of joy?

Gavin 2:04

Yeah, it was tough. You know, I think the first lockdown last year. It affected me odd. Like I really, really struggled with the emotion and the feeling of entrapment. I just felt really, it was hard. The first one summertime, I really struggled. But in that

we had a child. So we have my wife fell pregnant in March or April, March, April, and we had a baby in December. So that was that was the joy of lockdown was having having a little baby.

Mel 2:32

Lovely. So but I'm sure it's all joy. So many sleepless nights there, or is it all okay?

Gavin 2:38

No, now it's a mix. I think the pregnancy got us really locked down. But now she says just yeah, this is joy and, and his heart as well.

Mel 2:47

Yeah, but mostly joy. And so in what ways do you think the COVID pandemic has impacted young people? And what concerns do you have, if any?

Gavin 2:59

Yeah, I think we I think the first thing to acknowledge is that young people were just again, like cars locked down. They were they were forced to stay in their house, not go to school. So you look at the social aspect, I think, exasperated the use of social media, and the lack of human interaction. And we know young people, a lot of them they interact online anyway. And we just saw different techniques being used to groom and exploit vulnerable children. We saw a secondary trauma. And we spoke about this previous before when the lockdown first happened. It was loads of discussion around what would the ramifications of lockdown be for young people? increased violence, increase exploitation, grooming vulnerabilities. baffling trauma was really spoken about rolling off in ASCII because people are receiving secondary trauma on land

because they're watching videos that are violent or abusive, or receiving abuse. So yeah, there's I think there's there's a massive holding out for young people in mental health issues are becoming more apparent anxiety. So yeah, I think there's a lot a lot to be said for the impact it's having on young people.

Mel 4:07

And for people maybe who don't understand much about trauma or what secondary trauma is, what can you expand a little bit about what that is?

Gavin 4:13

Yeah, so there's two types. I'm not an expert, but I live with my own trauma. So I've kind of done a little bit digging, but I've been is acute trauma. So that's like you've experienced a severe incident in your life. So someone like myself, I grew up around a lot of domestic violence, and I lived in refugees and there was physical abuse, but then African poverty is also a form of adverse childhood experience. So we wrap trauma around for children, adverse childhood experiences, select them early years and those those those traumatic experiences that have left an impact on you, secondary trauma, I think we can liken that to like watching a video online. So a young person watching a compilation video of knife crime, that's a common thing. So there was a video on YouTube that was 10 months old. And we've been 10 months it was viewed over 369 1000 times. And so that's that's a sense. That's in essence, secondary trauma you're taking on formulas not directly on us, so to speak.

Mel 5:11

Right. And I think that, you know, obviously with the way that we live now in social media, and, you know, kids on phones, and so I can imagine that that happens quite a lot that unsung people.

Gavin 5:22

Definitely nothing. That's how they interact. And that's how they work. That's how they work and interact. But I think that's how young people that's how they operate. That's the life they live. We do face to face. Well, we can. But long before lockdown young people have communicated through online. And that's that's the means of communication. So most of the effect, what is done? Can I say it is what it's done professionally, I think is highlighted to us as a team and other professionals that just how much young people do online? Yeah, I mean, just so much they do online. So that's been that's been really, really, really insightful, actually.

Mel 5:59

Yeah, no, absolutely. And I don't think people actually really fully understand early trauma, and kind of the different types of traumas, you know, even, you know, loss, bereavement, you know, which many people will have experienced through COVID. And, you know, often children go back to school, and they seem fine. And it's that thing of actually, have we understood really what this child might have been through?

