

# Recap Series: Episode 3

[00:00:00] Hello, and welcome. I'm your host, Tricia Duffy, and this is the third episode of a special miniseries of the podcast that I'm calling *In Ten Minutes Time*, diving into the back catalogue and giving you some bite-size ideas on how to live a creative life. My philosophy is all about how to find a balance of creativity that works for you. But what if 10 years feels too far away? I'm revisiting ideas we've explored in the show and combining them with new research and a new idea of how you can be creative right now.

So what if you're just not feeling it in whatever creative practice you've chosen? Today, we're going to revisit [00:01:00] how to overcome creative blocks and imposter syndrome, things that might prevent you from being as fully creative as you'd like.

In this first episode, I run through five different types of imposter syndrome I've identified and encourage you to work out what is impacting you at any given moment in your creative practice. Sometimes knowing what we're dealing with can be just the thing to break us free.

## **RECAP START**

One form imposter syndrome can take is perfectionism. Ah, our old friend. We touched on this topic during the last series and I think it is particularly damaging for creatives because to be creative requires risk taking and it requires failure too. This experience conflicts with any perfectionist tendencies we might have, and sometimes when these two opposing parts of ourselves clash, it can feel agonising. [00:02:00]

And in creativity, your mistakes and imperfections can be the very things that lead you to the greatest breakthroughs. Do you suffer from perfectionist tendencies? What we're talking about here is accepting yourself for who you are. You're not perfect. I'm not perfect. No one is perfect. And we would be far less interesting and creative if we were.

Bringing it back to imposter syndrome, there is something more fundamental at play here. The idea that we should be naturally gifted at something without any practice, experimentation or learning. As you probably know by now if you've listened to previous episodes, I am a songwriter. I feel naturally inclined towards songwriting as a creative practice, but I'm 100 percent clear I was not born with an innate talent for writing songs.

I'm not a natural talent. I'm a hard-working songwriter who's made it my business to understand what makes songs work, how I can use or reject the tools available to [00:03:00] me in my artistic choices. Am I an imposter because I had to work hard at it? No, I'm not, and neither are you. This is one of the key values of the *In Ten Years Time* philosophy. Learn your craft, enjoy every step of the way, and you will live a creative life immediately. And in ten years, if you choose, you can achieve mastery.

Describing my sometimes obsessive drive leads me neatly to the next type of imposter. The overachiever or the superhuman. Oh my, this is a big one, especially for women. I grew up with a mum who is a superwoman. She worked full time at the hardware store we lived above. She looked after us kids. She volunteered with local charities. She cooked amazing food, proper domestic goddess. [00:04:00] If she hosted a dinner, she had a phrase. If someone complimented her on how effortless things seemed to be, she'd say: "it takes a lot of effort to have everything appear like magic."

My mum is amazing and she's hard to live up to. I wonder how much pressure she feels to be all things to all people. I work hard at my songwriting and at this podcast, and I don't intend to stop. But what I've realised is that I don't have to be the hardest working person at everything. I don't have to be superhuman.

There is potential societal judgment here. There are so many layers to deal with. Not only our own personal narrative and behaviours, but those imposed upon us. And this is where our ten year plan comes in.

Because by completing mine, I've been able to explore what is important to me. To work out where I display overachiever tendencies. The most important thing is awareness and the fact that I know I have control over these choices, and so do you. [00:05:00]

It's time to get into the fourth type of imposter syndrome. The extreme independent. The solo creative. Do you feel like an imposter if you need help? Does it feel like a sign of weakness? Songwriting for me is both a solo and a collaborative form of creativity, and co-writing is one of the most joyful activities I do. A lot of creative pursuits require time in solitude, and for many of us that can be a great perk of living a creative life.

I know for myself that almost everyone I know thinks I'm a fully paid up extrovert, but actually I'm an introvert that hides it well. Spending time at my desk researching this podcast and writing songs on my own feeds my energy levels, which allows me to pull out the jazz hands when required.

If you combine your creativity with others or you allow yourself to learn from someone else, you will create something that's greater than the sum of your parts [00:06:00] and you are no less brilliant and creative as a result.

Furthermore, you might find that you're able to help someone else along the way. Be proud to work with others and don't forget to give your creative collaborators credit. There's a final type of imposter syndrome that really applies to me right now, in this moment. The accidental expert.

Even as I'm speaking these words, my inner critic is sitting on my shoulder whispering in my ear. Who are you to be giving advice about imposter syndrome to your listeners? You're not a psychologist who spent years studying imposter syndrome. You have no right to even be having this conversation.

It's pretty destructive, right? I mentioned in a previous episode that I've named my inner critic Sebastian. I even wrote a song about him. Naming him has really helped me. When these thoughts come into my head and give me the feeling of being an imposter, I can diagnose it with this language [00:07:00] 'That's just Sebastian talking.'

I'm in danger of not being able to finish this episode if I don't quieten Sebastian down. I recommended the amazing creativity book, *Big Magic*, by Elizabeth Gilbert in the last series. Let me quote her now. She describes saying to her inner critic: "There's plenty of room in this vehicle for all of us. So make yourself at home, but understand this creativity and I are the only ones who will be making any decisions along the way."

## **RECAP END**

For some more helpful hints on how to unblock, let's revisit episode five from the same series to hear some tips. I've also left a link to the accompanying worksheet in the show notes.

