Headtorch Wellbeing Hour Tamana Ayazi

**Amy:** Welcome everybody to the Headtorch Wellbeing Hour with me, Amy McDonald,

**Angus:** and me, Angus Robinson. We'll introduce our guest Tamana in a few moments. As you settle in, a heads up that we are recording this.

It's going to go on all the podcast channels, even on Spotify, so please follow us on them, and we do really appreciate it. It does make a difference. At Headtorch, we work with organizations to create mentally healthy cultures and the Wellbeing Hour is an important extension of our work. I'll be back a little later to field some of your questions and comments.

Amy,

**Amy:** and we look forward to those questions, thoughts and comments, and, any other questions that you may have for our guest. For those of you who are joining us live, do put those into the chat. Before then, I will be asking Tamana some of my own questions, including what drives you to keep on storytelling?

How have you supported your own wellbeing? And what part does your film called In Her Hands, what part does it play in building bridges? Today's session is called We're All Human, Let's Build Bridges. Perhaps you're wondering, what has our guest got to do with Headtorch's focus on workplace mental health?

Well, let me reassure you that, Tamana Ayazi, Emmy award winning documentary filmmaker from Afghanistan has many stories and insights to share, and there are plenty of parallels for us all to make and to take away, especially when it comes to justice, equality, and of course, in the face of discrimination, we shouldn't.

What role we take? Do we do nothing? Do we make a stand? Or do we build bridges? So Tamana's question for us all to consider, and you can have a think about this as she and I go into conversation, is when a workplace embraces openness, how does this build bridges? So, for those of you joining us today, as I said, you'll find this question in the chat and we'll come back to it a little later on.

Let me introduce then our guest, Tamana Ayazi. Born and raised in Afghanistan, Tamana's won an Emmy for her documentary filmmaking and other film credits include an Emmy Award winning short documentary. She's a journalist, who uses storytelling as a powerful tool for advocating freedom of thought, equality, and human rights.

Tamana is a National Geographic Explorer, and in 2021, she began assisting Amnesty International in documenting its year long report titled, Death in Slow Motion, Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule. Tamana is the recipient of the Cinema for Peace Dove Award for Women’s Empowerment and we are super excited to have you with us here today, Tamana.

So do introduce yourself, with your mystery object.

**Tamana:** Thank you so much, Amy. I'm very humbled to be here and I would like to welcome everyone else who is on the call and whoever will see this podcast later. My name is Tamana, Tamana Ayazi. I'm from Afghanistan. I tell stories, I make films and whenever, whatever happens around the world, I cannot keep quiet.

So I keep talking about things and try to find solutions in any way possible.

**Amy:** Lovely. And your mystery object?

**Tamana:** It's a ring. My grandmother's ring, it's very special. That stone comes from Afghanistan. It was made in Afghanistan. And because I feel close to women in my family, but also in general, wherever I go, when I have a talk, when I have something going on, when I go to dangerous places, I keep this with me, I feel like,

they are with me spiritually.

**Amy:** Lovely. so the ring is in a sense, a bridge between you and your family back in Afghanistan.

**Tamana:** Exactly, and also the rest of the women in my family and around me who paved the way for me to be where I am today.

**Amy:** Yeah, fantastic.

Tamana, I've grown up in little old Scotland. I can only imagine what it might have been like for you to grow up in Afghanistan. Can you give everybody here a flavour of what it was like?

**Tamana:** The governments were changing a lot, so I feel like I lived so many lives in one life. So I was born between civil war and first Taliban period in Afghanistan, so the memories I have from my childhood is basically being at home, hiding my books, going to underground schools.

And then 2001, 2002, things changed. And then, yeah, we managed to, have some freedoms and opportunities. I remember going to school, university, and traveling around my country and making, telling stories. so I started as a citizen journalist and documentary filmmaker when I was in high school, and then I continued after university.

**Amy:** And in 2001 then, you said it changed. Presumably there were a lot more freedoms for you then as a young person.

