

Season 2, Episode 4 · Interview with Aveline O'Sullivan, founder of Bloom in a Box

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

Welcome to this episode of the W-Power podcast created to share the stories of business women from across the arctic rim and hear from them about growing and running businesses in some of the most remote regions of Northern Europe. I am your host, Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott. And our series will feature amazing women, who have overcome the challenges posed by the remote geography to set up thriving small businesses.

All them have received support of one kind or another from W-Power, a project funded through the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme of the European Regional Development Fund.

My guest today is Aveline O'Sullivan, founder of Bloom in a Box. Her aim is to make ordinary moments feel extraordinary and has come up with a plan to reinvent the gifting of flowers, whilst also solving a nationwide flower delivery problem in Ireland. Her aim is for everyone to share a special moment in time through the gift of flowers. Welcome to the podcast, Aveline!

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Thank you so much, Jennifer! I'm delighted to be here and thrilled!

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

It's great to have you on! So, why did you first start coming up with this idea of doing the Bloom in a Box concept?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah, you know, it's kind of strange. I suppose. My background is in telecoms. I spent twenty years in telecoms, in the network, you know, access network design and property, spent a lot of time in the corporate. And, but, I have no idea to this day, but I was driving to my home town of Clifton a couple of years ago, not even a couple of years ago, more than 10 years ago, and I had this feeling that I was going to own a flower shop. And I did. I ended up owning a flower shop. I didn't know what chive look from a daisy, right, we didn't know it. But, I suppose, I thought that, you know, flowers are a great way to connect people. But little did I know how much I wanted to connect people then. So, I started up with that. And it was my sister Erica who run that flower shop, and I had to be there.

And she said, that 'Now you can deal with all the public, because I'm not going to do the public, I'm just going to be in the background', right. And then, oh, my God! Actually, dealing with the public was my greatest experience in life! It was my greatest learning, because when you are in the retail, and I often say that everybody should spend time in the retail. And everybody should be a waitress or be in retail and deal with people. Because I waitressed for years before that when I was in college and school. And you really get to know people, right, and you get to know the good, the bad, and the ugly, but mostly the good, right. But you also understand how people have this desire to connect. Now, there's also people pleaser in me, a little bit, you know, I like to see people pleased. You know, it's problem sometime, but you know this disease to please. But I opened this up with Erica, and she made, and we had this, and did a lot of weddings. And I have to say that my sister Erica did most of that, but I started to enjoyed coming out to public. And then I decided, soon after I had my son Finn, which is another story, that I would open up another one in my hometown, in Moycullen. It was another place I lived in. And I thought it would be a lifestyle job. It's the first time to think that it's a lifestyle job. But then anyone working with the flowers, they look so hard. You are cold, you are constantly in water, you wake up early, you give a lot of, a lot to it, right. But. still, I had this flower shop for 3 years and I remember though being in it, and I remember I actually was going to start this blog called Tingling Girl, right, and the only reason I'd say that is because I was actually tingling. Some days at the shop, it was like there's something missing, there's something missing, there's something missing. It was driving me insane that there was something missing and what I noticed was when it was for the shop a little bit of recession time, that people didn't really want to be giving the big large type bouquets and yet they didn't want to be buying supermarket flours. But yet they wanted to connect. But they didn't want it to look terrible, if they spent less money. They wanted that connection still opinion that they want to travel and get it to somebody. And then it was these expensive delivery charges on top there. And I suppose, coming from my corporate background, I also saw that I couldn't scale. It was impossible for me to scale for my pace and my color. And this frustrated me, because I can only get maybe between the two flower shops and 50-mile radius. So, I said, we're going to solve this. So, I took myself off to London. I'm not going to go through the whole thing. I came up with the idea after looking at the back of the Cath Kidston's book, and waiting for someone to realize I have no idea what I'm doing. (laughing) Actually, the title of that book was 'Coming up Roses', which is kind of hilarious. So, I still sometimes don't know what I'm doing, but I do know, and entrepreneurship is like, the most of it that is you are listening, that you learn pretty quickly, and you learn every day. So, we make a long story short, then I got this

designed. I got a patent. I got a patent, the UK patent granted to me, for the product. So, what it is, it comes out of this, out of this box that people can't see it what's in this box, and within this box there is a vile. And it has water and it allows me to put this together for one place and I can ship it all around Ireland and I've recently started shipping into the UK. So that is the Innovation technical side of it. That's my investor pitch, you know, (laughs) for the case when I need to get money, that's like the man especially love to hear that there is technical design back in it. And I suppose there is technical, and I suppose I am proud because only 13 percent of women in the world, 13 percent of patents in the world are women.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

It's so exciting!

