

The One with the Pestering

- Paul** I research people's brains, I research behaviour, and it's mostly to do with shopping and buying stuff and then I use it to help people work out how to do things better.
- Alice** Does it make a difference what shelf something is on, in the shelves?
- Paul** Very big difference. There's a couple ones, you'll notice when you enter a supermarket they have these things called "endcap displays". So at the end of each aisle, there's these little displays that sit there in front of you. It anchors our thinking, it will draw us into that aisle to go and buy things.
- Maddy** Is that similar to when you walk to pay for something that they have all the chocolates laid out?
- Paul** Yeah. Sometimes, from a marketing perspective, you think that's probably not a clever thing to do because giving people too much choice is actually not a great idea. It's because the more things that we are given, the more choices that we are given, the more pain we feel that we're missing out. So if you have thirty jams, and you go, 'Well, I gotta choose one', you're actually going to and miss out on twenty-nine. But if you have, say six jams, and you say, 'Oh, I've gotta choose one', you're only missing out on five.
- Alice** Pester power. What is that?
- Paul** Pester power is something that is actually part of the strategy of food companies where they market, they advertise and promote to kids, who actually pester their parents to buy certain types of products. I actually think that there is a really positive way of thinking about it. That is, positive pester power, which is where the kids actually divert their parents to the healthy food, rather than necessarily responding to all the marketing that goes on.
- Joseph** So when I go to the shops with my mum, she says she's gonna buy one or two things, and then she comes back with a million. Why is that?
- Paul** We all do it. We all do it, we'll just get one or two things and then we get all excited and then we go, 'I can't help myself'. But the one thing you can do, is to actually just make a note and file it up in your neocortex, your frontal brain, to go, 'These are the things that I must get', you actually are less likely to buy all of the other junk that you get into the car with.
- The best thing you can do, is start at the fruit and vegetable area and start making your choices there, filling up your trolley early on in the thing, because then you're less likely to kinda buy from the processed food area. Good habits right at the beginning of your life. Make it easier to form good habits later on in your life.
- And it's practise, that's all it is. It's saying, 'I know that if I choose, say a chocolate as opposed to a banana, that the chocolate is probably not good for me'. But even the

process of you saying, 'I've thought about that', means that you're practising those choices, which is a great thing. And that means that your brain is better at thinking about it in the future.

Alice Are there certain food groups that kids are drawn to naturally?

Miriam So some children love fruit, while others prefer different things. They might prefer vegetables, they don't like such sweetness. And others prefer to have meats and things, so it's really individual.

Alice 'Coz I like to think of the taste buds like a muscle, so you can stretch it? And exercise it? And build up your taste for things?

Miriam Absolutely, and definitely some things you might've put to the side because something, perhaps visually about them, you thought, 'Oh, I don't like the look of that', but you might not realise that one actually tastes absolutely delicious and could be missing out.

Alice When we try something new, do you have any tips for learning to like it? Is it about keeping it small?

Miriam You know, we focus a lot on putting it in straight into our mouths, but I think actually exploring a little bit with our hands and just around our face, it can also be a really good way to get a good smell of it, and to just sort of suss out what it's actually gonna feel like when you do put it in your mouth.

Alice Do you have any general tips to experience new things?

Miriam I think the biggest ones come back to mum and dad. So you know, if mum and dad aren't eating lots of different things, say to them, "Mum and dad, can you eat these things with me?" If they model it to you and they show you that it's safe, then that definitely helps you to feel more comfortable and to know that that's a safe food for you to eat.

Maddy Does your family, or what your family likes, affect what you like to eat?

Miriam Definitely. So, there's a lot of research that shows that even when you're growing in your mum's tummy, that the fluid that surrounds you, is actually full of all the flavours of what your mum is actually eating. And then if she goes on to breastfeed you, again, all the different foods that she eats, some of those flavours come through the breast milk.

Alice Jonathan?

Jonathan I don't like a lot of foods that my mum eats.

Miriam Yeah, so what sort of flavours are they?

Jonathan She eats food from a culture where she was born in, Singapore.

- Miriam** And so, what is it about those foods, Jonathan, for you that you don't like? Is it the smell of them, what they look like? What is it about them that you don't like?
- Jonathan** Mostly, the taste and the texture. It feels really soft and it just doesn't feel right to me.
- Miriam** Whereas it's interesting 'coz your twin brother, loves those sorts of foods. So it's funny, isn't it? You've both grown up in the exact same time and within your family, exposed to the same things, but yet you've got different preferences, and that's really normal.
- You know, have a look at what perhaps some of your friends are having at school, and take that opportunity to have the smell of it again, and to actually explore some of those foods, because you might actually learn a lot about it in that way.
- Alice** What do you think?
- Lily** Mmmm!
- Billy** Okay, so what did the soup say to the DJ?
- Maddy** What did the soup say to the DJ?
- Billy** Can you please "turnip" the beat?
- Maddy** I hate that.
- Billy** That's some of my best material. You know, turnips, beetroot, in soup?
- Maddy** I get the joke, it's just I hate when people yell stuff like that. It's at that volume for a reason. If I wanted to turn it up, I would. Maybe I'm building up to something. Stop micromanaging my set!
- Billy** Since when do you DJ?
- Tuberman** Hey Maddy! Can you turn up the beat?
- Maddy** I dabble.