

# EPISODE 2

[00:00:00] Welcome to episode two of *In 10 years time: How to live a creative life*. Thank you so much for being here. I'm Tricia Duffy. I am a songwriter, a media consultant, a singer, and a podcaster. And I'm here with an aim to inspire you to live a creative life. To find a balance of creativity that works for you and to encourage you to make that creative dream a reality.

With a combination of small daily steps and the [00:00:30] heady power of ten to help us, we will live a more satisfying life. If you'd like to engage with this conversation, please follow me @intenyearstimeofficial or @intenyearstimeon Twitter or TikTok. I respond to every direct message, and if there's a topic or a question you'd like me to research and discuss, I would love to hear about it.

I've spent the last two years trialling ways to live a more creative life, and I'm distilling all I have learned in [00:01:00] thousands of hours of research into this podcast series, so that you can embark on a similar journey. This episode is all about finding or amplifying your passion. Some of you will have had a burning ambition or creative goal all your lives.

You may have put it to one side, perhaps thinking it was unrealistic, foolish or impractical. Some of you may desire [00:01:30] a more creative lifestyle but aren't sure what your creative passion is. This is the episode to help you either figure it out if you don't know where to start, or to encourage you to dream big, dream huge, if you've pushed your passion down into a dark well.

Let's shake those creative fancies up and get them into the light, get them dancing. I guess before we start, we should agree what we mean by creative. The Oxford [00:02:00] English Dictionary states that creative acts are relating to or involving the use of imagination or original ideas to create something.

For me, I think that anything innovative, imaginative, or artistic is creative. If you're a dancer, a metal worker, a songwriter, a potter, an artist, a writer, a coder, a furniture maker, a filmmaker, photographer, cross stitcher, actor, or even a glassblower, I could go on. You are [00:02:30] all welcome here. To illustrate what I'm going to dive into, I'll share another chapter of my own story.

As a child, I sang. In the back of the car, in the bath, in my bedroom, I sang all the time. I loved drama and performing, and I loved writing poems. I have an exercise book of poems I wrote as a child, carefully copied out in my best handwriting. And I have journals that outline the plot [00:03:00] of entire musicals.

When I look back on it now, the thing I loved the most at school and out of school was related to music, writing or performing of some kind. Everything else was dull to me. I was not particularly academic. I found it difficult to feign interest in things that I had no passion for. But slowly during my teenage years, I adapted to the norms and expectations placed upon me.

I told myself [00:03:30] a very convincing story that I wasn't a creative person. I learned to see myself as more valuable helping others create than doing it myself. In my career, I often described myself as a bridesmaid type character, or more likely a best man, since the creative person in question that I was supporting was almost always a man.

Now this is a podcast for everyone, but it is worth [00:04:00] noting that there have been a significant number of studies which illustrate that Western society is biased when it comes to perceiving women as creative. I'd need a longer format to do all the research justice, but just some of the reasons that this viewpoint persists is that to be creative, you need great self-confidence.

You need to be trusted with time and resources. The pressures that typically fall on women to be everything to everyone, from running a home, succeeding at work, and rearing children, means that [00:04:30]

we're more likely to think of our creativity as selfish or something to feel guilty about. There's a myriad of societal pressures that layer up to make it difficult for women.

Research in the Journal of Applied Psychology in 2022 expands on this in great detail. I'll add a link to that research and a more palatable article from Forbes in the show notes if you'd like to read more. For now, whichever gender you identify with, there will be individual pressures that [00:05:00] have impacted your relationship with your creative self. And I am here for you. Here to tell you that you are a creative person and you always have been.

Now, back to finding or amplifying that passion. What does a singer who writes poems as a child want to be when they grow up? I don't suppose you need three guesses. The point is, it was always there. My [00:05:30] way with words, my love of song, my love of singing and of music. I just couldn't see it at the time. I didn't know there was such a thing as the job of songwriter, and frankly if I had, I would probably have put it to one side in a box labelled 'Silly Childish Dream'.

I've said I wasn't an academic child. I left school at 16, with a few local prizes for poetry and acting, a drama [00:06:00] O Level and zero prospects.

When I told my parents I wanted to be a singer or an actress, they were concerned. And they encouraged me to think of something less risky. I told them in that case I'd be a social worker. You can just imagine the look on my father's face.

But I had another dream emerging. The TV I was watching was from America. Shows like *Moonlighting*, *Dynasty* and *Dallas*. I thought if I could just get to America, all my [00:06:30] dreams would come true. So I made that my single goal in life and at 19, when I still had the dream inside me, without that niggling sense of self doubt that tends to grow over time, I left home to go and work on a cruise ship in the entertainment department.

