VOICE by Maddyness: Meet Sachin Raoul, cofounder of Blueheart

Our third guest on the VOICE by Maddyness podcast is Sachin, cofounder of Blueheart. Blueheart is providing digital sex therapy to the masses, helping users overcome sexual challenges and build healthier relationships.

The VOICE podcast delves into the minds of UK tech trailblazers – narrowing in on one industry per series. The theme for our inaugural series is sextech. In the third episode, host Graham Hussey speaks to Sachin Raoul, cofounder of Blueheart.

We had a few more questions, so spoke to Sachin about why tech needs a dose of humanity – and why he reckons most tech innovation starts with pornography.

[Maddyness] On the podcast, you talk about your humanities background. Do the worlds of business and tech have things to learn from the humanities?

What kind of skills can, say, history graduates bring to the table?

[Sachin] When there's a big prize, there's going to be a lot of players to compete against. Becoming a professional footballer is a lot more competitive than becoming a professional handball player. In today's world, tech is probably the most competitive market out there. It's why developers are paid so much and why 'tech' and 'billionaire' often enter the party side by side. That means your ideas need to be off the charts original and coming up with a hyper-growth idea is no easy task because all the obvious ones are taken.

This means the most crucial skill for great entrepreneurs is their ability to see ideas that nobody else can. This is where the humanities comes in.

To be a great student of history, you have to look at the same body of evidence thousands of others have seen before you and piece together a novel picture. You're taught to think critically and tear down the arguments of revered historians that came before you and who spent their lives on the topic.

To achieve success, both history students and entrepreneurs have to ask the same question, "What is everyone else missing?".

Your task is to see what others are not, because they fail to look there in the first place. Or cannot, because they lack the imagination. Students of humanities are forced to look where others aren't, and that gets you half the way there. The rest is up to your imagination.

Could you talk through any research on sex therapy and digital therapy that

backs up what you're doing with Blueheart?

What we're doing is so novel that we have to look at the research behind sex therapy and digital therapy separately.

For the sex therapy side, there are techniques that have been practised for over 50 years, such as Sensate Focus. These have been refined since their inception – by Masters and Johnson. Their effectiveness has been shown in clinical and non-clinical settings time and time again for the past five decades.

As for digital therapy, this is a much newer area of discovery. There have been studies run on the effectiveness of digital therapy in helping people cope with mild to moderate forms of depression. The team behind Woebot was one of the first to prove this.

There's also been a range of studies now showing the same delivery for schizophrenia, stress and anxiety. However, the best example of digital therapy in action is the rise of meditation apps, which have taken the world by storm. They've proved that content delivered through mobile applications can have a huge therapeutic impact on one's mental health.

Post lockdown, do you anticipate any changes in the kind of sex therapy being sought by people? What do you foresee for the future of sextech in general?

As the world becomes more connected and internet connectivity and speed continues to improve rapidly, we can expect a lot more long distance, digital relationships. People who spend huge parts of their relationship online.

As that becomes more and more popular, people are going to turn their energy towards services that not only allow them to have sex over long-distance, but do so with privacy and security.

I wouldn't be surprised if the biggest success in the

> *realm of sextech came in the form of cybersecurity. Because if you're masturbating on line, you're going to want end-to-end encryption.*

What's the most interesting/shocking fact about sex or sextech that you've come across?

Most tech innovation starts with pornography. VHS? Porn. Faster internet? Porn. Virtual reality? Porn.

Interested in learning more about the story behind Blueheart? Listen to the third episode of the VOICE by Maddyness podcast, available now.

Article by FLORENCE WILDBLOOD