Gavin 6:23

Yeah, I think is I think is a, I think is a big issue for us. When we look at young people on the journey, we talk about the journey of a young person. Everybody asked, like, what will you do? will be done? No one really thought? It's a question why and if it were such a powerful question, because it was why why do you think that? Why do you feel that? Why is this happening to me? Why are you acting in that way? Why are you? If you ask, well, then you know that you're going to get a definitive answer that might take it back to the root of the issue, if you like, because young people not the problem, in my opinion. They're not the problem, I think, yeah, a lot of people label young people, you know, I mean, and I think the systems that are in place that will get towards the work. So if I break the law, I get arrested. And an d as a young person, you can go to the for sentencing, for example. And we can say, yeah, we try our hardest to address the root issues, but the systems don't allow for that systems aren't built for that. And I mean, unless you're trauma informed, and you practice that, that work, then you're never really going to dig deep enough to see the root of the issue, you're going to continue dealing with the consequences. And for me, I think that's what serious violence is, you know, as a consequence of, of deep issues.

You can look at austerity, austerity, so young people growing up in an environment where youth clubs have been snatched away from them, you know, I mean, then you look at the more not the more serotonin levels, but the domestic violence, what was the impact that can have on a young person? What does that do for the view and relationship? So young men that have grown up around abuse? Or, or even some young men that haven't, you know, what's your view? What's the world telling you? I don't want to just box it off as someone who's been beaten by that, that then goes on to the violin, I think, young men that watch movies and on social media, and, you know, the chauvinistic ways that we have, and the way we can talk down to women, and you know, the phrases that we use, I think there's so much to be alive for men that that we're seeing today. And if we don't address the root causes, we're just going to continue seeing it grow generation to generation and nothing's ever going to change.

Mel 8:23

Yeah. And I think you're right, that whole trauma informed approach. And I don't quite understand why not all organisations and schools are fully trained in that because actually, that gives you a better understanding of some of these kids and why they're behaving in such a way. And one of my bugbears is, you know, young people getting excluded. And like, I understand I used to be a teacher. So I understand how hard it is as a teacher sometimes to deal with some of these young people and their behaviour, but I'm not sure excluding is the right answer when they're just left out. And what happens then?

Gavin 8:55

Yeah, no, don't get me started on exclusions. Excuse me, they're not very, they're not very progressive it. Again, it's just dismissing. Anyway, I won't I won't get into that.

Mel 9:11

That's for another time another podcast. Okay, so your organisation reach every generation exists to shape a better future for tomorrow's generation, winning back those caught up in service violence and crime. So what led you to wanting to reach out this way to young people to help the one

Gavin 9:28

very good question, and I think the reason why we started doing what we were doing was because I was that one. When I was young, I was a young man. Again, my experience is different to someone the same as obvious. But I just I just felt like there was a gap. You know, the amount of services that was in my life from three years old, from I can't remember three years old until 22. I had people in my life professionally, but no one ever seem to kind of grasp it again. Going back to the point he was always What were you doing and everything. I did. was met with intervention. I mean, he's committing crime, we need to intervene. He's carrying a knife, we need to intervene. And I'm like, Look, I hear you. But again, going back to the root causes, you're not really addressing much. So we want it to be an organisation that would offer hope and opportunity to young people. Yes, acknowledging that there is work to be done. You can't carry knives and other it's not it's not justified mean you can't kill someone's they're all scared, that doesn't work. But how do we stop that getting? How do we stop that young person or that one become in dissent? Number one, and that's a funny thing, because we spoke to a young man the other day, and I said, Look, man, don't be just another one man. be the only one that be the only version of Ebola you're important. And he didn't know what to do with that. How would you mean Brava said that you're, you're becoming like everybody else around you, bro. That and we want to be part of the solution. We want to help young people find out who they are. We know serious violence is a major issue. And it affects us, you know, as I'm a believer without copco of faith, I'm a Christian. And I just felt led to want to work with young people that were in a similar situation to myself.

Mel 11:08

I think it's really interesting what you said about, you know, interventions and sort of, we've always got an intervention. And it's interesting, because we do do that, don't we? We think we've got to have this intervention to make things better. But

are we really, as an even asking young person? What is it that you need? What you know, what do you need from us? I don't know, if we do that enough. I don't think we talked to young people enough.