Aveline O'Sullivan:

So, when I got, I didn't realize it. So, I actually yei! I was thrilled, because it took over 3 years, like it's a long process in the European patent bureau. But I really do it because I want to connect people and women will get this and we all have been through many, many, many emotional times in life between having children giving births, jobs, relationships, being sick, all the different things that we go through, miscarriages, IVF. Like, you know, I could write a book at this stage of all I've been through in life and what I often want to us, and I remember this one like, you know, when you have a really small baby you're covered in vomit and you're really, really tired. And you just wanted someone to tell you that you're doing a really good job. You know that you've got this like you're Superwoman. And that's why it is. I do it and somebody can in an instant make that ordinary moment extraordinary and go, you know, 'I see you. I hear you. I believe in you. This is for you', be it sympathy, happiness, joy, engagement, all the different things. And you know what? I'm not a florist I say this. I'm actually a woman who owns a company that makes people feeling good. I just connect people. That's what I do by using a flower.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Which is a fabulous vision to have as well. And by looking at it, the process you put together, makes it very easy for someone to give that moments as well, isn't it?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah, because, as someone said to me recently, because it starts off with opening the sticker, that someone's been thinking about you. So, it seems like an Alice in Wonderland experience, you know, when I get to open the sticker. And you know what? Like, women love boxes. We love boxes, right!? And we love to knock the box! And you know, this one I found that Toni Morrison tells, very famous author, and she said 'Does your face light up?' And she was talking about children that time. And I did this about adults, because I hate when people lose their wonderment. I hate when people lose their excitement in that moment. And so, it's like a wonderment thing. You get the box, you open it, you're dying to see what's in it, and what's the message. And I suppose, I designed this with men, they didn't really get the whole idea that when you open the lid, you kind of get attention to make it longer little experience and you open it. And actually, then let's say, you get it in an office, you get it in anywhere, you can put it in your handbag and you can bring it home. Nothing's going to stop you to do this anymore. But, you can move it around the house and you can take it anywhere with you. It's very transportable. You know, it's just, it's just that fleeting moment in time, which is it delicious.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And when you said, men didn't get it, it kind of reminded me of Apple's recent advert. And all they show is someone peeling the plastic off the phone. Is that the same experience, isn't it?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

My husband has said to me! (laughs)

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And it is the box!

Aveline O'Sullivan:

My husband has said to me! Trying to pull off the box!

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

But it is! And, as you said, you know, in that kind of a global pot, how they've got it! And it's all about the same thing, that tension of pulling the box, isn't it, of the lid.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yes, and we're making the experience of a child. I don't know. I can't remember this. Do you remember as children, we wanted these surprise boxes, and we didn't know what was in them, and we were trying to get to see what was in them. But it's also, I have this passion to deliver kindness. So, I have this I want to deliver kindness, one box at a time. And I want doing that because, and this is the one thing I've learned, actually, that I cannot believe the strangers, who actually write to me, strangers, and tell me that they got the bloom. And in that moment of time they maybe were on a chemotherapy journey, maybe doing IVF, maybe they're doing many, many other different things, right. And they go, 'You've no idea what this did to me today. I'm like, you know like those days, when you want to give up, and you're like, that's it. I'm done. I'm out the door. And then you get this, and you're like, okay. Yeah. I'll keep going, I'll keep going.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Yeah. And as you said it could just be that one single message that you get that day that makes you realize that actually there's someone knowing what you're going through. Well, that probably brings us on to what challenges have you faced along the way when setting up Bloom in a Box. And how have you overcome those?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Oh, God knows! (laughs). But the first that comes up, the first and the biggest challenge you have as an entrepreneur is from the classic of your beliefs about yourself until, you know, what you can achieve. So, I think that once you start believing in yourself, you can achieve anything. I think that I am, I was recently interviewed, and I said that, you know, women are desperately self-sabotaging, and I am a prime example about that, and we don't celebrate what we've done. So, and actually this is about all entrepreneurs, men and women, right. So, you get to a stage, and you're meant to be celebrating it, but you don't. And you move to what you can do next and you don't enjoy what you've done. You're always going 'Oh, what can I do next? What can I do next?' I think that sometimes we need to understand that, like, to get up in the morning, and these days, like, when you make that, you're making sales or whatever it is, and you're, like, 'Why am I?' So, I think that was a challenge that I had to overcome and start believing in myself because when I went to people initially with this Bloom in a Box, you know, they're 'Oh, that's lovely, yeah', and they didn't really get what I always had in my head, that I was going to be able to ship this, like I'm shipping it to the

