

A TIME TO THRIVE

Successful Student Transitions

**Series 2 Episode 13
Voices in Transition**

Transcript and Resources

Welcome to Successful Student Transitions – A Time to Thrive

This podcast series is for you if you are:

- A student leaving full-time education and moving into the world of work
- A student moving to university or some form of higher education
- An educator, parent or counsellor supporting students as they take the next steps in their journey from school/college/sixth form into the world of further education or work.

For many students this represents the first big life transition. It can be an exciting and challenging time.

This podcast series provides strategies that develop self-awareness, understanding and the ability to thrive through times of transition.

This episode is part of Series Two: Voices in Transition, where we share peoples personal stories. You will here the voices of students and their reflections on their experience of transition and also of professionals who work to support students in transition.

This is the full transcript with links to associated episodes.

You can also access the show notes, resources and worksheets mentioned in the podcast by registering [HERE](#).

About Your Hosts

Elizabeth Gillies

Elizabeth is an Education Psychologist based in London who has worked in schools as a psychologist at the individual, group and systems level for over 30 years.



She has been fortunate to live, work and raise her family in America, Japan, and Australia so, unsurprisingly, she is interested in the challenges and opportunities of transitions.

Elizabeth is a CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) specialist. She works in schools, on-line and, near her home base in South London, incorporating walking with talking therapy in green spaces.

At the crunch points at the beginning and end of the school year, Elizabeth runs workshops for young people, teachers, and parents to help them understand common patterns of transition and how to use this knowledge to help themselves during this time and future changes.

Together with a great group of professionals in London, Elizabeth is growing a multi professional support service called Special Networks and can be found [HERE](#)

Elizabeth is a member of FIGT (Families in Global Transition) and with Louise and another FIGT member, is a co-chair of the FIGT UK affiliate. Link to FIGT. Connect via LinkedIn [HERE](#)

About Louise Wiles

Louise Wiles is a well-being, change and transition consultant, trainer and coach and the parent of two teens.



Alarmed by the recent explosion of well-being challenges amongst children and teens, especially during exam years and through times of change and transition. Louise believes we should be better preparing young people for life beyond school and university so that they can thrive through the natural highs and lows of life.

Louise combines her professional background in organisational psychology (MSc) and coaching, with her expertise as a wellbeing, positive change and strengths practitioner and her personal experience of life on the move, to develop training courses and coaching programmes that help her clients prepare for, and thrive, through the challenge of change and transition.

You can connect with Louise on LinkedIn [HERE](#)

Website [HERE](#) and contact Louise [HERE](#)

Louise is also the author of ***Thriving Abroad: The Definitive Guide to Professional and Personal Relocation Success***

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to Successful Student Transitions - a Time to Thrive

Life is full of change and resulting periods of transition.

And some of life's big transitions begin as students as we move through the educational process and then on to the world of work or further education, university, and independent living.

If we can learn as students how to thrive through transitions, we will acquire invaluable skills that will support us through a lifetime of change and transition.

So, if you're facing changes in our life as a student, listen on as we share our insights and suggestions to help you thrive in a world where change is the only constant.

Welcome to episode 13

Welcome to Successful Students in Transition: A Time to Thrive

In this podcast we're going to introduce you to Toby – a new student at university who has just finished his first term. Toby has lived in other countries so has a wealth of transition experience. We will be talking and reflecting on this current and ongoing transition.

We want you to listen out for common experiences of transition that he articulates very well.

He talks about his initial disappointment of not getting into his first choice of university and how he overcame and embraced making this university work for him.

We also talk about the quick transition into university life and learning to balance self-care and study.

Like other moves he has experienced, he knows transitions can be a roller coaster of ups and downs and he has many strategies to make this new chapter enjoyable with other young people who are in the same boat. He views transition as a process.

Listen out for him checking in with himself noticing what he is doing well.

When listening to Toby's story, think about what resonates with you and what might help you thrive in your transition to university.

Elizabeth Gillies 02:51

Welcome to Successful Student Transitions - A time to thrive. And I'm delighted to talk with someone who's just gone off to university and they're now, in their kind of finished their first term. So quite a newbie, aren't you, Toby, but I'm sure you're kind of settling in there. So we're going to talk with Toby about that transition to university. And maybe if it's been like some other transitions, and so let's kind of start there. So welcome, Toby. Thanks for joining and sharing kind of your expertise and your experiences. So that recent transition to university you've been there for a term? How's it been?