**Tamana:** Yeah, we had more freedoms and that's the reason I was trying to play different sports. I was trying to do different part time jobs as a university student and I managed to become a filmmaker.

I managed to become a writer, a journalist So, because we didn't have all those freedoms as children, so this generation, my generation, we wanted to explore everything to change the situation.

**Amy:** yeah. And what kind of sports was it? You talked about sports, we'll get on to filmmaking shortly, but you talked about sports there.

What kind of sports did you enjoy?

**Tamana:** My dad bought me a bike, so I had a bike to go to places when I was still in school, and then later on, I joined boys playing soccer on the streets of Mazar and Kabul. and then, thanks to filmmaking, I managed to go to places. And also I worked on stories related to sports as well.

But,

I was trekking, hiking, skiing, basketball. Yeah,

**Amy:** Basketball as well. Yeah. And you studied filmmaking, didn't you? in, in Kabul. How supportive was your family in terms of you taking up that study?

**Tamana:** I was still in Mazar and then I had to decide,

what to do, so I had a couple of options - to stay in my hometown or go to Kabul or go outside abroad and get an education. But then I decided to go to American University of Afghanistan. At the same time, I was making films and go between Kabul and my hometown. So it was easier, but also a group of friends,

we got the same scholarship and we were filmmakers and storytellers, strong women who wanted to stick together.

**Amy:** Great. and whilst you were studying there, that was when you became part of the team, right , that created the Oscar winning short film Learning to Skateboard in a War Zone, in brackets (if you're a girl).

First off, it was a fantastic title, isn't it? what was your part in that story, in that filmmaking?

**Tamana:** So I started filmmaking when I was in high school, but also I took a break. I studied business, operations management, but then I realized that I'm not a married person. So this film really helped me because it was all women crew and I managed to have all these conversations after filming, before filming.

And I was trying to find my role as a filmmaker. I really wanted to be a DOP, but then I realized that I'm good with people, I'm good with content, I'm good with emotions and interviews, so I decided to stick to these things, but also it did help me a lot to just explore, so I did, some of the interviews and also I did second camera, but also we were switching almost all the time because it was only two of us were Afghans. I did sound as well, so I was like switching, but also it gave me the freedom and the opportunity to explore and understand where I want to be, even if it's filmmaking.

**Amy:** Wonderful. So lots of opportunity to play around with what is my role? Where is my role? what excites me most? As for the girls themselves that you were filming, what did you learn about them?

**Tamana:** Oh, they had big dreams. They were really small, but they had big dreams.

**Amy:** What sort of age group were they?

**Tamana:** They were really young, from, seven to fourteen, seventeen and all of them, they had ambitions, they had dreams. The first day, I wasn't really sure about them. I was like, they are quiet, they don't talk, some of them, they are shy, they smile, and then they run. And then we managed to build a connection.

And then when we did the interviews, I was like, wow and those interviews made me sad and happy at the same time. Realizing that, it wouldn't be easy for them to achieve all those dreams, because from my own experience, I knew that even if you have the environment, the society and all the struggles and trauma we carry with ourselves will not allow us to be ourselves and to have big dreams.

But yeah, I was hoping that they would prove me wrong.

**Amy:** Yeah. You and I first met, Tamana, when, I came across you, in conversation on a TED conversation online and I was completely compelled to get in touch because of, well, because of you and your inspirational story.

And the power of LinkedIn folks, you know, I asked and Tamana replied and here we are, quite amazing. If you don't ask you don't get. So, against the odds, you're powering on to bring people's stories, the stories of the oppressed, of the ostracised, of the forgotten, you're powering on to bring these stories to the rest of the world.

what drives you to keep on storytelling?

**Tamana:** I think it's my experiences, but also the person I am. I'm very sensitive.

I need to channel my emotions and put it in the right place.

I feel like I have so much fire in me, so it's better to keep the light on in a good way. and also, yeah, we all are characters. We all have stories to tell, but also we all don't have the opportunities or tools to do that. So if I can help others to tell their stories and shed some light, yeah.