Gavin 11:27

No, nothing for us as an organisation, you know, my team, great team. And you're not a great wife, my wife's incredible, she does a lot of work behind the scenes with what we do. And I think we've all come to the agreement that we're going to co design personal development plans with young people, we used to call them interventions like intervention plan. And so for us, I think we just want to grow and become progressive in our language is very important. So we switched from intervention plan to personal development plan. And we call design that so we wouldn't be moved away from mentorian as such, which is, this is how you do it, you need to do this to coach and Rachael, what do you want to achieve? And how can I support you in that? And we're seeing that we're seeing the benefits of that. Yeah, no, I'm sure.

Mel 12:16

I mean, with the organisation I want freedom to, and I've just had a youth trustee, join the team, because for me, I was I said, you know, we've got to have young people, part of the decision making process and a part of how we monitor and evaluate our work and and is it still relevant to young people? You know, if we're not asking those questions to young people, then we're just presuming that we know. And so I watched your video on your website about your training, which I really, really enjoyed. Because, you know, we've all been to some training where you've gone and gone, okay, I've got to go into this train, and you've come away not feeling very enthused, but I watched that video, and I was like, oh, my goodness, it looks like it would be really enjoyable. And do you think that your lived experience of serious violence and crime enables you to impart essential knowledge in a different way to maybe someone else?

Gavin 13:05

Yeah, it's a very good question. Um, thank you for the compliment as a compliment the owner, just, yeah, I think what I have a lived experience, it offers a different sense of emotion, doesn't it? I can, I can draw on my real life experience. And I can tell you from start to finish what that journey looks like. So it just personalises it for people enough it when people always appreciate when I've done training in the past, people have always come up to me and said, Oh, man, I really appreciate your honesty. I really appreciate you sharing that because this gives me hope that I can do more, but not to discredit anyone that hasn't got lived experience. It's not about saying I'm better or they're worse, it's about I offer something different. And I think there's there's there's, there's there's a stigma around lived experience. Some people that don't have it, look at it in a bad way. They feel afraid, they feel what's the word I'm looking for they feel threatened by enough still now even to this day. Now, I've still got people or Institute's that refuse to work with me. And let me because they claim that I glorify gangs and my lifestyle, it tells people they can be bad and then turn good. And I'm like, that shows me just how smooth Your mind is. Because if you can only identify me as, quote, an ex gang member, which I don't I refute that anyway. But you can see that I'm a father and a husband, you can see that I've set up an organisation that changes young people's lives. And, you know, I'm trying to be a role model for young people and trying to hope for hope and opportunity. If you can't see the journey from that to that then that's not really my issue. But yeah, it's a blessing and a curse for some people. They don't like it.

Some people they do, and it's just something that I've got to navigate because lived experience is beautiful. To the listener for no one talking leaves is traumatic is reliving that trauma is bringing up emotion. You know, you've got to manage that. You've got to be in a position where you're delicate with yourself enough thing using people who have lived experience that young people? Yeah, man, you gotta be so careful. People have to really be careful with that, because it's just the other and it could be trophy. You know, I mean, you'd be a trophy, and then there's no emotional care and nothing going on in the background. So yeah, man, it's beautiful, but it's complex.

And I've heard a lot of people sort of talk about that whole thing about, you know, bringing, you know, people out to talk to people at maybe a training event who obviously experienced some form of violence, or I think people have mixed feelings about it. Don't I think you're right is how it's done. If it's done carefully, and appropriately. And you know, the young person