Toby 03:35

Thanks for having on me on, first of all, and so it was quite a roller coaster, to be honest, because initially, when I found out what university results I was quite disappointed because I didn't get my first choice offer, which was Exeter, and I had an insurance offer at the time from Swansea. And it was, I wasn't very happy with that as a start, I was quite sort of devastated because I had my heart set on Exeter. But honestly, since I've been to Swansea I've found it very hard to find something negative to talk about. So, um, in terms of the actual transition, it was, overall, I'd say it went more or less, as expected, it was quite easy, quite seamless. So my parents drove me down one weekend, they helped me move in. Then I met my flatmates on the day. And I think I got quite lucky with my flatmates, actually, because a lot of them are quite good friends of mine now. And next, I'm living with two of them next year as well. And, and yeah, so the first couple of days went very, very well. And we definitely did put ourselves out there. But we went to quite a few social events and things like that. And there were a few sort of surprises, I guess. And I think one of them was being at uni is, it is quite a quick transition, you've got to grow up and sort of become an adult very quickly. And learn to take care of yourself. Especially if you're living in self catered halls, and you have to learn how to cook, how to how to study how to take care of yourself and like balance it all into one day, which can be quite a lot. And definitely at the start it can be difficult for some making friends or figure out who you want to spend your time with. But, you know, there's always that cliché where it's like you're all in the same boat, but it really is true. So you'll find your friends if it's not gonna be during freshers, could be after it really doesn't matter. But eventually you do get there.

Elizabeth Gillies 05:25

So it sounds like getting out there kind of meeting people doing stuff was really important to kind of make those connections and yeah..

Toby 05:33

Oh 100% Yeah. And that's why I'd say to everyone going, you just have to put yourself out there, you have to if there is something that you want to go to, someone you want to meet, something you want to do. Absolutely do it. Because especially when it's the first couple of weeks, you don't have any lectures, then you can make the most of trying to meet people. And then obviously when lectures start, then you can start finding a balance between work and work and study. So, it's work and play.

Elizabeth Gillies 5:55

Yeah, yeah. So you need both those things, don't you?

Toby 05:59

Exactly. Yeah, because it's easy to swing too much to one side and do too much work and not enough social, too much social not enough work. It's very easy to do that. So finding a balance is is very, very key, I think.

Elizabeth Gillies 06:13

How do you do that, Toby then? How'd you find that?

Toby 06:15

It's quite Yeah, it's, I'm not sure if I find the optimal balance yet, but I like to, I've started the process. Yeah, I go to all the lectures I can, and make sure that I get everything you know, all assignments done, and make sure I put those sort of on top of my priorities. And then after that, after that's done, I make sure to give myself plenty of time to do the things that I really enjoy doing. So things like going to the gym, I've met one of my best mates in the gym as well. And then a big part of the surf society as well. So I think it's really key just to make time for things that you love doing as well as putting all the effort you can into your course.

Elizabeth Gillies 06:53

So finding some clubs and societies that are the things that you want to pursue some things that you're already good at. Yeah. Yeah,

Toby 07:04

Yeah, like if you've got hobbies, and which you're very passionate about, definitely continue them into university. I was I wasn't, I only started surfing sort of recently. But at Swansea it's a great place to do it. So we went to an event on the first night I met some really, really good people there. And then we've been to almost all the events so far, and it's been really, really good, honestly. So if Yeah, definitely continue your passionate into uni, because then you'll meet people with similar interests, and it's a great way to meet people.

Elizabeth Gillies 07:33

It is I think you're right. It's a great way to meet people with common interests. And one of the things that I sometimes kind of say to people is continue the things that you're good at and you like to do but some times it's quite good to try something completely different. I guess going to uni is completely different, where you've got to do all that balancing stuff, like you said. What do you think about that? Maybe maybe not in the first term, or..

Toby 08:00

Oh, no 100% I think first term especially because this is when you'll have the most time to, you know, try and, I think a lot of societies what they do, they do sort of taster events. So you can go to a few of their events for free, because eventually you do have to pay for societies. But whilst you have the opportunity, there are so many things you can do at uni. So if there's anything you wanted to try this new, then yeah, definitely go for it as well. Because it's really, really the best time to do it. And you won't regret it. Because I mean, you'll regret not doing it, but you'll never regret doing it. Even if you don't like it. It's always good to try it.

Elizabeth Gillies 08:35

Yeah, that's a really nice perspective. You know, you don't want to be kind of like finishing your third year and going, 'Oh, I wish I'd done...'

Toby 08:43

And then even in even in third year, like or even fourth year, you know, there are people, there are people who are starting out societies for the first time, they joined with us when we went to the first events, and they were like, 'oh, yeah, we never tried before, but thought I might try it now.' And it's been great. Some of them are really good friends.