UK at the moment. So, that I can ship this in the post with water and the flower arrives perfectly. To be honest, did I know how it was going to work, no. But I just had the picture, and I always had the image and I've been through a lot of designs, and that had never actually changed. So, like, we had lots of challenges. Nobody initially wanted to. Everybody knows it, when you start up, they look at you, and they don't want it, right? And people go 'Well, look, I don't know about the time to give this startup, that's a lovely idea, but, you know...'. You know, it's like trying to get a job for the first time, you have no experience. To try to get experience, you need a job, right?

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Yeah.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

So, I remember, even with my vial, lots of people turning me down, but I will mention, Eugene, who would bring me back one day and said, 'You know what? I'll give you a go!', right. And, you know, I've just got ordered lots of... I don't know, was it me begging him or what it was, and but yeah, you learn resilience. Because if you really want, you won't give up. You keep begging until somebody takes you. And we had lots of product issues initially in testing, you know. We've had to change, you know, certain things in the box that we were doing it by couriers initially, and it was getting hammered on the side by big things and cargoes. We had to get inserts, so you can't see it, it's made inside the box, to stop it. We all learn along the way. We had to get different seals. And you know, I have so many of them, but I think the greatest one is believing in yourself, I think. That's one of the biggest challenges. And once you do that, you can actually, you can actually do anything.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Anything. You're right with that as well, women especially do have that self-belief. And I do like also to take it back. And do you take the time to pause now and celebrate those achievements and successes that you have in the business or do you still find yourself, right, that one, I achieved that, I'm on to the next?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

I do the both. (laughs) I wouldn't say that I'm completely brilliant. I think I have the energy that makes me always want to do more. And that's a chance, we have different boxes in production at

the moment. And, you know, I'm dying to get on for them. So, I find myself sometimes never in the presence, because I'm always wanting to be, you know, somewhere else. But I get up at... I get up after 6:00 every morning, and because I do a lot of talking, as you can tell, and I do a lot of that, and I suppose, when you're in the business and you're seeing all the emotions that are coming in boxes, and you see all the things you get very wrapped up in other people's lives. So, I get up every morning after 6 and I come downstairs and I make tee, and it's my favorite part of the day, because I can't hear anything but the kettle, and the water boiling on top of the teabag. And isn't this really quiet moment, and I do a lot of gratitude. I've been in very many places in my life. And now I have been really-really low, like really low. And I can stay like, you know, there, I have to pull myself out of it by gratitude going to God sending us so many wonderful things, you know, and sometimes you forget it. Sometimes we forget that we have so many amazing things, right? I mean, to even get up in the morning and have your health and to be able to go and make people go. Oh, yeah, that's their great that you say that, it's actually the truth, and it's not a rocket science, it's actually the truth. So, then I go on to zoom call at half past six with this group that I'm involved in, especially with <names>, I got this course with her. And we sit in our pajamas camera off, my God, (laughs) and we, we talk about our gratitude for the day and we focus the mind on what we want to achieve. And that's helped me a lot because that makes me accountable. That makes me accountable because I have to turn up to somebody. Because when you work on your own, you're turning up for yourself all the time, which is really important. But when you have a group helping you... it is different. But I do. I try to do it more. Like, when I finish this podcast, I'll be like, yeah, you know, I think that, I think that we can spend too much time in our comfort zone with that. And I think sometimes it's the only time when we progress in life is when we get out of our comfort zone.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And I think, you're right. It's so true, and it's being able to push through that terror barrier and take yourself on to the next level, isn't it?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

And there are certain times, there's no doubt about it. I don't make that small and forgotten, any shape or form, it flattens you, until it takes layers of skin of you, as my good friend once has said to me 'Stand-up, suck it up and pull that dick back up again and get on with it'. Every woman that's listening to me at the moment, because all entrepreneur, and they're going to be, like, you know,

you have to, have to be able to do that because if you don't take the really bad days, then you may to give up now, because there's bad days.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