is in agreement, and it can be done, but I think you do have to be really careful. Yeah, definitely. Um, so your training, what does that involve? Who is it for? You know, who do you mostly speak to? Yeah, it varies. So we deliver full day training with you online now, because of lockdown over two days, but it just covers like, we look at stereotypes, we break stigmas, we look at changing the narrative around the word gang. So what does that actually mean? What does that what does that look like we talk about disparity and inequality. So racism, looking at how children of colour, brown or black females that are brown or black, how they treat it differently to their white counterparts, when it comes to the word gang, that you would use the word gang with someone that's over a certain colour or class. But you wouldn't necessarily use that for someone who's middle class and comes from a loving home. We look at that have uncomfortable conversations, man, we talk about the journey of a child and join on lived experience, we look at best practice. So what we've done and what works, what hasn't worked. And we're really honest, you know, we've had young people that have committed murder before now and gone to prison for a long time. We've had young people that have been stabbed, and, and we've had young people that have been shot, and we've had it all happen. And I share all of it, you know, the temptation to say, Oh, look, man, I've got a young lessor that when I was talking to you a minute ago, young lad came in, which I'm sorry, but he came in and he's smiling at me, because he's working. Now we've mentored him, we've all we've coached him supporting him, he's not working. So for him to come in his work, he wanted to stand up looking at me and me to see him. So that's positive. But if I'm honest with you, there's a balance of good and bad, you know, and that's what we want to bring in that train into some realness. You know, like, it's real, every child is different. Let's not think we've just got one answer to the solution to the problem. And we can't do it on our own eyeball. It's not about isolation. We want to look at more agency, information sharing. Yeah, and involve the participants as well. I want to understand what you're facing what you're going through, I can help you looking at trauma, looking at self care. So when a young person has sadly passed away that I've worked with, how do I manage that? No one talks about that. He could do supervision. But what about the clinical side? What about the emotional about going home and for me, and my team, me and my wife, were really clear with the team, look, you're at work, you're at work, when you're home, you're home, that don't carry him and if he's caring if he's heavy on you, comments, be towards the doors open, you know, please don't take it Let it not impact home lab that let you try and be separate.

So yeah, man, the training is a variety of things. You know, it's a variety of things, and it's for professionals. It's for frontline practitioners, social workers, police, nurses, youth workers, parents and carers. We do sessions for whoever wants to know, whoever's interested can come along.

Mel 18:25

So do you think it will always be online now? Or are you quite keen to get back face to face?

Gavin 18:31

It's a tricky one I like I like both. I first want to be face to face. But to be honest with you, I was driving around the whole country man that my wife was so forgiving of the hours we had to put in. But having two young children, I've got three children, but my son doesn't live with me. He lives with his mom. He's 13 I've got a four year old and a four month old is just Unforgiven, isn't it? So where I can then I will do online? Where possible and where needed? And I'll do the face to face?

Mel 18:59

Yeah, I think that's been the beauty of lockdown is that we've realised that actually we can do online learning. We can do online meetings and allows us to talk to people perhaps we would never normally speak to. So definitely positive. And so what is the building lice project? And how does this bring young people hope and opportunities?

Gavin 19:19

Yeah, so building labs project is community interest company. So it's a not for profit, social enterprise that we've developed. Underneath reach every generation so reach every generation acts as the umbrella company, that's where everything's worth. Building labs was funded by the National Lottery for three years, so we got funding to do mentoring and coaching across Essex well in certain areas of Essex, buzzard imprint with chumps with Braintree, and we've kind of kept growing over

the last couple of years into new areas in the hope that we will move across the county eventually. So that's where my staff do a lot of dimensioning coaching but we've built something called the base out of that now. So we got funded again, because we're not locked down and happened. So my The young man came is all the session done as he goes to have to go home now. And then I kind of looked at my colleague Aaron, I was like, I remember I got sessions, I said counselling session. Let's just see what my mind saying. Because this guy was on the brink of like, cutting off his friends and choosing a different part. I just felt, yeah, Amanda, who can you? Can you change your appointment? Yeah, I can go stay with him. When oma told Ria, my wife and she said no, that's not that's not reasonable. So she dreamed of this idea of having a base, you know, a place where young people can do their one to one sessions. But then to stay, they haven't got to go back home, they haven't got to go back on the road. So they can just come here. And it is just grown and developed into like a building workshop with my brother in law. Also got a manager now who's in place and they're doing looking at resources, one to one

sessions, we've got computers that we're trying to buy now that would allow for music, creating music, and one for creating media. So just looking at how we can utilise this space to really enhance young people and offer hope and opportunity and invite people in to come and speak to them job centre. careers and why as entrepreneurs. So yeah, man just really want to open up this space and allow young people to believe for more man.