## **RECAP START**

Number one, change your routine. [00:08:00] If you usually create late at night, try waking up earlier in the morning. If you do your creative work in your lunch break after you eat, try creating first and eating after.

Just the smallest change to your usual habits can make a significant difference. Number two, set a fake deadline. This is one of my go-to blocker hacks. I think I've mentioned before that I will tell myself I'm just going to write a bad verse by noon. No pressure. I have all morning, plenty of time and no expectation of the results.

By removing the pressure to make something 'good', and I'm doing the inverted commas with my fingers as I say good, it helps us to get back to process over outcome.

Create a real deadline. Alongside the fake deadline, sometimes a real deadline can help. And accountability is really important here. Especially if you work for or by yourself. That could take the form of a promise to a friend. Or perhaps it's time to enrol on a course or commit to an exhibition or a performance of some kind.

Number four, collaborate. [00:09:00] Explore a project or a part of your project that involves another person. By bringing someone else in on the journey with you, you create accountability to another artist who will depend on you. Now you have someone else invested in the project and its potential success, as well as the benefit of their creative ideas.

Number five, get a change of scene. This could take the form of an artist's date as recommended by Julia Cameron in *The Artist's Way*. Getting out of your usual location can work wonders for unpicking your blocks. Even moving rooms in your house or going to a different coffee shop, taking your notebook to a park or simply walking around the block can be just enough to get you back on track.

Number six. Get some exercise. Now, as you know, I'm a runner and I can't tell you the number of times I've had to stop on my runs to crash an idea into my voice notes. Any repetitive exercise will allow your mind to enter a meditative state that can release ideas and create motivation.

Not that I want to encourage the procrastination [00:10:00] we mentioned earlier, but I have found that even hanging the washing out with energy can be enough to get the blood pumping and the creative juices flowing again.

Number seven. Take a shower or bath. Again, just like running, I find the running water over my face is a surefire way to get me inspired.

I do that dripping all over the bedroom thing to get ideas down into my phone. Showering is particularly good for melodies. I'm not sure

how that translates for a painter. It could be messy. If you're into cold water techniques, you could try that too.

Number eight, find a creative input. Watch a film, watch a documentary, read a poem, do some research, look at a painting, go into nature, go to a museum. Anything that will give you a stimulus that could inspire you. You might choose to go and explore something that aligns with your own creativity or something completely different.

Number nine. Talk to the mirror. Have you ever heard of this technique of giving yourself a [00:11:00] high five in the mirror in the morning? It's a technique created by Mel Robbins. It basically involves positive self talk every morning to the mirror and, yes, you guessed it, giving yourself a high five. The rule is, no negativity. Go to the mirror and tell yourself, you got this. And how great you're going to feel when you've created. It genuinely works. So simple.

Number 10. Read a tarot card. Whether you believe in the powers of the tarot deck or not, I find having a set of tarot cards on my desk helpful just to get me out of my head sometimes and offer me a new way of thinking. It might sound a bit woo woo to you, so if you don't like the idea of tarot, which I completely understand, there are other cards you could use. There's a useful app called 'the Whack Pack', which I also sometimes use. It offers new ways into a problem. You can simply ask it to 'give you a whack' and it offers inspiration or a story.

## **RECAP END**

[00:12:00] In that original episode, I drew a tarot card, and I'm going to change it up this time and choose an oracle card from a set that I was gifted recently. Okay, I'm shuffling and splitting the deck, and I have pulled up a card that says the Rose of Venus: alignment, flow, right relationship, harmony. And so this comes with a little book, so I need to now just look in the book to find the Rose of Venus.

Okay, so this is really interesting. It talks about the Fibonacci series, the golden ratio, the number sequence in which each number is the sum of the two preceding ones. This particular card offers an invitation to look at anything that doesn't feel as though it's in alignment. To trust in the tapestry of your life and your ever-changing nature that can be dedicated to living a life that's deeply aligned. Well, that's excellent, isn't it, I think that's a really good thing to keep in mind, and it really [00:13:00] aligns, ironically, with the *In Ten Years Time* philosophy. I'm going to offer you now the challenge, the question, and the recommendation. The challenge is this: to think about that list of things I suggested in the clip and choose just one to do for ten minutes. Will you choose something drastic, like finding a new partner to collaborate with, or something small, like taking a bath, or something even more dramatic, like finding a new partner to take a bath with?

The question is this: If I told you that any imposter syndrome you feel right now will soon be normalised and a new form of imposter will swoop in to replace it, what does that do to your relationship with the inner critic?

And the recommendation is this: check out Brian Eno's *Oblique Strategies*, a method for promoting creativity. You can do this by purchasing a deck of cards or go to the website [obliquestrategies.ca](http://obliquestrategies.ca). When you go to this website, you get an affirming [00:14:00] statement or question which should trigger some reflection.

There's a refresh button on the bottom to get a new card. Today I got, "Go outside and shut the door." And when I refreshed, I was presented with the message, "Your mistake was a hidden intention." And that's so true in creativity almost all of the time.

I have a new recap episode coming next week which takes us back to one of my favourite episodes of all, *Reframing Rejection*. Until then, find me on Instagram or Facebook @intentyearstimeofficial to keep chatting, or book a workshop, or email me via the website

intenyearstime.com. If you've enjoyed this episode and you know someone who needs this, please send them a link.

I'm sure they will appreciate it as much as I will. Peace and love.