**Amy:** Yeah. And what does, what does the process then of filmmaking, what does it give you?

**Tamana:** It gives me sometimes pain, most of the time hope, because when I see something, happening, I cannot ignore it. I can't turn my face. Even if I do that, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night.

And it happened last night because I was thinking about a story, so I need to do something about it. And telling a story is making films, and that's what I'm good at. I know that I can do it. So, and that's the reason. Yeah,

**Amy:** wonderful. You've, you've got multiple film credits, including Where the Light Shines, and more recently, you, you co produced One Bullet, didn't you, with multi award winning director Carol Dysinger.

Let's focus for now, though, on, on your Emmy award winning film In Her Hands, which has also won the Audience Award at the 2022 Camden International Film Festival, now available on Netflix, folks. For those of you that haven't seen it, can you share with us just briefly the, what it's about?

**Tamana:** In Her Hands is a film about the youngest female mayor of Afghanistan before Taliban, came to power back in 2021. and it's about her fight, her struggles and hopes to make a difference, and also to survive because it was not easy for Zarifa to fight for human rights for education,

for equality, because there were people who were against her, and she was quite young when she became the youngest female male of one of the provinces divided between Taliban and former government, so it was a lot of responsibility.

**Amy:** Yeah, absolutely. It's an incredibly hard hitting, very moving documentary.

What was it like for you to film in what were sometimes it seemed extremely dangerous conditions?

**Tamana:** Well, it was my country, but also as a filmmaker, as a storyteller, you don't really think about those things. If you want to tell a story, you want to get to the truth. And I also wanted this film to feel real, complicated, complex, and authentic,

and I couldn't do it without going to those places, talking with the people like them. Yeah, it was not an easy decision to do all those things, but yeah, I remember telling myself, do it or die. I'm not sure if I will do it again, but you know, I was younger. yeah, but I'm really happy with that decision now.

Also, I remember when things were happening in Gazan Afghan, I couldn't ignore it because I knew that I have to deal with this decision, I have to deal with this future, and it's not only me, it's the rest of the country, so as a filmmaker, I need to document it.

**Amy:** Yeah, I'm just overwhelmed with your sense of purpose.

it just shines out of you, if you like, just that drive to tell, it's not just Zarifa's story though, is it?

**Tamana:** I remember traveling to all these provinces, and bigger cities were different than the villages, and I was like, if we want to make a film, we need to tell all sides.

Sometimes it's not only two sides, so we had former government, we had Taliban, but we had the people. So they were fighting for power, but then we had the people who had to pay the price and it's happening everywhere in the world. Like when we think about the elections in different parts of the world, if people do not step up, yeah, it will be.

And that's the reason, that's the reason, we decided to include Taliban and also Massoum, because it's the people of Afghanistan.

**Amy:** Yeah, and Massoum is, was Zarifa's driver, wasn't he? he was the mayor's driver. So did you actually go, it was actually you there filming the Taliban?

**Tamana:** Yes,

I was everywhere when we were filming, but after Taliban, came to power, I was still filming and, there were some parts at the end I couldn't be there.

**Amy:** I'm just in awe of your, courage, it's amazing. Well, what part does, In her Hands, what part does it play then for you in building those bridges?

**Tamana:** I really believe in the power, yeah, in the power of communication, power of talking to each other. Imagine if there was no film like In Her Hands. We cannot have Zarifa, Massoum, and Taliban to have the same space and platform to talk to each other, because they would never agree to sit together and talk, and that time, it gave me some hope.

I was like, if I make this film, at least they will understand, they will try to build the bridges. I know that it sounds like a dream, because it will take some time, it will take time, but also power of communication, power of building bridges, because we all are different. If we keep ignoring each other, what will happen? When I say different, I don't talk about colour, I don't only talk about experiences and race, it's ideology, it's more than that. We have extreme left, we have extreme right, we need to come to a middle ground.

to have respect for each other and build things together. Otherwise, it will be too divided. We already have so many divisions in the world. We don't need more.