I sang, called bingo, hosted quizzes, taught line dancing, and travelled all over the world and got paid to do it. It was a dream. After four years I decided it was time to put [00:07:00] down some roots and I came back to the UK and managed to wrangle a couple of freelance shifts as an edit assistant for a sports TV company. A few weeks later they offered me a job as a production assistant and I developed a career on the business side of television.

It has been a really interesting and varied career which has led me to be able to run my own consulting business for the last 11 years. Now interestingly, when I look back to 11 years ago when I left full-time employment to run my own business, I can see that the thing I [00:07:30] wanted more than anything was a work-life balance.

I wanted control over how I spent my days. I dressed it up as wanting to spend more time with my children. Back to this socially acceptable story again. And yes, I did want to see more of my kids growing up. That was definitely part of it. But there was more to it than that. The truth is I wanted to be an innovator, a creative.

In my business, and in all aspects of my life, I wanted a creative life. [00:08:00] Now, I've got the hang of running my own business. I make sure I maintain my passion for music and songwriting, even when the busyness we talked about in the last episode makes it very difficult. I now have about a 50:50 balance between my day job as a media consultant and my music career. I write songs for film and TV. I write and perform myself via my musical alter-ego, Little Lore, and I write with other artists for their own releases too.

The [00:08:30] music you hear at the start and end of this podcast is from my first solo EP, Little Lore, and it's a song called *Thief*. I'll include a link to it in the show notes so that you can listen to the whole thing if you're interested. I also embark on creative special projects, which I'll talk about more in a later episode.

I mentioned last week that I'm in the early stages of my journey to live a truly creative life. I haven't reached my 10-year goals. I made the decision about [00:09:00] 2-3 years ago to purposefully change the balance further between my day job and my songwriting. To use the analogy of the marathon, I've just about got to the stage of my 10km training runs. That's huge!

I feel something similar to the heady joy a marathon trainer feels when they run an entire hour for the first time, when I get approached to write with a band or an artist or write for a film. They are amazing things to happen. But I mustn't lose track of the [00:09:30] fact that these are just little visible signs or reminders that I'm doing it. The real joy is in the living and in the process. The everyday stuff. Creating this podcast. Writing songs. Designing projects to enable me to become an even better writer, honing my craft.

Now this is the rub, and we will all face this, so I want to talk about it. At 10 km, I'm not yet making money from my [00:10:00] creativity. I'm running this podcast as a personal project, as an act of generosity that I feel compelled to do, and I don't recover the costs of my music business yet. I have less capacity to work my day jobs, so I have to make lifestyle choices to reflect my earnings. That sometimes means turning down nights out, cooking at home, rather than dialling for a takeout. I've actually embraced an attitude of scarcity, which I'm enjoying way more than I expected. It's not for everyone, [00:10:30] and I must emphasise you need to find a balance that works for you.

There are days when it's really tough and I think I need to get a grip and get back to work, but the little bits of success I do get usually come just at the right moment, which gives me faith that I'm on the right path back to your creative self. I believe you know truly in your heart what your passion is already.

One thing I believe most [00:11:00] strongly to be true is that if any of us takes a brave step towards our passion, we'll be instantly happier. Yes, it will be hugely challenging, but we'll meet like minded people,

have some creative relief from our work, and so the change will be instantaneous. This is not a time to be shy, and it's not a time for excuses. There is no reason or impediment whatsoever that will stop you living a more [00:11:30] creative life, pursuing your dream.

The only way you won't live this life with all the richness of your passion in it, is if you choose not to. Simple as that. Finding a way to harness your creativity, to use it daily, will make you more fulfilled and happier. Try not to think about the outcome by socially preordained success measures. We talked about success last time, so do go back and listen if you missed that episode.

You may find new ways to hone your passion over the next 10 years. [00:12:00] You may find other creative ideas come to the surface and inspire you to try more new things. That's the thing about creativity. It's a virtuous cycle. The more creative the life you live, the more creative you get. And the more creative you get, the more creative your life, and so on.

I finish each of these podcasts with a question, a challenge and a recommendation and we're going to jump straight in with this week's question at this stage since it's so pertinent to what we're discussing. [00:12:30] As always, there's a time stamped transcript in the show notes on my website so you can come back to this if you're on the go right now.

What were your passions when you were a child? What was the type of playing you loved? What were those hobbies that you enjoyed and were proud of? Did you enjoy needlecraft, knitting, music, singing, acting, writing, science experiments, Lego, baking, painting, building [00:13:00] dens, play doh sculpture or pot making, dancing?

Robert Greene, author of the book *Mastery*, suggests that you possess a kind of inner force that seeks to guide you towards your life's tasks, what you're meant to accomplish in the time you have to live. He says that In childhood, this force was clear to you. It directed you towards

activities and subjects that fit your natural inclinations, that [00:13:30] sparked curiosity, that was deep and primal.