That's it, that's it. And we'll all have those days, which, so, brings on to this year. It certainly had its challenges with covid. And how, what challenge did that bring specifically to your business this year because it is obviously online?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Okay, so I had some positives, I really did, I can't complain about covid. And, I suppose, I actually was double jobbing for a long time, I think. And in covid, I decided eventually give up my full-time role in corporate, because it's obvious, I was working because I had to pay for the patents, I had to pay for the stock, and I had to pay for everything. And a lot of people will tell you that they go. Sometimes you can't go solo. Sometimes you have to keep a job going, because when you don't have money coming in, that's when you start losing your passion and desire for what we do, you know. So, you, kind of, have to be working on in the background and then it gets to the stage you have to jump. But you also have to know the time when to jump, because I tried, and I just was kind of borderline. Like, I tried to leave laster, and then I came back in again. And then I had another patent, what got off the money, but then, if I didn't really jump, jump, I mightn't be sitting talking to you now, like I really jumped into it. But when I jumped, oh my God! The reward was amazing. The reward was amazing because, like, I soft launched last year, but this year has been phenomenal and I think that's got to do with energy, and I do believe in energy, and my energy now was focused completely on this, and now I had a gap to be filled. Before I had too much going on and but I hope it was good that way. It made me do that. The business is good because I was interacting with people, especially in nursing homes and hospitals, and people couldn't get into them.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Of course. Yes, it's a lovely way to get, to bring it here.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yes, because we have to buy flowers, and a vase, and take them to the hospital, to many different places, not just nursing houses and hospitals. People couldn't see people. I wanted to connects,

even for birthdays, you know, it was that simple of a gesture, when they usually come for a drink, they couldn't do that.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Yeah.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

We had our suppliers stop coming to us overnight.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Of course. Wow.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

So, yeah, it was a big panic, because no fresh flowers were coming in. And I was 'Oh, my God. Oh, my God! What I'm gonna do?' So, it was easier to find a solution or stop trading. And I couldn't stop trading, because I only started to get momentum. And I didn't want to lose this momentum. So, I ran around Holland and eventually got a supplier, because I had a connection from the older flower shop, to supply straight to my door. Well, we had to get a minimum order, like, the minimum order's quite high for what we were used to getting say we're buying, so, we were actually losing money every week with the minimum order. It's not losing money, but like, wasn't helping that, you know, so I was giving away a lot of free flowers, because I had an excess of flowers, in my neighbors, in the nursing. And they were getting totally free flowers. But you know what? I don't regret doing this. I took that really short-termish, because I had to keep the company going. I had to keep it going. The other thing was our vials, my great friend who did make the vials for me, couldn't make them for me, as usually he makes them in 24 hours, and now it was taking 7 weeks.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Wow.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Because the got asked by the government and health agency here in Ireland to make covid test. So, the one machine that I used that's vacant 360 days of the year, because it's blow molding, was now

all of sudden being used for covid tests. So, I could not get vials. So, then I had the flower issue, then I was running out of vials. So, I took to social media and I ask my customers to return their vials. And they did!

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

Wow, that's amazing!

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Customers returned the vials, and it's now put the recycling thing, that I have about to launch soon, about recycling. And I'm looking at more sustainable packaging, you know. So, everything happens for a reason. So, I mean, I would like to, <...>, but I kept saying every crisis is an opportunity, every crisis is an opportunity, and I just doing the matter over and over my head and then I had another day where I get my seals. And they came in the wrong size. And in order to get them back into production is going to take four weeks. Don't ask, don't ask how you overcame that, cause that's a long story. But we overcame this, like, you know. And I'd post them here in Ireland, and shipping was taking normally, you know, more than usual, due to shipping rash and shipping panic. They can last two or three days in the boxes designed to do that, no problem, but I still worried. I still worried about them, but we did it! We did it! And, you know what? We're still standing. And we've learnt. And all of that because, you know, you aren't saying (is it Eleanor Roosevelt?), I'm great with my roots, but I want keep them growing. As she said, 'You don't know woman's strength until you put her in hot water'.

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

That's it! (laughs)

Aveline O'Sullivan:

And I can tell you that is the truth and I'm saying that about all the other people that I know in business and I don't just say women. Men as well, and couples and anybody that owns a business I've been tested in so many ways. I mean obviously I was one of the lucky ones so, you know, I think you're amazing.