**Amy:** Wow. Yeah. You've won, incredible awards for this piece of work. What does it mean for you to have won these awards?

**Tamana:** When I started filmmaking, I didn't really care about awards and stuff. Some people, they say that, oh, I used to have dreams of red carpet awards. For me, it's different. If I work on something meaningful, it's important,

but also, I remember when we won, I dedicated the award to women in Afghanistan, in Iran, and the rest of the world who are fighting for equality and who are paving the way for us and for the next generation.

**Amy:** Yeah, how fantastic to pass that gift on, you know, as you've done obviously with the film, but you know, it's like double that, isn't it really? You had to leave Afghanistan. Can you share with us what happened in, in May 2022?

**Tamana:** So, because when I had to leave Afghanistan, it became very complicated to stay and work as a filmmaker and I wanted to continue my work.

I wanted to edit my film. I wanted to bring it and show it to people and share it with the world. and then I decided to continue working and keep myself distracted for almost a year after Taliban took over. So I had three different jobs, all heavy, focused on Afghanistan, but also women and girls. And there was a point I couldn't take it anymore.

It was too much pain to carry. So I remember being in my room, in my bed, and I couldn't leave. I couldn't move, and that was the moment I realised that keeping myself distracted is not the solution. I also need to focus on myself. I need to take care of myself to be able to take care of others. I need to give myself some space. to, yeah, recharge, and process, and heal, and then come back to what I do. And that's when I started therapy, and also I started, yeah, balancing personal and professional life, anyway.

**Amy:** Yeah, so important, isn't it, to recharge our batteries. It doesn't matter who we talk to, you know, and who we here at Headtorch engage with,

that's such a key one. How often we come across people who are just, you know, doing too much essentially. and as you quite rightly say, it's about finding that balance, isn't it? 'cause we could only look after others when we're really looking after ourselves. Thank you for sharing that.

You talked there about therapy. How else do you support your wellbeing?

**Tamana:** Being active, sports. I'm now training for half marathon. So yeah, I'm getting there slowly. Uh, yeah, I wake up early. I'm not a morning person, but I push myself. I wake up early. I start it with yoga, meditation or running or some other exercise. And then I have my own space also I write a lot.

**Amy:** Yeah, writing being fabulous therapy, can't it?

**Tamana:** Yeah, so all the emotions of that, and I know it helps me with my decisions, I'll pause for a little, what else? And then, yeah, eating properly, three times a day. That's really Afghan, to eat three times a day, but I know why my people do what they do.

and yeah, keeping hydrated, and just building a circle, a community, a network of people who care for you and you care for them.

**Amy:** Yeah. So, so, so, so important, isn't it, to have that community. So, it sounds like you're doing fantastic, amount of stuff to, to keep yourself well. that's really lovely to hear.

Thinking, now about, you know, your loved ones back in Afghanistan right now, what's life like for them?

**Tamana:** When people ask me on a daily basis, I'm not really sure because I need to explain everything. So most of the time I'm like, it's manageable, it's okay. But then to be honest, it's not easy. Women are at home, girls are at home, schools are banned education is banned basically for women and girls, they cannot work.

So basically half of the society lives in a country, but it feels like a prison. They don't have freedoms. They cannot decide for themselves.

**Amy:** And what do you think the future might hold?

**Tamana:** Long term, Afghanistan is a country, like, governments keep changing, but also it will take long, but it won't change unless we have a female, a woman, as a leader of the country.

And it needs to be someone who is there. Because they live that life, and they need to have that power to make a change. Because I know that situation is, not as previous government, even for men, but at least, they're in a much better place than women in Afghanistan at the moment. It will change, but it will take some time.

And there is a light in my heart and I follow that and I feel like, yeah, it needs to change. It can't go on like this for years.

**Amy:** You're no longer living in the country, what do you see as your platform?

I suppose, how are you using your voice to support the women and girls in Afghanistan?

**Tamana:** I believe in the power of storytelling, and it can be in different forms.

Even now that we are having this conversation, it will help people to be aware of the situation.so yeah, I try to do it as much as I can, but also I don't want to be centre of attention, so that's another issue.

