

Transcript

Wynne Leon

Welcome to the sharing the heart of the Matter podcast, where we honor the Storyteller and us all. I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are with author, graphic designer and Blogger Dave Williams. I love reading something that gets my creative juices going. But even better in this community of podcasting and blogging is catching a ride on everyone else's enthusiasm. In this episode, Dave Williams tells us about the inspiration he gleaned from reading Alicia Day's book Embrace Your Weird. Felicia's book is more than a read. It's an experience of exercises to break us out of our creative ruts. Dave shares his take on what inhibits our natural flow and some of the things that inspire him. This is a great episode with the incredibly talented and creative Dave Williams we get to draft off of his inspiration. Felicia Day's book and the flow of creative spark. I'm certain you'll enjoy the scenic and inspirational places we go when we share the power of story. We know you'll love it.

Vicki Atkinson

Hey there, Dave.

Dave Williams

Hi there, Wynne.

Vicki Atkinson

Hey.

Dave Williams

Great to see you guys.

Wynne Leon

So good to see you too.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, we're we're so happy when we get to see you returning guest, come back and win. And I love the topic at hand today because we noodle on creativity and. How to inspire people? And recently you shared you. You wrote a beautiful blog post about a book that provided some inspiration and it has a a fabulous title. This was written by Felicia Day called Embrace Your Weird Face Your Fears, and unleash creativity. I mean, I'm in, right? Yeah. Yes. Yeah. But it. And you wrote a beautiful piece about it.

Dave Williams

Subtitle. Yeah, watching, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

And we'd love for you to kind of introduce, you know, our listeners and viewers to the book, if you don't mind, because there are lots of things out there, you know, to try and help people get over the hump if they're in a slump. And you know how to really stoke the flames a little bit and you with, you know, for our our listeners. Viewers, you know, you wouldn't say this about yourself, but you're a brilliant author and illustrator, graphic designer. Your storyteller at heart, and you're one of those people that win and I, you know, enjoy so much because you see life as a story. Stories are everywhere. So we're just so curious for you to share more about. You know why this book is an impactful read for you? Tell us.

Dave Williams

Sure, sure. And thank you guys for. Having me back, it's very. Happy to be. Here I had a great time last. Time and I'm excited. To be back.

Vicki Atkinson

Yay. Yes, yes, yes.

Dave Williams

So look, I guess as an overall thing that it's a self help book with that helps you get into a good headspace to be created. It's not specifically about one outlet of creativity about creating sculptures or drawing, painting, writing poetry or fiction, or making music. You know, it's it's a general thing about getting into a headspace or more into a headspace. You know, if that's your, your, your thrust about wanting to do that. And so it's it's how do you do it and a big idea of this book is kind of. Rolls back the clock to when we were kids, and it's that here to talk about good headspace creating stuff just comes naturally. You know when you're kids that you pick up crayons and you go to town on a piece of paper, you pick up yarn and beads and whatever else you can find and you make a. Sculpture, whatever it can be, and you just you're having fun doing it. It's a joyful thing. And so you you think of that as, you know, that's a kind of goal headspace and what happens to that. You know, we we grow up, we don't create as much or if we do we create stuff in school. You know, for projects and what happens with that, we're graded on it. We're graded and that can cause the start of anxiety of worrying.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Dave Williams

About am I gonna get you know, AB whatever on this and so creating stuff and become mature, you know, rather than the the fun. Just just do it and have fun and just be silly. Anything goes to, OK. My project has these guidelines and I have to meet those. And at the end I'll be graded. So that introduced a bit of static in the heads. And another thing you know kind of you that's one branch

and another branch is that of course as we grow up we learn about the world. And part of that is. Great. You know, it's great for our safety that. When we're taking a walk. We need to stop an intersection. We need to wait for the stop light. To turn red.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes.

