

EPISODE 3

[00:00:00]

Welcome to Episode 3 of *In 10 Years Time How to Live a Creative Life*. Thank you so much for being here. I'm Tricia Duffy. I'm 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 heady [00:00:30] power of 10 to help us, we will live a more satisfying life. If you'd like to engage with this conversation, please follow me @intenyearstimeofficial on Instagram or @intenyearstime on Twitter or TikTok. I respond to every direct message, and if there's a topic or question you would like me to research and discuss, I would love to hear about it.

I have spent the last two years trialling ways to live a more creative life and I'm distilling all I've [00:01:00] learnt in thousands of hours of research into this podcast series so that you can embark on a similar journey.

Today I want to do a deeper dive into the idea of a 10 year plan that I mentioned in the previous two episodes. If you haven't already listened to those, I'd recommend going back and listening to them first. Henry Kissinger said, "If you don't know where you're going, every road will get you nowhere." This is something I believe to be entirely true.

So I would like to guide [00:01:30] you through the way that I create my 10 year plans and talk about how to use them going forward. Let me start with a story, the moment that I became sure that there was something magic about the Power of Ten. It was 2022, and I was at a wedding of a dear friend. The night before the big day, I had dinner with my husband and a family of other long term friends in a hotel.

Someone dropped into the conversation that it was pretty much ten years almost to the day since [00:02:00] the first wedding of the bride to be. Ten years ago, she'd walked down the aisle in a different relationship, which had subsequently ended. She'd gone on to meet someone else, and created a new and wonderful blended family.

So much had changed. Now we all know that we're living a lot longer. So please forgive me for this lazy maths, but let's just say that a pretty decent proportion of us might live to near on 100 years [00:02:30] old. That's 10 lots of 10 years.

In 10 years, you can change your relationship entirely. You can change your career. You can change your entire life. It's true that some factors might be out of your control, but some are completely within our grasp.

That night, before the wedding, we had a great conversation. I wondered, where did we all see [00:03:00] ourselves in 10 years' time? The kids found it super easy to answer. The 11 year old told a great story about how he would be graduating from university and embracing adult life, with much excitement.

But those of us over the age of 40 found it more challenging. We were able to articulate more easily the things that we would be removing from our lives. 'I won't be working so hard, the kids will have left school but might still be living at home, [00:03:30] the mortgage will be five years off from being paid, the cat will probably have died.' You get the idea.

Very few of us were able, or willing, to share the things that we wanted to add to our lives. In the context of working less, what would we be doing with that time? Lying around on the sofa watching Netflix? Who knows if Netflix will even exist then!

Now a small number of people tell me they don't want to think about 10 years [00:04:00] because they're happy with their life right now and they want to live in the moment. I want to be clear that I'm not

proposing you stop enjoying the everyday. I'm a firm believer in a daily practice of awe. However, just like Henry Kissinger, I am proposing that if you have a clear direction of travel, you will get even more satisfaction from the now because you will know, each time you make a decision, do an activity, take a small step, it's [00:04:30] helping you on a journey to the life you want.

After all, this is your life. Only you have the power to choose which direction it goes in. And the great news is that when you create your 10 year plan, you can always change your mind. This isn't a legally binding contract: it's an idea, a dream, an aspiration. I would recommend that you take the time to revisit your 10 year plan every year and update it.

It's a [00:05:00] cycle of planning that evolves with you as you expand your horizons through the small choices you make every day. If I told you that in 10 years' time your life will be exactly the same as it is today, how does that make you feel? If it fills you with joy, then that's an excellent foundation for your 10 year plan.

To stay the same, you still need to take action. For a more physical example, the scientific community tells us that anyone over the age of [00:05:30] 30 is losing between 3 and 8 percent of our muscle density every decade. And that percentage goes way up after 60.