**Amy:** You don't want to be?

**Tamana:** I don't want to be centre of attention, that's an issue, but it's my passion to talk about the situation because that's what I care about.

**Amy:** Yeah.

**Tamana:** If I have the platform, I'm more than happy to talk about it, but there should be a balance because also I'm not a politician, I'm a filmmaker.

**Amy:** Yeah, absolutely. you have your medium, don't you, to share that and to, give voice to people who don't have that voice. You know, I, I know, personally, I see these situations, I hear about them and I often feel pretty helpless.

I want to do something, people want to do something, and feeling, you know, so far away, if you like, so really removed from that world. What would you suggest that we can do to support?

**Tamana:** There are things we can do, we have in power and there are things we cannot do.

I cannot stop war. I cannot bring peace, but at least I can talk about it. At least I can work as a bridge between women here or people here and in Afghanistan and connect them so they can help each other. So there are, women led NGOs. We can support women who are protesting, even talking with them is, it gives them hope.

I remember doing interviews with these women. I didn't do anything for them. I just interviewed them for Peace or for Amnesty International or related to stories I want to work on. And then they started crying and thanking me for doing these interviews because they felt seen and heard, and it was a form of solidarity for them.

And I think that's important. We're human.

Absolutely, and that's fantastic, and in terms of us as, you know, just here working in a different part of the world, what can I do? What can I do to support? There are also underground schools in Afghanistan led by, for example, a small group of university students who are teaching girls who cannot continue in school. We can support them, we can give two hours per week to volunteer with them, and I keep posting these things on my social media, I use social media to do these things, so I share it, so when people are interested they can support them.

And also, if you're working in an NGO focused on healthcare, for example, you can help women who work in that section because some of them are still able to continue working, and also different sectors, and I'm more than happy to connect people if they contact me.

**Amy:** Wow, great. To be that connection to the outside world.

**Tamana:** Because of safety and security, we cannot talk about everything public or keep everything public. And also we need to think about people who are still trying to make a change, their safety and security for their loved ones, but I'm more than happy to exchange emails and also connect NGOs and people.

**Amy:** That's a really fantastic, fantastic message for anyone and everyone, isn't it? That actually none of us are helpless in terms of what we might be able to do to support and make really vital changes. Lovely. Tamana, thank you so much. I think what we will do now is we will, have a look at what people have been sharing in the chat.

This is your question. When a workplace embraces openness, how does this build bridges? Angus, you've been sifting through the chat. What have folks been saying?

**Angus:** I've got a question here, Tamana, you've got, know, quite incredible lessons from your experience, incredible courage, your ability to communicate, and you talk about the power of relationships. So what advice would you give to people in the workplace where maybe they are working in a toxic environment?

What advice would you give them?

**Tamana:** So it's really interesting because when I used to work in Afghanistan for us, for people in Afghanistan, it's very natural to talk about things and maybe that's the reason we managed to keep up with everything so far. But also since I came outside the country, I realised that people have so many so it's boundaries but also so many layers and also walls.

And openness, whenever I talk about openness and also, being able to, yeah, to just connect with other people who we work with, I'm not able to work with people who I cannot be open with. And that's the reason I choose people who share the same values, who are open, otherwise it will be like talking to a wall and then you can't keep up with that.

**Angus:** Yeah.

I was gonna say you also have incredible confidence, because you have the confidence to go and bring diverse groups together, including the Taliban, to make a film.

**Tamana:** I believe it's really important to, to have that. No matter if you're a man, a woman, or non binary, or, you know, and also filmmaking.

As a filmmaker, I work, you know, each project I work with a different DOP, I work with a different, producer, so. I keep building the groups, the circles, and also, before I start a project, I have a session with my team, my crew, and I talk about boundaries, values, being open, all these things, because I don't want to deal with that while we are filming.

And also, it's the same with bringing different people In Her Hands in other films. Sometimes people don't want to be in one film, but also need to be able to communicate this to let them know that. It helps everyone else. My story is not enough without someone else's part in my story.