Mel 21:18

Yeah. And I think going back to what you said earlier, about, you know, youth centres closing down and not being facilities, it sounds like this could be a space for young people to come. And like you said, just be able to chat and talk about things that maybe are on their mind. So it's although it started as something it's become something else in a way, hasn't it?

Gavin 21:37

Yeah, man. And I say this. And it's again, as you said earlier about young trustees is co design. So local, young people feeding into the vision, being part of the conversation is really important. And we're looking to set up a young advisory board. So young people, young people will sit on a board and a panel. So a fitness six areas in assets, including South Park, I think so it

might be two from each part of Ess ex. And they will come and they will they will just meet and chat and yeah, advise us advice of a services, you know, just what really needs to happen because the worst of a young person who happens serious violence is never heard. So we want to we want to give them that platform.

Mel 22:20

Yeah, no, fantastic. So a little bit about you. And so I know that you're studying for a degree in criminology and sociology, so what was your incentive to be to go on that road of kind of studying and essays and all those things?

Gavin 22:34

I'm asking myself the same question. Yeah. I just wanted to really formalise my experiences you know, I know a lot about what I know what my knowledge is very limited and I think when you first start out someone like myself first starts out there's a lot of interest because you're you're a quote expert for experience so people aren't Let me hear and that only last so long. And the truth is I've got more and more young people coming through that I would like to see occupy that space. And if I continue to stay in that space, then I'm not allowing opportunity to prevail because then I'm blocking up so I wanted to kind of if I can use the term move up a level and I knew I had a keen interest in sociology I understood this and I understood demographics I understood my environment was geared towards stuff I never understood how and when I couldn't validate them points so to study really gave me a bit more it was giving me a lot more grounded knowledge a lot more things I can

actually say well I know this to be true because bang rather than just say no I notice and who knows man what what's gonna happen when I when I graduate? You know? What will happen what opportunities will come never late Better late than every no?

Mel 23:48

Absolutely. And how you find us Is it is it been hard work sort of doing it? Like I suppose everything's been online as well.

Gavin 23:55

A bit so what I did is I tried to be smart while I was clever, I chose open uni because I know that they're always online so I thought well look if it goes back to if I go to a uni where they're not used to working online there could be teething problems and go to one that's consistently online now love it man are very stressful and it's really hard. I've got deadlines. I've got one coming up I'm just loving it you know, I'm really enjoying it really, really enjoying it and I'm learning about myself. I didn't know how to me to be fair, had a baby as well got an extension got me good grades. So yeah, I'm really enjoying it, man. It's really, really sad. It is fun.

Mel 24:30

I did Applied Social Sciences. So I did a bit of criminology, but sociology, psychology for my degree, and it is really interesting. And I think it relates to the work that you're doing, doesn't it so that like you said it kind of gives it an extra dimension to what you've already got. Will I'll be dropping you alone. Busy? Absolutely. I don't mind if you have got question. That's fine.

Mel 24:55

And so I love your quote that's on your Twitter and it says In the plays, that is social injustice, let's give children fire exits. So how do organisations that work with children provide these fire exits? And why are they so important?

Gavin 25:11

Yeah, that does, yeah, that just remember I did a kid. So I'm a board member for the Alliance for youth justice. And we did a, they asked me to be a speaker at an event. And that just came to me and I just thought, all we do is fire for you know,

yourself know, from your work you will fire for we always have done we will try and put out fires. And I just thought to myself, Well, look, man, the real Blaze is the injustice, isn't it? We know that as a burning building. And I'm like, yo, how can we find ways out at that? So rather than look at the world again, just try and look at exits quickly. So we know a young person's head into the criminal justice system, for example. How do I, I don't want them to pause Sure. And and show that burns to get what I mean, oh, look, I've been through jell O come out, I've got scars to show for it. How do we cut that shortcut? So create fire exits, man, if you can see the blaze in fire. And I don't know if I'm allowed to speak about my faith freely or not. But it's something

