

Name: SHALOM LLOYD

Date of Birth: 1973

Duration: 00:00:00

(00:00:00) *If you could tell me what your name is and the year that you were born?*

My name is Shalom Lloyd and I was born in July 1973.

You are young as well!

[Laughter] I don't feel it!

So tell me about or tell me why, what was it that made you leave Nigeria when you were just sixteen?

I was a ... why I left Nigeria when I was just sixteen ... I was a bit of a nerd as a child. All I knew were my sciences, so ... and my mother honed in on that and I got a scholarship, actually to go to the former Soviet Union, Russia, to do a degree in sciences and I took it, yes.

Well, what was that like at that age, leaving family ...?

Leaving my family and going to Russia was exciting. It was very, very scary, leaving the family; I've got four brothers ... so leaving everything I knew behind and going to a country where I didn't speak a word of the language, it was quite daunting but at the same time exciting. So yes, I was really looking forward to it.

And then came to [unclear] (00:01:15)

Yes, I lived in Russia, former Soviet Union, for six years. I did my BS and MS in Pharmacy and then came back to UK. My family lived in the UK.

Your family lived in the UK?

Yes, well my brothers are in the UK, or were in the UK. My parents were in Nigeria. So I guess one by one my parents sort of shipped us out gradually.

And what did you do when you came back from Russia, you know, where did you work?

Well, I came back from Russia, I came back with my degree like any other young person in their early twenties and I didn't really know what I wanted to do. So tried different jobs, worked in cosmetic counters and ended up in pharmaceutical industry – that's what I studied, that's all I knew, so I ended up getting into the pharmaceutical industry in which I have worked in for over twenty years and absolutely love!

What is it you love about it?

Oh gosh! What is there not to love about the industry? When you think about from when you have a headache to a serious illness we go to the counter and buy Anadin or Paracetamol, somebody researched that, somebody produced that molecule, somebody brought that drug to market. It's bringing little miracles to patients' lives every day. That's the industry.

[Unclear] You don't just work in it, you're a pretty 'high-flier', aren't you?

Oh God! I wouldn't call myself a 'high-flier'! I like to work hard, I love what I do; I always feel as though when people are passionate about what they do, it ceases to be a chore. It comes with ease, most of the time. And so I studied from the ground and worked my way up to leadership roles in the industry.

And what does your family feel about that? Is it unusual for a woman to be as successful as this – I don't know, in the Nigerian culture?

In the Nigerian culture, in the African culture in general, women sometimes are the minority. I mean, it depends on the family and I was one of the lucky people to have a forward thinking family. My father, when he was young, received a Commonwealth Scholarship and he studied in Hendon College in London so he was already out there and I think he wanted to give his children the same experience of the world.

So how did you end up in Milton Keynes?

Well, my husband and I met and I lived in Bracknell and he lived in Wolverhampton, in the midlands and we started dating and we decided to move in together and our jobs were important to us and we looked at the map and Milton Keynes was half-way house between the two locations and we chose Milton Keynes.

And what were your first impressions of Milton Keynes?

Clean! It was clean. I am a bit of a 'clean freak', a little bit. It was clean and there was something very welcoming about MK. All I knew about Milton Keynes were concrete cows; didn't know anything about it. But as I got to know it, we came here almost every weekend house-hunting, researching schools and gradually realised that this place is a great place to raise children and that was the deciding factor for us, really.

Because family is very important to you?

(00:05:00)

Absolutely! I've got five children in total; I've got two step-kids, who have left home and three younger ones, Isaac, thirteen and my four-year old twins. And they're my everything; they're my motivation, my reason for doing everything that I do and all great ideas seem to have come from my children and from my husband. So, yes, family is absolutely everything. And Milton Keynes really embodies that for me. This is where our children have known as home, the younger ones; we came here when Isaac was two years old, so he has always known here as home. The twins have been here all their lives, so ... yes, it is home!

So tell me about that. Tell me about the twins; they were born in 2014?

Yes! It was ...

Unidentified voice: Sorry ... do you know which chair it is that making ...

It's mine, it's mine! I keep shimmering ...

Unidentified voice: If I ask you to sit slightly forward on it? Is that helpful?

Yes.

Unidentified voice: ...the back part.

Yes, it is the back part of it.