Elizabeth Gillies 08:59

Right. So then you get to. That's a good point, isn't it? You get to meet people across the year groups.

Toby 09:08

Yeah, exactly.

Elizabeth Gillies 09:09

Yeah. Cool. Um, I know a little bit about how you've kind of moved in your life and lived in different places. Now. I'm just wondering about, if this transition to university has been like other transitions that you've had in your life? I don't know if you want to say anything about that?

Toby 09:29

Yeah. Okay. So um, yeah, obviously, since I was quite young, we moved countries almost every four years or about that. And I'd say this transition to university, it was probably the easiest transition I've ever done. Like, for moving into different countries, right, it was our family going into a completely new place that didn't change. So you know, you're meeting people who have already been friends for since they were born. So you've got to integrate into that friend group. But like I said, before, like moving into uni, you're all a very similar age, and you're all going through the exact same process, you're all in the same boat. So it's really easy to make friends. If you put yourself out there, then it's definitely was the easiest transition. I mean, it is a completely new chapter in your life, and is the one thing that is scary, but it's also really, really exciting. Yeah.

Elizabeth Gillies 10:17

And do you think because it sounds to me, like in those, those big moves with your family, when you've moved country, you had to adapt quite quickly to living in these new places. So then, do you think that's helped you kind of go to university that you've had these big, other big transitions in your life, Toby?

Toby 10:38

Oh, 100%? Yeah, it definitely prepared me for it. Because, I mean, I'm used to that sort of lifestyle, moving so much that I was sort of expecting another move in my head. So I ended up moving to another country again, even though it's just from England to Wales. It is really nice being in another country again, even even though it's not a huge difference between from England, but it really, really helps me. I think I just knew what to expect when I moved in. So 100% Yes.

Elizabeth Gillies 11:10

And kind of what are the what are the kind of things that you know then you've been through some kind of bigger transitions when you've been moving before? What do you think, do you have an idea about how how you adapt in a transition? What are the things that help you?

Toby 11:27

Yeah, I think the biggest thing is that it's not moving like sort of changing your life starting a new life is never a simple process, like people think it'll get better over time, and it's just sort of like, steady progress. But it's not it's an absolute roller coaster, you have updaysm you have down days. And then it's yeah, it's a long process. It can take different people different amounts of time to adapt to a new place, but but yeah, you do eventually get used to it. And it's just you have to take each day as it comes. Because you can never know how long it will take or you never know how well you'll fit into a certain place. But over time you learn, you learn to love it. It's just a long process.

Elizabeth Gillies 12:04

I like that, it's a roller coaster, you've got good days and kind of not so good days or bad days. And the good days are fine. Usually everybody can have, nobody talks so much about 'oh, I've had a great day to day,' but maybe they do, but sometimes those kind of difficult days. those are the ones that they focus on. And something that I try and do a little bit about when people are going to university say let's plan for a difficult day because like you said you're gonna have them. Um, do you know what you do in a difficult day when you'll be having a kind of hard day?

Toby 12:40

To be very honest, I've had very little difficult days but it's been it's been very, very good so far, but on the days where I was seeing that, this isn't going so well, then I just, like I said earlier, just keep on doing the things you love. And make sure you've got a chance to keep on doing things like, so for me that's going to the gym, that's playing football, that's surfing, things like that, because I still had those sort of things I could always go back to then, you know, I always had a chance to go and do something I loved.

Elizabeth Gillies 13:07

Yeah, so something very active for you is really important.

Toby 13:07

Oh, yeah, I think I'm, I'm big into sports, I think sports is so important in your life. And it's, it's really, really great if you do one, because not only is it just really, really good for you, but also you can meet friends with similar interests. And that's so much fun.

Elizabeth Gillies 13:29

Yeah. And I think it's a really important thing because other people be listening to this about, knowing what transitions are like, like knowing there's ups and downs, knowing there's good days, knowing there's kind of sometimes tricky days. So you have to know that and those kind of phases that, you know, we know that happens in transitions can often you're entering into something and how it's

exhausting, and you have to be quite busy, and you have to be out there meeting people and everything. But also about knowing what helps you in a transition is really important. And it seems to me that you know what helps you then Toby, get active, meet people, you know, get out there. Yeah,

Toby 14:07

yeah, I think I guess moving around so much as that has helped me like that. But um, but yeah, I mean, it can be exhausting for sure, because your senses go on overload, you're in a new place, to meet new people, doing new things. It's like, if you need a couple of days, just to relax at home. In your accommodation. That's absolutely fine.