I'll put a link to his book, *Mastery*, in the show notes for those who'd like to read more. His theory makes sense to me. As I've already mentioned, the childhood poet and singer and actor becomes a songwriter and a podcaster. Writing songs and creating this podcast fulfils me in ways it's hard to articulate.

Even saying this out loud is filling me with a combination of awe and satisfaction. It's [00:14:00] addictive. Whatever it was you loved as a child, spend some time thinking about how it made you feel, what people said about your efforts. If you have any of the things you created as a child around, I would encourage you to look them out or any photographs of your efforts. Revisit that child and see what they have to tell you about the dreams they had. Those dreams weren't foolish. That kid was really onto something.

[00:14:30] I've created a free *Finding Your Passion* worksheet to help you. If you find a prompt useful. A link to the worksheet is in the show notes and it includes instructions on how to use it. It's useful for anyone seeking their passion and anyone looking to take a step up with their current creative pursuit.

If you use it, please let me know how you find it and feel free to share it with anyone who would find it helpful.

[00:15:00] For the challenge this week, I'd like to encourage you to dream really big. To just put reality and limitations and age and money and what anyone thinks to one side It is time to allow the power of 10 to really work for you We're tapping into our inner child here. So I'd like you to imagine that I'm your fairy godmother. I'm here with a sole purpose to make your wildest dreams come true. [00:15:30] Write down in your journal what your 10 years time life looks like. And if you don't feel able to be specific, write down how you feel about your creative

balance. Jot down some of the ingredients of your life. How much time are you spending with your art creating?

Imagine yourself waking up on a day in 10 years and look at how that day is going to unfold. How much time are you spending on the things that make you happy? Is there a [00:16:00] painting you created on the wall in your home? Have you released a record? Did you win the Bake Off, the Sewing Bee or the Pottery Throwdown? Did you make your daughter's wedding dress? Have you embarked on and completed a class, a degree? Competed in a dance competition? Run a pop up store selling your jewellery? Built a kiln in your garden? The bigger, the wilder, the sillier, the [00:16:30] better.

You don't need to share it with anyone, it's just for you. If you feel really uncomfortable with this, and by the way, that discomfort is a very good sign, then I encourage you to think about ratios. I've told you that I'm at 50:50, and moving to 80:20 over the next 10 years. Where would you like to get to?

Perhaps what's right for you is to aim to introduce a hobby that is a long-term part of your life. That might look [00:17:00] like 2080. Perhaps like me you feel more satisfied by half or more of your time spent in creative pursuits. We will work more on the 10 year plan next episode. This is just time to get some ideas down.

No limitations allowed. Shall we have a little chat about age? What does age got to do with it? I was guilty of this crime against creativity. I told myself it was [00:17:30] too late. A very wise woman, Sophie Daniels, professor in songwriting at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, folded her arms and said, "I fail to see what on earth your age has got to do with it, but I'm open minded. You're clearly very bright, so I look forward to hearing your reason." She made me realise that our perspectives are valid. They are interesting to others. Yes, you may have more responsibilities, but you also have the luxury of wisdom. [00:18:00] You value life and its gifts. please do not allow your age to stop you. There's an ancient Chinese proverb that says, 'the best day to



plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best day is today.' Get that seed in the ground.

Thank you so much for joining me. Let me reiterate the question for this week. What did your child self love doing more than anything?

[00:18:30] Feel free to use the *Finding Your Passion* worksheet available on my website. My challenge to you is to imagine a day in your life in 10 years time. This is a chance to dream big and it will form the foundations for your 10 year plan which we'll cover next time. And finally I have a few recommendations for you this time. Elizabeth Gilbert has written a fantastic book on creativity. She is an author but [00:19:00] painters, dancers, metal workers, please don't let that put you off. It's a fun and really inspiring read called *Big Magic*. She also bravely deals with the issue of money too, if that's an area of contemplation for you.

The second recommendation is for any aspiring piano players out there. Those who've never played or want to return after a break. Check out James Rhodes' *How to Play the Piano*. It got me back to playing the piano in a really fun, [00:19:30] accessible way. James is also a really great example of someone who changed their entire life in 10 years.

Finally, if you're interested in learning something new or developing a skill in the privacy of your own home, have a look on Udemy. There are thousands of short online courses in anything from songwriting to painting, poetry, guitar playing, pottery, sheet metal design, jewellery making, coding, you name it.

Courses [00:20:00] start around £12.99 and I started my songwriting journey by doing one of these courses. I highly recommend. If you've enjoyed this episode, please find me on Instagram at @intenyearstimeofficial. I respond to every direct message. Full transcript and details of recommendations and research are in the show notes and there are free resources for anyone wishing to live a creative life on my website [intenyearstime.com](http://intenyearstime.com).

In the [00:20:30] next episode, we'll be looking ahead at how to create your 10 year plan. Peace and love until next time.