that I hold dear to myself. And this is a scripture, that's one Jew 23 that says, snatch those from the fire. And that's what it says you got to kind of read into it, look into it, but others who have been enough, you know what, there's so many young people that are just funnelled down negative pops. And I had enough of that, you know, and I had enough of that, waiting at the end for let's see how many listen to 10, comma Joe, and really want to change their life. That's not enough for me. So I'm saying, look, organisations and you know what, I don't do that thing where I say, oh, we're the best. And this is what we're doing. You need to listen, because look, everybody's got their power from their role to play. And we're just trying to be the best at what we do. And I'm not want to point things out, they're not doing the job properly. Because I ook, I just said to my team, listen, let's just focus on us. You get it, let's just do what we can do to make a difference. So let's not look at ever ybody else. And so we're not doing it. Now we're going to do it we're going to do and how we were going to create fire exits, is by offering hope. So catching a young person just before we just before it gets that far or showing a young person that there's another way or same to the young pe rson, look around you, man, you're at the last point now you could get excluded from school, for example, you could go to jail, right now you've got a pending case, but you could go to jail right now. Or that guy, friend, you have a weapon, come and talk to us, man, let's do this properly. Let's not get into that argument. Let's not go and sell drugs for that guy. Let's not judge. I mean, so how do we it's by positioning ourselves and offering doors of opportunity. And you can only do that if you're partnered with the right people. Because I might ring you one day and say, you know, I know you do A, B and C, I've got a young man or young woman that does a wants to do A, B and C can you help? Yeah, cool. So I can pan that's another another exit door. Because when we got them they were stuck in the midst of ablaze in building, but you've just opened up another avenue, building a college, you know, whoever another

organisation might say, yo, like we do up a wilderness way we do this, we're going to put refer it into that. So I just feel like you may not see as a junction man, and we want to be in the building that's burning, and just say Ben is the number one for you. There's one view there's one view, and we want to be the students and I'm gonna shoot young people. Excuse me anyway, it might be that when we should send them in to us, but we just want options upon options for young people.

Mel 28:23

Yeah, no, it does. So if for example, say thinking about a school, how practically Do you think a fire exit? Would? What would it look like for a school? And do you think it relies on the having champions of children in the school that will help them find that fire exit?

Gavin 28:40

is a good question, I think for us, okay, again, I'll talk about us. But what we're trying to do is work with people referral units now and say, Look, Robert, and mainstream schools and say, Look, if you're going to isolate a child for a week, say mainstream school, you're going to isolate a child for one week, and they're going to sit in a room and look at the board for a week, send them to the basement, let them come here as part of their timetable. So that one week that you're isolating them, let them come here, let them mix with me and my team and one of us are going to go we've got 5060 resources if you like let's do some with them. How did you end up here man? What happened? Why did you are talking in

class with the teacher treat me unfairly then we can talk about how to manage yourself in that school environment how to and I mean, look at the deeper issues again, so the isolation is proven to be actually useful because we're able as an organisation partnership, we have come to school to address the issues that actually lead into the kick to applause that lead into the isolation and then hopefully work with the school on a reintegration back in so that for me, that's what we're trying to and we're in conversation now. Even through you know, some kids are in part time timetable approved, which I didn't know was even possible. So I'm saying Okay, cool. If they do a free days review the other to let them come here. So it's just looking at that man.

Mel 29:56

I think that's when it comes down to working in partnership with I still feel that we don't always do to the best of our, you know, our ability to actually if we work in partnerships with schools working with organisations like yourself, and then that conversation can happen, can't it? Otherwise, there's no other options, is there? No. And the young person suffers most long term? Yeah, absolutely. So post COV ID, as we work through 2021 2022, what are your hopes for young people who are trapped in the cycle of serious violence and crime?