Elizabeth Gillies 14:29

Yeah, yeah. And also, I kind of think, in that first term, I don't know if you did it, but you know, making time to connect with other people. Maybe not in that setting. It might be family, or it might be other friends from you know, from your home. But just having a bit of something in the diary, because I know, come September, October, it's still kind of, you know, still kind of the end of the summer, and then it gets dark, doesn't it? So I don't know if that was something you did, kind of made plans, kind of to connect people or not?

Toby 15:05

Yeah, so I'm, obviously I did get very lucky with my flat. So it's always quite nice to be to be within my flat, but then also have mates from other societies. And from sort of, you know, outside the flat on different campuses. So because, you know, Swansea we have two campuses, right, so we have one that's sort of on the right side of town, and the other one the left side of town, they are quite far away. But I do have a few friends from the other one. So it's nice to see them sometimes. And also, I did talk to people from from back home a little bit as well, because it feels quite weird, because it's like you're living a double life, right, you've got your life at home and your life at uni. So it's nice to talk to your mates at home and see how they they're doing, talk to your family as well. I talked them out once a week, we did like a brief FaceTime. That was good. Just to catch up with them see how stuff is going? And yeah.

Elizabeth Gillies 15:53

And did you? Did you plan that before you went toby that you'd connect with your family once a week? Or is it just kind of did it, kind of just happen?

Toby 16:04

Just sort of happened really. I mean, I've been texting them, sort of showing them what I'm doing and saying, 'Oh, this happened today, we did this.' And then eventually we'd be like, 'Oh, if you want to call then we can talk about it.' And I was like, 'Sure, let's do that.'

Elizabeth Gillies 16:19

And sometimes it's getting there you find, you know, the things that work for you. And so, you know, often parents want to kind of know all the things that are going on. So that kind of finding the right time to connect and stuff is you know, a useful and a good thing to do.

Toby 16:36

Yeah, yeah, I'd agree. Definitely. Yeah.

Elizabeth Gillies 16:38

So it sounds like you've made this transition quite, kind of. I'm not gonna say easily, but you've you've done it quite, you know, you seem to be doing it quite well. You know, Toby, so, good for you. And my guess is other transitions and knowing a bit about transition has really kind of helped you. What kind of advice would you give to people? You know, there you were a little bit disappointed. You didn't get to your first university and stuff. What advice would you give to people about, you know, if they're in that similar situation, or going off to that in that first term? Maybe you've said some things are already about it, but what's your what's your wisdom?

Toby 17:22

I think especially if you don't get your first choice, biggest thing is just not to worry. Like I know, it feels really, really terrible when you've got your heart set on a uni, got your heart set on a course and you just don't get it it just doesn't feel fair. Right? But it turned out sort of, even though I didn't get into my first choice, I've had the time of my life at my insurance choice and I would not change it for anything. I think big sort of rule of thumb is, wherever you go, you're gonna have a great time as long as you make the most of it, because you need, at the end of the day it is what you make of it. And if you, if you sit there and don't do anything, then you're not going to have a great time. But if you put yourself out there, if you do your best to meet people, have fun, then you will have a great time. And even if you don't get into insurance choice, either you've got clearing, and then even even further than that, I have a mate who went to his went to a uni through clearing, then he didn't enjoy that uni he joined a different uni the next year. So he started the started first year again, and he's been loving it. So there are just so many options. If you if you don't get your first choice, and it's really not the end of the world, there are so many options that you can explore.

Elizabeth Gillies 18:28

And I think you're right. At the time, it can be a bit devastating. But it is a mindset thing. Okay, I've got my university now. Now I'm going to make the most of whatever I'm going to. Somebody once asked me which which university did I thought was the best one in Britain? And I said the one that you're happy at.

Toby 18:49

Definitely, yeah.

Elizabeth Gillies 18:51

I don't think there is a best one, you know.

Toby 18:54

No, no, no. I mean, yeah, you can look at rankings, they are this, this is right, the best for this subject. But at the end of the day, it's not going to be the best for everyone. Because, yes, you're going to be studying your degree there. But it's also going to be your home for at least three years. So there's no

point putting yourself at a uni, that's the best or whatever, if you're not going to enjoy yourself there because that's giving away three years of your life to be miserable. And that's not worth it.

Elizabeth Gillies 19:17

So some nice advice there about joining, going to university just kind of go with it. Think about your mindset, think about kind of looking after yourself, because it'd be really busy in those first week, think about getting a good getting into a work life balance. And I think you're right, Toby, it takes a bit of time, you're not going to get it first, you know, first term even, sometimes it takes a little bit of time to sort of get it all together, that works for you. Anything you wished you'd done differently?