Dave Williams

Traffic is supposed to stop, then it's safe for us to walk across the street. We check for traffic, too. If there's no stop light, so we those things we learn are fantastic for us. But we also learn some stuff that is probably not as fantastic that the world is set up and this may. Be more of a. Cultural a rather than you know, a this is for your safety thing like stop lights. But a cultural thing of the world is set up.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Dave Williams

The culture is set up in certain ways, and I'll use an example that I have twin daughters and we've had this conversation a few times that. You go into a clothing store, you look at the boys section. And then you look at the grills section. And you can see differences and you look at say, let's say the T-shirts like jeans, jeans can be dark blue or whatever. But you look at the T-shirts, the blue shirts, they could tend to be bold colors like you got your your dark blue, you got your red, they could have. Dinosaurs on them. A cool lizard on a skateboard, you know? They got some rad. Epic stuff, right? And then you look over again at the girls section of T-shirts. Well, how are they different? They could have softer colors. They've got butterflies on them. Unicorns. Maybe sparkles is that different setup for you and there was that question of, well, what if you're a girl and you want to wear a T-shirt with a dinosaur? On it. Why do you skateboard if you're a boy and you want to have a T-shirt with butterflies and sparkles and whatever else that maybe?

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

You won't find it at that particular clothing. Store. Maybe you could go on. Etsy or some other place? You know? I'm sure there's out there of like you. There's, you know, in general. Of print on demand.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

Right, you can. You can go there. But. I guess it's that my point is that when we're out in the worlds, we learn those things that the world is set up in a in a certain way. Yeah. And to go against that is that raises the possibility of being seen as weird. If you are a girl wearing a.

Speaker

That.

Dave Williams

Dark blue shirt with a dinosaur on it. People might like say ohh. You know, some people might think you're weird and that kind of raises that that. That. Idea that weird can have a negative connotation that it could be used as a put down. Umm hey, there we are. They're an oddball. They're not doing what you know. Hey, I'm for the listeners. I'm reading, raising my fingers and air quotes. You're not doing what you're supposed to do.

Wynne Leon

MHM.

Dave Williams

Yeah, but yeah. The book here says, you know this Felicia Day's book. Embrace your weird is to say weird doesn't have to be a put down. You know weird can have you're you're limiting the word by only having as a put down that weird can be wonderful that you don't have to go along with trends you can be weird. You can have quirks.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

What? What is the witness of wind or the Vicky Ness of Vicky? Like it's you have the quirks that make you you. Compared to everybody else around you and it's the book really is that. Hey, it teaches you weird is is fine. It's it's worthy of celebration. And throughout the book there are exercises to kind of, you know, to make you think about this. And it asks you to think about when you were a kid. What were you into that maybe you grew out of quote UN quote.

Speaker

Yes.

Dave Williams

Maybe you were into Dragons and Pegasus. I guess Pegasus is stories that hurts papers or whatever else that yeah, you were into that stuff and.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Dave Williams

You grew out of it because you thought ohh it's that's silly. I don't want to do that stuff. Anymore but you. Don't have to, of course. Do that, that you can have passions or obsessions now that fuel your excitements that hey, it's it's whatever that gets your your blood going quicker.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

It's you can be really into and it's the. The setup is that headspace of you don't have to do everything like you do as a kid. But if that goal is a headspace of how cool it was to create when you were a kid. I'll finish that by my long, long answer with the I guess the kind of stereotype, you know, the scenario of the location is an Art Museum. It's an exhibit of this abstract modern art. Right. And the guys walking through it. And he's scratching his head. And he's like, this stuff is so weird and basic. My kid could make this stuff. But. Isn't it cool that? Yeah, your kid could. And the artist could, did you know? And. And so I guess you think you turn that around and think maybe an artist is somebody who remembers the excitement of creating when they were a kid. And they learned the limitations like everybody else. But they got to the point where they could lessen those limitations in their minds. But those are the side ends free up that space.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Dave Williams

To I can create this wild abstract stuff and some people will say oh, it's weird. My kid can make this stuff, but other people will say holy smokes, that's.

Speaker

M.

Dave Williams

Incredible. I'm going to stand in front of this and it's going to make me think of. This merry you know, this wild world of by this painting. Yeah. So that's kind of a rambling answer, but.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

No, it's great. What I love about that is it, it goes back to our previous podcast that we did with you when you talked about seeing your daughters creating and well. Inspired in you. You know, you were like, well, they can sit and draw. So I'm gonna sit and draw. I mean, it's it's amazing how you know.

