

The One with the Opera

Alice And what did you study?

Paul H Well, it's an interesting story. I studied opera. So I was a singer, but then I kind of moved, and I did a PhD in consumer psychology. So how people make choices in shopping environments. So guys, look around. The really interesting thing about that particular fridge, is that it uses the colour that is the most noticeable colour in the spectrum. We actually are drawn towards red, and that's a clever trick that they use to actually draw you towards it.

Lily If something is on the middle shelf, are you more likely to buy it than if it was on the top shelf or bottom shelf?

Paul H Yes, and the reason is it's just effortless to look straight ahead. Our brain says, "that was easy, "I'll choose that," and they kind of say it's around 10 degrees above your eye level, and about 45 degrees below, so that's like that and that kind of thing. Oops, sorry, that kind of thing.

So about that, you're more likely to choose that than any of the other products. There's one particular brand of chocolate that has a colour which is purple, and there's been some research that's been done which exposed people to this colour purple on their way to the supermarket, and when they got to the supermarket, they were more likely to pick up that brand than they were any other brand. What it does is our brain says, "well, for some reason I remember that colour, "so I'd better choose that particular colour "because it's familiar." Familiarity is huge.

Alice Let's talk.

Paul H Fresh food?

Alice Fresh food.

Paul H All right, cool. Often at the entrance to the supermarket, they actually do have the fresh fruit and vegetables, because it's their way of saying to you this is a good place to be.

Alice Whose turn is it to say thank you?

Maddy I want to say one more thing.

Alice Maddy?

Maddy Could you sing any of Don Giovanni for us?

Paul H Well, I could, actually.

- Maddy** Can you please?
- Paul H** Really?
- Maddy** Yes.
- Jonathan** Who are you?
- Vera** I am Vera, the vegetable clairvoyant.
- Jonathan** What's a clairvoyant?
- Vera** That is an excellent question, Jonathan. A clairvoyant channels the spiritual realm, and from that realm they bring messages to the physical plane. Would you like me to do that for you? To build your Lego house, to build your Lego palace, to build your Lego wall, beyond which no one can scale, what do you need? Joseph.
- Joseph** Lego.
- Vera** Lego. Lego. You must let go your fear of vegetables.
- Joseph** Will do.
- Jonathan** Will do mystery person.
- Paul West** I think to begin with I've got to say I haven't always been a farmer, but I have always been a legend. Just wanna get that clear, straight out of the gates. Ever since I was your age, I was a bit of a legend, and I've just grown into my legendary boots.
- Alice** What was your relationship like with food when you were a kid?
- Paul West** When I was a kid, so I grew up in a town called Murrurundi. Has anyone ever been there?
- Group** No.
- Paul West** It's a little bit smaller than Melbourne. It's not exactly a major city in Australia, it's got about 900 people in it. So a little country town, and I ate meat and three veg. That was my dinner, and to be honest, I didn't really like the veg that much.

Now I've learned, as a cook, always to prepare vegetables so they are so delicious and amazing. Now when I cook, what I like to do is I cook a little bit of meat, and lots, and lots, and lots of vegetables, because if you imagine the cook as an artist, and you've got a big palette with all your different colours, and if the dish is your canvas, when you paint just with meat, it's just brown. Just brown, and I don't know if any of you keep up with the art world, but I haven't seen too many masterpieces of late that are just brown.

Vegetables bring all the colour, and vibrance, and excitement to our diet. All the colour, and the variety, and there's so much difference between say a lentil and a piece of silverbeet, or a tomato and a cucumber.

Maddy Where did you get your love of cooking and growing from?

Paul West So I got my love of cooking and growing from a time that I spent on a small farm in Tasmania. I was staying with a man who had a long history, a long history of growing things and cooking them. He was a French man, so that's really part of his cultural identity, and I'd never seen anything like it, and he was willing to teach me, and I was very interested in it.

And for me, the highest ideals that we can hope to achieve as people are to work in a way that benefits the land, work in a way that benefits ourselves, and work in a way that benefits the communities around it, and growing your own food, and cooking healthy food for the people that you love is the way to do that. There's absolutely no harm in it at all, and it's the highest human ideal.