



Food & Drink Hero: Pep & Lekker

The answer to a tricky family problem - how to give a gang of fussy eaters (and one keen vegan) the nourishment they need, hidden within the flavours and textures they love. Susan and Juliette worked for over a year with award-winning chefs and nutritionists to create what was to become a range of soups and snacks .

My background was that of a lawyer working across a number of leading city law firms, primarily in support roles to work around my family commitments. When my kids went to university, I knew I needed to do something different, I didn't know what, but felt it should revolve around running my own business, which was something I'd always wanted to do but maybe lacked the courage to embrace.

I'm someone who has always worked collaboratively so I asked my sister in law Juliette, a former psychotherapist, to join me in my journey, as she has a very different skillset, and so we complement each other really well.

We started with a creamy soup made with cashew nuts, using seed snacks which provided the background texture. It certainly wasn't easy lugging 25kg of onions around a kitchen or being on our feet 10 hours a day and ultimately we struggled to meet the volumes needed for a chilled product to succeed. However, we did unwittingly have our eureka moment which was deciding to do something interesting with those nutritious seeds we'd been drowning in soup.

Seed Snacks was really a result of me struggling to find good food for my lazy, vegan son.. Henry had become vegan and was eating really badly, and for the first time I started to read back of packs. So much of the food was packed with dried egg and milk or loaded with sugar, salt and synthetic rubbish. I was sure a real gap in the market existed for real ingredient food that embraced great nutrition as well as taste. We refuse to focus on calories or the ridiculous guilt that so often surrounds food, because we both believe that there's far too much emphasis on dieting.

Along the way I've learnt so much about my own relationship with food and, whilst not

vegan, have given up eating meat and faced into my own sugar addiction having grown up on products like Ribena and tomato ketchup. As I got older the sugar highs and lows started to become a real problem, with mood and energy swings. It is definitely not easy to wean yourself off sugar, and I do have the occasional treat, but snacking on our seed snacks has definitely helped me control my weight, mood and energy levels.



There have certainly been a number of low points and wrong turns along the way but I wouldn't change a thing about my new Seed Snacks life. We are forever inundated with positive responses from happy customers which is so rewarding, knowing that we are making a positive difference to so many peoples' lives. Seeing Seed Snacks on Ocado and in stores like As Nature Intended and Sainsbury's still gives me an incredible buzz. After 25 years of working for other people, and never enjoying office politics, I have finally found the freedom to set my own agenda, which is truly liberating.

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