Gavin 30:30

My hope is that they will receive hope and opportunity. And what I mean by hope and opportunity, I don't need to just be a cliché, man. It's like, hope for more. If you see and speak to the German people, you probably do so you'd know. They. This is hopeless. I like really young kids, young people have said to me, you know, yeah, like they're in jail. for 25 years, I didn't even do anything. I was just there. You got other young people saying, Yeah, well, look at my house that we're never going to get out of this house. We're never going to leave the area. I'm just what this is it. I'm just around. This is my life. That's it. What can I do any different and that breaks my heart, man. And I think it breaks my heart because I've been there. I remember living in that space. If you can just give someone hope. I've seen young people that you told him that. You I help you do your college course, your college application. To see what you want to do that for me. And it's something so simple. That's our job, bro, we considered that a job that that's all we do. That's basic. But yeah, I'll pay for your travel quality. If I can, will you do that for me, and you start to see that hope comes alive in the blood, that constant shifts, they stay up straight, they like what they started to believe, again. Because what hope does is opens the door to opportunity, you know, then it's like, well, you've got your passport. I mean, you've got your visa, we do passport, as we do bank accounts, whatever. Because we what we want to do is take away stumbling blocks. I said to the young man, two weeks ago with my colleague, Ben, I said, Look, if you not having a bank account, or passport is going to stop you get in college, then I'm going to take I want to try and take that away. So that's what we want to do. We want to enable people offer hope and enable opportunity. And that's why I love young people to just be hopeful again.

Mel 32:14

Yeah, and I think sort of through COVID, people have lost a bit of hope, haven't they? So I think that be part of the process will be restori ng that hope, as we sort of move forward out of the pandemic and that kind of thing. So don't know, I agree. And so how can people get involved with which every generation generation, you know, is there is anything that you can do? Is there anything you need? What is it, you know, that sort of?

Gavin 32:36

Yeah, we're looking for volunteers all the time. So it was opening the base, hopefully in the next couple of weeks, which is in in ritual. Yeah. And you can get in touch with us online, send an email, follow us on Twitter. And if you pray, pray for us. We need that, trust me, we need a lot. If you do want a partner, we've asked if you think actually what they're doing is really good. And I've got an avenue I've got a fire exit I can I can really work with these people, like young people can be fed into us, then we really want to hear from me. And if we can help you in any way that parents if you're struggling and you want any help, you know, get in touch with we're more of a given service than a receiving service. That's the that's the problem. I have, you know, we want to give people stuff. But yeah, there's so much happening with the base, you know, if you want to come and volunteer come down. Excuse me, we're looking for materials, we're always looking for funding. So yeah, there's ther e's loads to be said and loads to be done. If, if anybody does lead to want to come and support us. Or even just come and have a look to see what we're doing. That's normal.

Mel 33:44

Yeah. And funding is always the same for us for freedom to that's always there, isn't it? Because obviously, when you get funding, like you said, when you got it, was it comic relief, or was it not lottery? Yeah. When you see that, it allows you opens up doors, doesn't it? So that's something that is always needed for sort of organisations and charities and that kind of thing. So um, well, thank you, Gavin, thank you for joining us today and just being honest and open about your journey. And

it's it's really great to see how enthusiastic you are about young people because you're like me, I'll you know, I'm always trying to give them a platform and listen to them. And that's really, really important.

Mel 34:28

It was really refreshing to hear Gavin talk about how important it is that we get to the root of why young people are getting involved in serious crime, rather than just punishing them for their actions, and also his views on how vital it is that we take a trauma informed approach when supporting young people. I know my eyes were opened when I learned about early trauma a few years ago, and how this can affect children and young people in so many ways.

For more information about Gavin's work, go to www.reacheverygeneration.co.uk

Thank you to all of the young people who've been involved in the making of today's podcast. Elsa Arnold, Freedom2's youth trustee and our Freedom2 ambassador's. The music is written and performed by Josie Beth.

I'm Mel Manning Thank you for listening. Please subscribe to this podcast and follow us on Instagram at freedom to UK or go to our website www.freedom2.org.uk.