Vicki Atkinson

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon

To answers in a month apart and but it's the same thing of getting into that headspace.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and I think that the creativity and conformity that you just talked about, you know, Dave, I think Felicia Day does such a great job of this. And as I was reading, I immediately seized up.

Dave Williams

That's.

Vicki Atkinson

Because she asks the readers. And I'm not you, she says. Get your pen, get your crayon, get whatever. And here's a blank page and I'm gonna give you an activity or something to help you unleash. But I want you to draw and I immediately went. No, no, no, no, no can do. I'll go get another piece of paper. But I'm not gonna mark up this book with something that's gonna be like, not worthy. And so I think you know what I love about you bringing this book to us. Is that what you said at the beginning? It applies to all the creatives. And all that judging we do, where we put ourselves down before we've even gotten started. That that, you know, it just it's that thing that we do. And so this boosting creativity and helping people to be confident you see that as a byproduct or an outcome of of reading this book.

Dave Williams

Yeah, I think so. And it's it's a, you know, and when I'm I'm it's awesome that you you mentioned about the previous podcast that I was on and talked about that because you're so right. You know I had that for years where I was you know. I grew up loving books. I grew up in working in a bookstore, my grandparents bookstore, and especially science fiction stuff, loved it. And then as I grew older, it's that that. Term of like science fiction geekery that I didn't want to be seen as that, and so I pushed that down of I want to, you know, hide it in my in my trying to be cool and not a geek. And seeing my daughters creates. That was the the Click to. Say. I want to do that. Again. Looks so fun and that that helped me as far as you know it was before I read this book and it was might as well embrace my weird. And that's through. I I finger painted I drew and I embraced that I went back to enjoying that science fiction and.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Dave Williams

Being OK with that and saying, hey, I'm a geek, you know? I that's part. Of who I am.

Wynne Leon

Well, there's yeah, there's so much in parenting where we get to be reminded of. Of how we formed and you know, we get to pick up on those clues. I love that you did that.

Dave Williams

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

But yeah, David, one of the things that really struck me is that Felicia Day, you know, she's got a, a background as an actor, you know, performer, you know, she's creative in so many ways, but she also touched on kind of some mental health things. On page 104, she writes about anxiety. And how important it is to have agency and power, you know, in our lives and how you know, when I read that I thought, Oh my gosh, that is something that's such a barrier for people and the ways that you've already described that we judge ourselves, we put ourselves down and, you know, as parents, that's the last thing that you wanna do. But I do think creativity helps to boost confidence but tell us more about that, you know, from your perspective, how does it empower, you know, being creative getting past? That fearfulness of I'm not worthy. I dare not, you know, do this because I'm not an artist. I'm not a writer. I'm not. Fill in the blank.

Dave Williams

Right, right. And just to backtrack just a little bit, you mentioned about Felicia Day and and to give it just a little background that yes, she has written this book and she wrote a book before that you're never weird on the Internet, which I think it looks like it kind of, you know into this. Similar issue. But she has starred in see the about the author section. She's been on the shows of supernatural and the magicians and Mystery Science Theater 3000. So this is a kind of a just a little background on her. But as far as your question though.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah.

Dave Williams

I wrote down. I made sure to, you know, the the listeners you can't see, but I have the copy here and it's got these purple posted notes on different pages.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes, we'll vouch for you. Yes, yes.

Dave Williams

We need to, but I wanted. To to get you right from the a quote from the book. Sell that. I really like this and it goes looking at creativity as a release valve for big feelings is a wonderful way to rid ourselves of the inhibition that I need to be perfect when I make. That's. Kind of like that that well. You know a Pebble in a pond and the ripples. Right. They're resonating. Because and it's not just the need. The anxiety of needing to be perfect when you make things. It's just that overall. And so the listeners out there, I consider myself an anxious person. I have anxiety goes beyond just making things and this book helped me with.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah.