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

Especially this year as well. It has tasted everyone and, in some ways, it is being a leveler as well because we've all had to deal with exactly the same. No one's known how with that covid to deal with.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

No one and we all have as well, and I think it's only fair to say, for we had children at home. We've all had like many other different things. You'd have relatives to think about, and feeding other people. It's not like, you know, everything was going normal. Nothing was going normal. So, you know one day you think your business is going to go down the chimney, when you're trying to take another day. How you going to get back up again and the worry and the stress especially if you have employees because if you do have the obligation to them. It's just, God, it was mind-blowing, and it still is, you know.

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

It is, it is. And in terms of the rest of this year, what are your goals and objectives to see you to the end of...

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Survive! (laughs) No, no, I'm joking. You might need to thank God, we're doing, we're doing quite well still. I'm just about to take a new unit. And because we're expanding, so, I'm quite excited about that, because I need the space. We are taking on some more corporates which is, which is, which is really good for us. And also, we're just, I suppose, looking at strategies now. To get into the UK more next year and also just to increase sales here, make sure our distribution is correct. Yeah, we're looking at a lot of things but at the moment, at the moment I need to, when I get this unit, I need to pause for a week or two and maybe think about it without jumping, because, you can ask anybody that's been through this covid thing in entrepreneurship. You're just jumping, you just have to, like, it's never, like, every 24 hours you're making a new decision. You just go put it in and it's just, and that's great. But that's also exhausting and I don't know, I kind of want to pause now, for we got to another, finally, got to the stage. I say that, but I have jinks in myself. I just, kind of, what to know what is right for the business, and sit down and now that my son or daughter going back to school next week. I mean, you know, it's hard to keep everything, you know, thinking about everything. So,

when they go back to school, and we have them set and back in, I can actually pause and think of that, my strategy of up where I want to go.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Yes, and this was, as you said, look forward to 2021 and for you get new units and, as you said, the new opportunities and distribution channels that are opening up to you now.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah. Yeah, there's a lot of things opening up to me now, and I just want to make the right decisions, I suppose, and sometimes I need a pause.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Just to, just take that time and stop. And in terms of networking generally, how has that helped you and your business since you started?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Oh, amazing! I think networking especially is wonderful, because entrepreneurship can be very lonely, you know, because if your friends don't own a business, or you know, the family don't own a business, or you know, whatever it is. It's very hard, you know, sometimes you look at your goal, you know, it looks just what you're doing. And you can't just come out and have a walk, and you can't just 'Dududududu...!'. that, you know, and talk about the concerns and worries you have with your business, when they're trying to talk to you about school or something, you know, else. So, you have to, when you have networks, you can be honest and you can be real. You can say, like I really have this worry, and this is how it's going and it's a lovely, it's like a sacred space really, that you can kind of go 'I need help with this or I need help with that'. Because we don't know everything. So, when you're in part of an organization, you can go to different apartment in the building 'Oh, I need a marketing head', or 'I need an accountant', or anything. But when you have your own business to everybody, you know, you're putting on a different hash every five minutes, right? And you're trying to, trying to learn and sometimes you're Googling how to learn, actually trying to 'I do not understand, what does that mean?' Whereas when you have a network, they really support you, they really support you, I think, and I think when you're part of a network, you have to give back, you have to give your experience and you have to be honest. I really think you have to be honest.

There's no point to say 'Oh, it's just a, b, c, it's just like a walk in the park'. I wouldn't, you know, I wouldn't by the way, I wouldn't do it any other way because I love, I love owning my own businesses. I think, I always had, like, I remember, when I was 6 years of age, then I'm going to own my own business, and I wanted to set up a flower shop as well. But, I remember then also being in organizational structure in the corporate world. And I remember looking at these businesses all the time. And, yeah, I'm going to own my business and I love that empowerment, I love that feeling of doing something, so, as much as I say x, y, and z, and it's roller coaster, I'm really enjoying the roller coaster because I've learned so much. I've learned so much!

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And it's great, as you said, it is the learning and also being able to share that learning with other business owners who are on the same journey with you, and you are alone on different parts of that journey and, I like as you were saying some of your network will have the marketing expertise and some of them will have the finance expertise, and likewise you have gone through, seen, overcome some problems, other people are about to hit, so you can't hold it, as you say it, to share that experience with each other and it was a safe environment as well, wasn't it?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah! That's right to say, I don't know everything, you know. And, actually Blake has said that it's actually one of the best things. You never know, not always know how to do everything, because anyone is going to do it differently. Does it make sense? Like, if you think that you have to do it the same way that everybody else because somebody else does it that way, then sometimes you use, like, I found in my experience that I've actually done things my own way because I really had no idea how to do it. I was just kind of guessing as I went along and actually I learned a lot, you know, that way as well. So, I don't want to tell that it is hard, because then they don't want to do it. Because I still have no idea what I'm doing now. (laughs)

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

But, as you said, it's an enjoyable learning experience as well, isn't it? Learning all these new ways of doing things.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Oh, I love it, I love it!