**Amy:** So when you filmed In Her Hands, and when you were filming the Taliban, were they aware then of the other stories that you were going to bring into the final documentary?

Were they aware that Zarifa the mayor was going to be there and Massoum?

**Tamana:** We couldn't share with them the time and location, but they knew that we were filming different, yeah, Taliban knew that we were filming Zarifa, Zarifa knew that we were filming Taliban, but we couldn't share all the details.

But we didn't hide it from them, for safety and security reasons. But also when you work on a film, I remember when we were in Taliban territories, they were like, it's all safe, but make sure you don't tell anyone because we don't want to be bombed and then you're like, You know, I have to be careful with all these things, but it doesn't mean that I have the access and that I forget my core values.

**Amy:** It's, it sounds like almost protecting people's boundaries, which is so important, isn't it? To actually enable people to be open when the boundaries are safe. yeah.

**Angus:** How would you navigate, or what advice would you give if it's a situation which is not open, how would you start to break down those barriers?

**Amy:** when I started in an office here, I remember there was one person who was not close to anyone in that office. She didn't want to shake hands, she didn't want to hug, but also I'm someone who's like, you know, yeah, now we are close friends and it takes time, but you need to work a little bit on it.

**Tamana:** But I'm not saying that you should be the only person who will work on it. Work relationships, friendships, it's from both sides, but also you need to take some time, and yeah, we need to keep the doors open, basically. We cannot close the doors and complain.

**Amy:** Yeah. Catherine Robertson has put in the chat, openness encourages people to feel cared for, and that in turn builds trust and confidence in the organisation.

Yeah. What do you think to that, Tamana?

**Tamana:** Is it in the chat?

**Amy:** yeah. Openness encourages people to feel cared for, and that in turn builds trust and confidence in the organisation.

**Tamana:** I love it and I completely, I agree with this. It helps because we spend eight hours or nine hours depending where we are of our day in an office and then we go home we spend some time with family or people we live with and then we sleep. Next day it's the same and then we have the weekend to meet friends and family so we spend most of our day in that office, in that workplace..

So if you don't feel cared, if you don't feel like there are people who will be there for you, how will we manage to continue? And that's the reason it becomes very toxic if there is no openness. If you don't feel safe in that environment, and that's the reason people keep leaving jobs.

And also that's the reason people are frustrated and burned out.

**Amy:** Yeah.

**Tamana:** If they feel safe, they can, yeah. Contribute more.

**Amy:** Yeah and that taps in also to, doesn't it just that sense of, that sense of inclusivity, that sense of, belonging. Um, what's your message, Tamana, to some people's, negative attitude, for example, towards refugees?

**Tamana:** I have experienced it myself, it's not easy, it's not a good feeling, when you feel that way, when you're a refugee. No matter how difficult it is. I'm privileged. It's not the right word to use here because if you were privileged you were not forced to leave your own country or home or family or loved ones.

but me as a filmmaker, some people might think that, okay, she has all the things she has, award, opportunities, a name and all this. But at the end when I go to a different country, I was in Germany and I felt that way. I was in a town in Germany, and a woman started cursing, and then I didn't know what to do, what to say, because usually I don't curse, I don't fight, I'm a very peaceful person.

we are different, but also, we are the same. We are humans,

with feelings, with emotions, no matter how much we ignore it on a daily basis, but that's the core of who we are and we need to forget the colour of other people's skin. I keep saying colour because I know how people are affected. I didn't choose to be Afghan. I didn't choose to have this eye colour.

I didn't choose to have this hair, the colour it has and the way I look.so, yeah, I'm not ashamed of my story, my identity. But at the same time, people need to respect who I am and also the rest of the refugees.

**Amy:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Tamana:** It could happen to any of us anytime. I never thought it would happen to me, ten years ago.