Unidentified voice: As long as you're comfortable.

Thank you.

Yes, so your twins were born in 2014 and one of them had eczema?

Yes, it was ... I had three rounds of IVF to have my twins and as you can imagine, a very difficult period but I was so determined

and eventually, when I was blessed with the twins it was an amazing point in our lives. Unfortunately, one of my twins, Joshua, my boy, was born with severe eczema, some of the 'scratch until you bleed' type of eczema which was horrible! And being in pharmaceutical industry there is a place for our medicines but putting steroids on a new-born, which is what ... the only thing that seemed to sooth and work for him, just seemed not right to me and so I just had to find a different way of soothing my little boy. And that's really how my company actually, 'Tribal Skincare', was born – out of personal experience! Like I said, my kids seem to be the trigger for different ideas that I have.

I am proud of my dual heritage; I think the African side of me and the British side of me, the two worlds seem to collide and fit really well and one of the first things I did was ask for one of those really disgusting, horrible smelly things, that grandparents used to put on us a kids that made our skins look amazing ... it was Shea Butter, which is to me 'liquid gold'. I had some raw Shea Butter sent to me from Nigeria and the mixing side of my kitchen and that is where my 'Eureka' moment happened and after using my formula on Joshua after three days his skin seemed to clear and really that's how the company was formed here in MK.

And now you export and do you get your ingredients from Nigeria still?

Yes, we do, our ingredients are sourced from Nigeria, so not only did the idea come from what I call 'the Joshua effect', it was all about finding the raw organic source from ... product from the source really because I wanted the raw ingredients. The search took me to a place called Assam in Nigeria, northern [unclear] of Nigeria and met these amazing women of Assam who produce Shea butter and working with them now to provide infrastructure, empower them, source of income, so we import this amazing ingredient that they produce into the UK and we manufacture, formulate tests and produced here in the UK.

And your company is based in Milton Keynes?

It's an MK company, very proud of it because it's is amazing the support you have in Milton Keynes. I think there are over 12,000 businesses in MK and everyone is just really supportive and really inclusive and it's all about networking and finding the contact and everyone knows somebody who knows somebody who can do something for you in your business and who you can do something for as well. So yes, it's a close knit community, it's a huge community. We are an MK-based company and we work with local businesses and network and

collaborate with local businesses to help us grow and help them grow too.

And what's your dream really, what you'd like to do, you'd like to [unclear].

Well, when you think about where we live in Milton Keynes, we're not known for skin care. When I think about Assam, where we buy our ingredients from and support these women, they're not known for skin care either, one thing I promised the Assam women was I was going to put them on the map and I'm working hard to do that. I also want to do the same thing at home here, is put us on the map as a place where quality skin care is available.

And do you see your future here in Milton Keynes?

(00:10:00)

Oh wow! Yes, this is home! This is home! From schools, again everything goes back to my children, from schools to safety, to an environment where children have so much to do, there is so much for families! In fact, you have so much choice here. They've made friends here, their roots are here! Absolutely! This is our home.

And what would you like to see happen to the city in the next fifty years, say?

Aaah! The city is fifty now and in the next fifty years you can almost see the trend; diversity, employment, business, infrastructure, nature. Milton Keynes is one of those strange places where if you are a person who likes to be in the city, you can be; if you'd like to be out in the sticks, you can be. And I hope probably that would continue but you know, it feels like home. If I also want to be near my African roots I have that in Milton Keynes. So I see the diversity, the growth of MK going from strength to strength. I don't think it is going to lose its core. I hope it doesn't.

Unidentified voice: Marie? ...Wonderful! That was fantastic! I can't think of anything to that!

That was brilliant!

Unidentified voice: [Unclear] dissertation.

Unidentified voice: If you just open the pages and just show the events, like what sort of things are. That would be nice.

Yes. I actually dedicated this to my ... this is my dissertation, really – (Russian/Nigerian name) – it's all in Russian. But I

made sure I had an English bit where I dedicated it to my family. I wasn't married at the time with kids; there was my mother and my brothers and my friends at the time would help me sort of through the difficult period. Yes, there is a lot of work in there [unclear].

Unidentified voice: Really? What year would that have been?

1995.

Unidentified voice: Well, so your still doing things...[unclear].

NO SOUND TO END.