So, if you'd like to stay exactly the same physically, you're probably going to need to start working out. Okay, that's a bit flippant, but you get the idea. If you want things to be different, then you need to take even more action. If you don't have a long-term plan, a goal, a vision, whatever you want to call it, there is a risk that you are operating in inertia [00:06:00] or that inertia will creep up on you. You're treading water.

With even the vaguest of goals, you can chart a course. You are empowered in your decisions. Without it, you're sailing across an ocean without knowing where you are heading and without realising it, you

may well be repeatedly charting the same stretch of water. With me? Okay, so how do we do it?

A 10 year plan can sound [00:06:30] intimidating. But at its heart, this process is just about making a sort of agreement with future you. Sometimes making space for the things you enjoy can be hard in the moment. Making this agreement with yourself will help you prioritise the things that inspire you. We talked in the first episode about time and how easy it is to lapse into scrolling Instagram for an hour instead of making a purposeful decision to do something creative.

By articulating [00:07:00] what your future might look like, you're able to visualise the reasons you make those small decisions each day. When you're wavering about picking up the pen, paintbrush, dancing shoes, or stepping towards the piano, when it's hard, tell yourself that future you will really appreciate it.

And you know they will because you've already articulated what that future you, that 10 years' time you, is looking for. You don't need a fancy template for creating your 10 year plan or [00:07:30] a special journal. Although if you have one and you like a format, please do use them. I have also created a free 10 year plan template which you might find helpful. It's on my website for you to print off.

If you don't have a printer, a plain piece of A4 paper is all you need. Draw two lines on the paper to create four quadrants. At the top of each quadrant, write the following headings. Creativity and Learning Career and [00:08:00] Finance Relationships and home, health and fitness.

There is no right way to write these things down. You can use bullet points, mind maps, free write or bubbles. Whatever suits your mood. Coloured pencils, pens and ordinary Bic biro. Whatever you have to hand. No special You're never going to share this with anyone unless you choose to. So just get it all down.

If you'd like to hit pause after each [00:08:30] category, that could be a really effective way to get your thoughts down. If you're on the go right now and want to do this later, you can use time stamped transcript in the show notes to scroll to each section and listen, then write. Whatever works for you. This is a podcast about you. But I think it's important to stress that all the areas of your life are relevant in this 10 year plan and they feed into one another.

Before you begin, you might find it useful to write in each box the words, [00:09:00] 'In 10 years' time I will have...', and underneath that, 'In 10 years' time I will be...' I want to stress that writing it down is a critical part of this process. Thinking about this is important, but if you don't record your thoughts and commit them to paper, you will lose the ability to revisit your goals down the line, to expand your thinking and see how far you've come.

Let's start with creativity and learning. After all, as the self-appointed fairy godmother of creativity, that's what I'm all [00:09:30] about. This box is all about personal development and your creative-life balance. It might include education, learning or relearning a language, for example, or another academic pursuit.

In adulthood, more traditional academic learning is almost always a creative act. If you find it fascinating, you will find it brings you joy and connections with people who are on your wavelength.

Your creative goals go here too. Do you want to [00:10:00] take up something new? Or do you want to master something? Perhaps learn the piano, take dance lessons? Write down 'dancing weekly as part of life', for example. Or, do you, like me, want to change your life and become an established songwriter? Whatever it is, whatever your dream, write it down as specifically as possible.

If you search the internet for how to do a long term plan, it will talk about SMART goals. These are Specific, Measurable, [00:10:30] Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.

Let me just put a grenade through that for a moment. I think your dreams here should definitely be relevant and since we have our nice 10 year bounding we have a time frame. The more specific the better and if you have a measure that comes to mind then by all means be my guest.

But for the sake of this exercise, I balk at the word 'achievable'. This is about going nuts with the possibilities, not limiting ourselves with the inevitable caution that will [00:11:00] come with thinking about what's achievable.

The art of the possible is only created by thinking up the impossible. I love the Lewis Carroll quote from Alice in Wonderland. "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast. I dare you to believe seven." I recommend putting yourself in your imagination in 10 years' time and thinking about what you will have achieved in the last 10 years.