**Amy:** yeah.

**Tamana:** Even four years ago.

**Angus:** I think there's a really interesting point here. I recently learned about the editorial process in the Economist newspaper, and what they look for is diversity. of the people in the meetings where they choose the leading articles. And they look for diversity in terms of seniority, from the most senior editor to the intern who's working there and give them all a voice.

They look for diversity in terms of ethnicity and backgrounds and where you're from. The skills that you have, and they say through that they get, you know, great, great articles, great thoughts, and they would never get that if it wasn't for that diversity. What's your thoughts on that?

**Tamana:** It's really important from small groups, for example, I work on a film and it's not more than five people or four people or two people on the ground, but also we have bigger teams And I know how complicated it is to have it because people who are in power in most industries, it's based on who you know, how you know, like all these things,

but it's really important to have diversity, also because people have a different view of the world, a different lens, different perspective, and also those experiences will bring, yeah, colour to the work, no matter what you do.

**Angus:** Definitely.

**Tamana:** And yeah, when I work with a team of, a group of people from different cultures, one day I go to a Japanese restaurant, the next day I cook Afghan food,

and then the next day they take me to, yeah, Indian restaurant so we get to know each other, we get to, you know, connect and understand. So next time we will know that this food has this taste, for example.

**Amy:** Literally, diversity makes our lives richer, doesn't it? Yeah, it's beautiful. Yeah. and look how the innovation that comes from that, from the mix of cultures, from the mix of who we are.

Fabulous. Lovely. Let's now, take a look at your top tips, Tamana. Your first one here we have is believe in yourself when no one else does. Listen to your heart. Tell us a bit about that.

**Tamana:** I was lucky to have a family, and parents who supported my dreams, who supported me, but also there were times when I felt that, when I felt like that, no one believes in me, but I had to keep going.

But also, no matter what happens in life, all these experiences, as I said before, I feel like I lived so many lives in one life. yeah, when you can't see the path, when you can't see the direction, you need to believe in yourself.

**Amy:** Something about trusting your inner voice, isn't it?

**Tamana:** Your higher self, your inner voice. yeah, because we are part of the creation, we are part of the universe.

**Amy:** Great. Celebrate your achievements. Absolutely.

**Tamana:** It took me a long time to do this, to realise it, to accept it and to talk about it. I still remember, it had happened to me even last month when my friends were like, you have all these achievements, and she introduced me to some other friends.

and then I didn't want to talk about it because I just wanted to be me, to be Tamana,

not with the package.

**Amy:** Right, yeah.

**Tamana:** But also I know where this comes from. When you ask a man about, you know, his achievements, he will talk about it. But for women, it's different. yeah, we try to be more humble, but it's okay to separate it, to know where we come from, how much work we have done.

Yeah, to get, yeah, to achieve the things you're teaching them.

**Amy:** To achieve the things. Yeah, I get what you're saying. I mean, some men equally are humble, and some women do shout as well, but I think I, I relate to the fact that a lot of women perhaps don't shout about their achievements as much as they could.

Stand up for yourself. Tell us a bit more about that.

**Tamana:** I'm trying to find the right way to say it, to make it simple, so everyone can understand. I remember in life, when I was younger, I didn't stand up for myself, in so many different situations, and I regret that. But then there was a time I decided to stand up for myself, and then it changed the whole, ending of that story.

And I'm, so, I'm so pleased I did that, and that's the reason it comes from the experience and yeah, don't doubt yourself.

**Amy:** And was that standing up for yourself by going into filmmaking?

**Tamana:** Filmmaking, but also, other decisions in life because I believe that you will not have people or someone to save you all the time.

It's you.

**Amy:** Lovely. It's okay to dream bigger than yourself.

**Tamana:** Since childhood, I was tiny and I still am. But then, the place you live, the person you are, the things you do, that's not everything. It's more than that. If you have bigger dreams, go for it. Don't be afraid it'll happen.

**Amy:** Keep learning and unlearning.

I love this. It really ties in a lot to what, to what we talk about that. Tell us a bit about it from your perspective.

