

ES-013 Changing Direction — Estate Story

ES-013: Changing Direction

Collection: CHIA-TEA Estate Stories, Season One

Edition: First Brew

Status: Complete

Welcome Home

Welcome Home.

Today I want to tell you about poop emoji balls, a toilet seat, and how the biggest failure of my life turned out to be the most important education I ever received.

Why This Story Matters

This story is preserved in the Estate because disappointment is not always what it seems. Sometimes the thing that fails teaches everything you need for the thing that succeeds. This is the story of the apprenticeship hidden inside the disappointment.

Chapter One: Fun Shit Games

I built a gaming company.

I'm serious. Poop emoji balls. A toilet seat. Physical products you could buy and play with. Fun Shit Games. That was the name. That was the dream.

I learned everything. Manufacturing. Supply chain. Product development. Marketing. Branding. E-commerce. Packaging. Shipping. Customer service.

Everything a business needs to function, I learned by trying to sell novelty poop products.

Chapter Two: The Dream

It wasn't a joke to me. It was a real business. Real investment. Real twelve-hour days (there they are again). Real hope that this would be the thing.

I believed in it the way builders believe in things: completely, stubbornly, with my whole heart.

And it didn't work. Not the way I planned. Not the way I needed.

Chapter Three: The Wall

If you are standing in front of a wall today, perhaps it is inviting you to turn your head just enough to notice another path.

I stood in front of that wall for a long time. Pushing. Trying harder. Investing more. Believing that persistence alone would break through.

But there's a difference between a bump and a roadblock. Old Man Winter taught me that in E005. A bump needs tea and patience. A roadblock needs a new direction.

Fun Shit Games was a roadblock. And it took me too long to admit it.

Chapter Four: The Pivot

When I finally put Fun Shit Games on the shelf, something interesting happened.

I didn't lose everything I'd learned. I kept it. All of it. The product development skills. The marketing knowledge. The ability to build something from nothing and ship it to real people.

Nothing you learn with your whole heart is ever wasted.

Those skills didn't belong to Fun Shit Games. They belonged to me. And they were waiting for the next container.

Chapter Five: The Builder Becoming

Sometimes life is less interested in the thing you are building than the builder you are becoming.

I didn't know it at the time. But Fun Shit Games was never the destination. It was the apprenticeship. Every skill I developed selling novelty products became the foundation for building apps. For creating digital ecosystems. For designing ZENYA, SHAT, HOPES ANCHOR, and SOS.

Poop emoji balls became the training ground for an entire digital ecosystem dedicated to hope.

You can't make that up.

Chapter Six: SHAT's Ancestor

SHAT came directly from Fun Shit Games.

Not just the name (though yes, there's a lineage there). The philosophy. The idea that sometimes you need to release something. Get it out. Say the thing. Express the feeling. Stop holding it in.

Fun Shit Games was about release through humour. SHAT is about release through honesty. Same impulse. Different container. Better purpose.

The dream that failed gave birth to the tool that helps.

Chapter Seven: The Spare Room

Fun Shit Games lives in a spare room now. Boxes of unsold product. A dream paused, not finished.

I walk past that room sometimes and smile. Not with regret. With gratitude.

Because dreams don't always look the way you planned. Sometimes they just teach you everything you need for the one that does.

The apprenticeship was hidden inside the disappointment. And I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Brewmaster Insight

This is the funniest episode in Season One, and also one of the most profound. Karen takes you from laughing at toilet-themed novelty products to understanding how that exact experience built the skill set behind four mental health apps. The pivot from FSG to [Famous.ai](#) is the most unlikely origin story in podcasting.

Tea Leaves

- Nothing you learn with your whole heart is ever wasted.
 - Sometimes life is less interested in the thing you are building than the builder you are becoming.
 - If you are standing in front of a wall today, perhaps it is inviting you to turn your head just enough to notice another path.
 - Dreams don't always look the way you planned. Sometimes they just teach you everything you need for the one that does.
 - The apprenticeship was hidden inside the disappointment.
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Drops of Hope

"If you are standing in front of a wall today, perhaps it is inviting you to turn your head just enough to notice another path."

"Nothing you learn with your whole heart is ever wasted. Not the failed business. Not the abandoned dream. Not the years that feel like detours."

Brewmaster Journal

What "failure" in your life taught you skills you're still using today? What dream in your spare room might have been an apprenticeship in disguise?

Try This Today

Name one thing that didn't work out the way you planned. List three skills or lessons it gave you that you still carry. See the apprenticeship.

A Letter Before You Leave

Dear Friend,

If something you built didn't work, it wasn't wasted. I promise you that.

The hours weren't wasted. The heart you put into it wasn't wasted. The skills you developed, the lessons you learned, the resilience you built by showing up for something that ultimately said no: none of it was wasted.

It was preparation. For something you can't see yet.

The spare room isn't a graveyard. It's a classroom.

Keep brewing.

— The Brewmaster

Estate Archive

Estate Story ID: ES-013

Title: Changing Direction

Collection: CHIA-TEA Season One

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Referenced By: E013 Estate Pack, Season One Story, Story Orchard

Connected Stories: ES-005 Without a Map (bump vs roadblock), ES-008 Harvesting Hope (ZENYA's shelf), ES-014 Why CHIA-TEA Had to Exist (where the pivot led)