Use that first [00:11:30] sentence. 'In 10 years' time, I will have...' in my case, I might write 'in 10 years' time, I will have finished my master's in songwriting and completed a PhD.' It's probably worth me sharing with you now that I'm about three months from completing my Master's and I'm sure I want to do a PhD, but I don't yet know exactly what the research question will be. I don't need to be that specific, I can dream that in ten years' time I'll be Dr. Duffy! That's exciting for me because my late arrival in [00:12:00] academia is incredibly gratifying and fascinating.

Then use the second sentence, 'In 10 years' time I will be...' to articulate what you'll be doing then. For me I'll say, 'in 10 years' time I will be living a fully creative life as a songwriter, author and podcaster.' When it comes to your career and financial considerations, I want to encourage you to really lean into what is desirable for you, but also what is [00:12:30] enough. How much do you need to feel secure?

What does financial stability mean to you? What do you need to live safely and comfortably, to have a sense of home however that looks for you? Think about how much time you spend working and what you feel comfortable with financially. Please do this without any judgement whatsoever on yourself. It's a scale.

You may be someone who needs financial security or [00:13:00] perhaps you have a far greater appetite for risk. In both cases you're welcome here. And there is a creative balance that's entirely right for you. Please try to detach yourself from any competitive thinking when you do this. Societal seductions will be piling in here to undermine you. This is a private plan. You don't need to share it. For me, in 10 years' time, I will have transformed my career so that I am working as a songwriter, a podcaster and an author. [00:13:30] I'll be living to my means from my creativity, even if that means earning less.

Relationships and home. Some of you will be really clear what your outcomes here are. Perhaps you are looking for love. Perhaps you want to cherish your parents in old age. Perhaps you want to expand your friendship groups or maintain a great relationship with your kids. Your family, friends and community will be part of this creative journey so think about what you want to be surrounded by on the road. [00:14:00] This is a good moment to think about where and how you want to live physically. For me, in 10 years' time, I will have cherished the years with my parents as they get older. I will have maintained a relationship with my then adult children. I will have a dedicated music and podcast recording space and a place for musicians and creatives to stay with me comfortably. Yes, kids, I'm talking about using your bedroom!

I share my thoughts purely as an [00:14:30] example. Your ideas and dreams will be entirely different to mine.

In your health and fitness box, include all the things that you would like to be different or the same in 10 years. You might be a brilliant beacon of health, in which case, maintaining your current status might be what you need to write here. You may be able to predict a more significant

health change, such as the menopause. Write down how you'd like to manage a change like that.

You may have more fundamental health issues to deal with. Write down what [00:15:00] the ideal you looks like. You might also want to include new sports you've always wanted to try. Perhaps you want to take up padel or try rowing, start running or yoga. Sport and fitness have some similar properties to this creative debate. Making time to invest in them will serve future you very well.

I'm going to finish with the challenge, the question and the recommendation as always. But your challenge is, of course, to create your 10 year plan. [00:15:30] If you follow the steps I set out above, this should help make the task feel much more achievable.

And the questions are fourfold this week. You must ask yourself the question, what do you want for your creativity, your health, your career and your relationships in 10 years' time? Plenty to chew on. Finally, the recommendation. And to help you with this long term thinking, I'd love you to listen to another podcast created by the Long Time Academy.

Particularly episode one [00:16:00] entitled *Human Layers* and the meditation practice that accompanies it. In this episode, they talk about how other cultures and communities have used what they call 'long time thinking' to great effect, and the meditation takes you on a time travel journey that completely blew my mind.

If you intend to go back and do your 10 year plan later, I would recommend that you listen to this first. The link is in the show notes, as always.

Thank you so much [00:16:30] for being here. Next week, we're going to talk about process versus outcome and get into why enjoying the creative activity is far more important than the finished product. I can't wait to have that conversation with you. Until then, peace and love.