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Yeah, and in these is your creative spirit and that entrepreneurial spirit is being, as you're always coming up with new ideas by which means to take the business.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah, and you know, I know you work all the time, that you own your own business, but you also have flexibility as well that, you know, you know, you don't, I suppose, I don't know what I would do if I was supposed to be somewhere in an exact time. And the same time was I know that it makes you work at eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock at night, but it allows me more flexibility for my family. And that suits me, that suits me.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

That's it, you are not bound by that. Yeah, and in terms of when you first started the business, is there the one thing you wish someone had told you?

Aveline O'Sullivan:

It's gonna take much longer than you think. Oh my God. <...> Oh my God. It is, it's much longer process, but it's meant to be so, I can say that now, it's meant to be because you're meant to, you know, do x, y, and z. But there's no such a thing as overnight success. You know, people say, oh, she's an overnight success. Or, that company is an overnight success. It's like an iceberg picture. They don't see all the work that's going on underneath the bottom and then they just see the top, but nobody sees the long hours, the fear of the money, the, you know, are you doing the right thing, or that. I would actually get, that's the one thing I would say, that I wish someone would say to me now. I need you to settle here though because this is going to take longer, you know. It's a big space out there. Yeah, that's I think that's yeah, that's what I would say. Just have patience. Relax and enjoy it a bit more. Sometimes I have this, you know, watching somewhere, like, way down the road, and probably not being in the moment and enjoying it. So, I would say be a little bit more patient of what you did, and be kind to yourself for this.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And that's probably going back to, as well, about celebrating your successes along the road as well, isn't it? Yes, celebrating, be in the moment and celebrate what's there, and move on to the next thing.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yeah and it's difficult, but you know what, I'll celebrate tonight!

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

Exactly! Exactly! And in terms of, obviously, the listeners and just giving them a bit more flavor about Bloom in a Box, and the use of shooting even earlier in terms of elevator pitch, that people tell us, in that, kind of, 30 seconds, you know, all about Bloom in a Box.

Aveline O'Sullivan:

I am a flower company, and I would say, that we're reinventing the gifting of flowers. Because flowers traditionally since the Greek times have been given in very much the same way. I think there's such power in a single flower. I was drugged to do multiple flowers next year, but at the moment, when a child is handing with two hands you a flower out of nowhere, even if it's a dandelion, there's such power in it, because, you know, everybody's individual like a single flower. You're not lost and everything, you know, it's the gesture. So, I suppose, I said it earlier, I only come here to make people feel good. That's what I do. I just make people feel good. I send flowers to make people, a flower, and a gesture and I have thought that a flower in a box is a mechanism for doing it. And that's what I do.

Jennifer McDonald-Nethercott:

And that probably is an amazing vision for the business because I wanted to ask you about you know, what is the vision for the business over the next five years, but you know, the way making people feel, it's such a powerful vision to have

Aveline O'Sullivan:

Yes. Somebody said to me couple of years ago, that my vocabulary also has good 'feel'. Like I always say 'feel', because I believe so much in the feeling, you know, we're all feeling the good's and bad's. And that is why people come to hear me. It was in me young, and I've always wanted to do this, you

know. So, no problems, definitely, but you know, there's still that need, to meet face, because I was, I enjoy that feeling of someone acknowledging me, someone making me feel good. I really enjoy like, you know, materialism aside, it's all rubbish at the end of the day. How do you feel? So where would I like to be in 5 years? I just want to be talking to you in 5 years and saying 'You know what? I'm now shipping over UK, and I'm now franchising or licensing in many different countries, because at the end of the day, people are people! It doesn't matter where they are or what country they're in, they all want to feel good.

Jennifer Mcdonald-Nethercott:

Which is a great, a great place to be in, a great big vision for the business as well to take that concept and take a globally as well. Brilliant! Well. Thank you so much for your time today. And if you want to find out more about Aveline and Bloom in a Box, we will pop some links in the short notes.

More information about W-Power and the support available in your area is included in the short notes, as well as links to join the project's local and international Facebook pages and LinkedIn group. We thanks to the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme of the European Regional Development Fund, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise for their support with this project. Until next time!