Toby 19:50

Ooh that's a question? Yes, it's honestly going to sound a bit cocky. I think first term has gone so well. And I would not change much at all. If I could do it again, I'd probably go about it the same way. Maybe would have moved in earlier, came home later or probably put Swansea as my first choice University. I mean like that, because it's just gone so well. So honestly, I would not change. I can't think of anything off top my head.

Elizabeth Gillies 20:21

Isn't that isn't that great? Have you have you been able to kind of congratulate yourself for doing so well in it then?

Toby 20:32

I mean, it didn't feel like that for a long time because of obviously, it wasn't my first choice. But then I got there, I started studying and then I sort of came to realise 'Hang on, I've made it to uni. I've got the course I wanted. And you know, I've met I've met good friends.' So sort of, I think, maybe a month or two into it, I was like, Okay, I think I've done quite well so far. So I definitely. I mean, first I was feeling really, really happy most of the time there within sort of month in I just felt 'Yeah, I've done quite well. I'm happy with myself here.

Elizabeth Gillies 21:02

And I really like that so much, Toby because it's a little bit of a check in with yourself. You know that those days are meeting people and you know, they're kind of stressful and doing stuff and being in all that new stuff. And then that little check in with yourself, Well, how am I doing? And see, kind of reflect a little bit. I'm here, I'm doing it. I've made some friends, I'm getting on with things, you know, I'm getting I'm going to my lectures and stuff. So I like that idea of checking in with yourself a lot. Just to kind of be reflective about 'Yeah, I'm doing it, I'm here' and in a way kind of congratulating yourself for the things that you're doing well, sometimes as we know, humans have this negative bias. And we're forever looking at what we're not doing or, you know, what we think we should be doing. But if we can catch ourselves and think about, I'm doing this, I'm here, just like you said, I think that's a really good kind of message to other people to to look what's positively happening.

Toby 22:14

It can be easy to get caught up and start thinking about the future too much as well. Because I think a lot of what a lot of people, I mean, a lot of people take uni sort of differently, they do it in their own way. But what a lot of people think is, it's solely to get a job and then go further in life. But yeah, you can spend it, I think some people spend a little bit too much time just thinking about the future but and in terms of you know what this degree can do for me, is it going to get me a job and yes, that is important. But at the same time, I think what is the most important thing is, is to enjoy what you can in the present moment. Because yeah, it's honestly if anyone's thinking about going to university and they're not sure, I'd say 100% do it because I've had the time of my life so far.

Elizabeth Gillies 22:53

And that harks back to something you said earlier, just take a day at a time, you know, because I know sometimes people think, 'Oh, I'm gonna be here three years, that's a long time.' But actually, if you do it in a day at a time, you know, I know some people who get, who may be get a bit kind of frustrated or worried about, you know, the length of time that they might be there, but just doing it a day at a time enjoying that day thinking about your learning that day. It's a really good way. And before you know it, you'll have your, horrible to say it, but you'll have your degree done.

Toby 23:26

Yeah, not that I'm thinking about that right now.

Elizabeth Gillies 23:29

No, I think you're right. Absolutely. Right. And, you know, I think maybe some people will be different, but I think it's another good bit of advice. You know, think about your learning. Think about what you're doing, think about connecting with people, think about checking in with yourself about how you're doing, and that's going to make your time really, really good. I couldn't agree any more. Hey, Toby, I really enjoyed hearing about your successful transition to Swansea and it sounds like it's been, you know, a good choice that you made.

Toby 24:00

Definitely, yeah. Thanks for having me for a chat. And I think it's been amazing. So far, no complaints,

Elizabeth Gillies 24:08

No complaints. And well, here's here's to the next two terms and the end of your first year. enjoy it as much as your as your first term. Thank you very much, Toby.

Further listening:

To learn about all the other episodes, access transcripts for free and buy the Think Sheets associated with episodes 1 – 10 go [HERE](#)

We hope you have enjoyed this interview with Toby and have felt his enthusiasm to make his time count and thrive at university in lots of different ways.

You might want to listen to all the previous podcasts in the series but especially

Podcast One – Beat the Transition Blues -where we talk more in depth about the nature of change, transition, and adjustment and why struggle can be part of the journey to grow knowledge and resilience.

Podcast 3 Minding your mind – where we talk about the origin of common thoughts during times of transition - the 'what if's' and why they can sometimes be challenging and helpful in making good choices.

Podcast 4 What matters to you - where we talk about knowing our values and what's important to us can help carry us through the challenging times.

Please check out all the podcasts, transcripts and Think Sheets that you can purchase to dig deeper into the topics of transition and where we share more resources. For all these resources go to Louise Wiles Coaching [HERE](#)

Thanks for listening.

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