**Tamana:** I really like this one because it keeps happening and I journal a lot, and that helps me do this, practice, and also moving between countries, I realized that the things I need,

I wasn't everything then for me I had was not everything, the experiences I had.I see this side of the story, someone else has a different perspective, do I just ignore it? Or I do my research and educate myself, learn new things, and also unlearn the things I learned in the past. Lovely

**Amy:** and embrace openness.

Open your heart, mind, and arms.

**Tamana:** it's not easy for some people. Even for me, it's a bit challenging, but it saved my life in so many different times.

**Amy:** Wow. Tamana, let's move on to some quickfire questions. Thank you for sharing those amazing top tips, so valuable for us in life, in work, anywhere, right?

Are you ready for your quickfire questions? Here we go. What does vulnerability mean to you?

**Tamana:** Being me, feeling the way I feel.

**Amy:** Nice.

**Tamana:** And share it and talk about it and not be afraid what people will think about it.

**Amy:** Fantastic. What little thing do you notice or zoom into to celebrate every day?

**Tamana:** A phone call with my mum.

**Amy:** What message would you give your younger self?

**Tamana:** You got this, don't worry too much.

**Amy:** And what message would your younger self give you?

**Tamana:** I am so proud of you with all these struggles and experiences. but also I know that yeah, you will find your path. And you. Yeah. You are getting there.

**Amy:** Tamana. Thank you so much. I'm gonna hand over to Angus now who's going to give more formal thanks. Thanks so much.

**Tamana:** Thank you Amy

**Angus:** Tamana. Thank you.

We are humbled to have you on the Wellbeing Hour. There's so much there that is so inspiring. so interesting, so much that we can take away as well. So I'd like to thank you, for, you know, coming along, agreeing to coming along, being so open and sharing your story. I wrote down some words as I was listening to you, and the words I wrote down are courage.

Bravery, Confidence, Strong Heart, Inspirational, Authentic and Open and Hope.

**Tamana:** Thank you so much.

**Angus:** What you demonstrate is that shining light to, you know, that we should all have hope. That there is hope out there. The things you have done are quite remarkable. I cannot even begin to contemplate, the courage it takes to do what you have done.

So thank you for joining us on the Wellbeing Hour. It's been an absolute pleasure. And there's so many lessons we can take away, both on a personal basis and also for the workplace. Absolutely.

**Tamana:** for having me.

**Angus:** It's a great pleasure. So coming up on the Wellbeing Hour, we have next time on 25th of April, we have a different format.

We are having a panel and we're going to be talking about Stop Wellbeing Washing, Start Walking the Talk. So join us for that. On it we have Karen Anne Duffy. Karen Anne is HSE and Sustainability Manager at Volvo Construction Equipment. She is also Chair of their Global Mental Health Community for Volvo Group.

So that's right around the world there with Karen Anne. We have Professor Denis Fischbacher Smith. He is a Research Chair in Risk and Resilience from the University of Glasgow. And we have Julie Nerney. Julie is a serial entrepreneur. she's a transformational leader and she's also non exec director of the UK Supreme Court.

So it's going to be a good one. It's going to be controversial. It's a different format. So get that date in your diary. Also, we have coming up, 15th of May, we have Chris Abbey. Chris is a Senior Vice President, HSE, for Altrad, which is a big industrial services company, and on 25th June, we have the Wellbeing Hour with Olly Valayan.

He is a Head of Process at Optimum Plus and a Visiting Professor at the University of Dundee. So, please join us for those. It would be a great pleasure to have you on. And, get in touch with us, we'd love to hear from you. What are you doing with Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing? Tell us what you're doing.

You know, it's going to help get the message out there and, all the good things that we, some of which we've been talking about today. We have tailored solutions for senior leaders, people managers, and frontline people. So yeah, please get in touch with us and join us, for all those Wellbeing Hours.

You'll hear this if you want to hear it again on, the podcast channels. Follow us on LinkedIn as well. That will keep you in touch with what's going on. So it's been a great pleasure having everybody here. I would like to thank you very much and we'll see you on the next Wellbeing Hour.

Thank you.