Dave Williams

Kind of thinking about that because Felicia Dolan, her book talked about that is a big block to creativity. Is that fear that whatever you make won't be good enough, you know, and that that's that phrase of, you know, it's it's it's either perfect or good enough.

Speaker

MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, right.

Dave Williams

But but then you can ask the question or questions good enough for what though you know it's if you're drawing or painting, are you saying it's good enough that it looks realistic, like a photograph? Is that level?

Wynne Leon

Ohh, right. Mm-hmm.

Dave Williams

Is it good enough that if you're writing a song that it becomes a a huge hit on YouTube? That it it gets a million likes on YouTube or Instagram or wherever that I guess they it's. The the You need to question what does it mean to be good enough? Because.

Wynne Leon

Great. Yeah.

Dave Williams

What? And you also can open yourself to the possibility that creating an artwork wherever it is a song and drawing whatever can be fun on its own again, like being a kid. It could be it could be a joyful.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Speaker

People.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

You from work or before you go to work or whatever, you're on your lunch break. You're sketching a building across the street, whatever it could be a joyful moment in your life.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, yeah.

Dave Williams

It doesn't have to be good enough for publication or anything.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes.

Dave Williams

Yeah, cause you don't have to even show anybody. You can have, you can.

Wynne Leon

No.

Dave Williams

Have. Full of ideas and drawings and whatever ideas for of skyscraper whatever.

Vicki Atkinson

Right.

Dave Williams

You don't just show anybody that you know.

Vicki Atkinson

No, and she one of the things I marked on page 250, she presents a list of, you know, reasons to create and one of them is create for no reason, right? You know, make mistakes. Be curious ask why except differences. And I think it speaks to what you're saying, Dave, about kind of enjoying the process. And you know when and I both we're we're outcome sisters. Like what's it gonna look like? Where is it going? Is it gonna be good? And I think when you get so wrapped up in that, you forget that there should be some joy in the doing.

Wynne Leon

Right, right.

Dave Williams

That that is a big, big deal. I think you know and and as far as the book goes, it's a, it's a big.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

You know, lesson to try to get across. And so once it absorb you know that's one that you don't. It doesn't have to be publicly publicized, publicized. The thing is what you had mentioned about making mistakes.

Wynne Leon

MHM. Yeah.

Dave Williams

That that's another part of the book is that, hey, it's OK to make mistakes, you know? And that actually reminded me of when I think you blogged about this recently, where you had a quote from Neil Gaiman about making mistakes. And I actually made a note.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Dave Williams

Of that. So I'll throw out a quote your way. It says Neil Gaiman said because if you're making mistakes. Then you are making new things, trying new things, learning living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your worlds. So make new mistakes, make glorious, amazing mistakes. That is, that is, that is fantastic, made glorious, amazing mistakes. What is good advice?

Vicki Atkinson

Right, yes. Ohh my gosh, it's so good.

Wynne Leon

It is so good and the other thing that I love about all of that is that, you know, creativity as a process, but as as a way to process.

Speaker

Yes. Ohh.

Wynne Leon

All the stuff that's going on in the headspace, which is really hard to put down in words sometimes, but there's, you know, finger paint can sometimes be amazing. Yeah, yeah.

Dave Williams

Yep.

Vicki Atkinson

When I think cultivating the quiet you know to do all of that is something that people are hungry for. You know, so that those things can kind of surface. Ohh my goodness.

Dave Williams

Yeah. I I I really like what you said when of of it could be a process of sorting out. I mean, if we're going through grief or something that's frustrating us, you have stream of consciousness writing or drawing and that could help you unblock or you know just.

Vicki Atkinson

Ah.

Speaker

MHM.

Dave Williams

Think things even if you you or even if not, you're thinking things through, it could just be a time of quiet, you know in your your.

Wynne Leon

Uh. Yeah.

Dave Williams

Yeah, and another, I don't know if she really mentioned this in the book, but another thing I would kind of tack up on that that you know, we. Have a bulletin board. I'd like to talk about other people.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. OK.

Dave Williams

For me, the process of creating that you have an idea in your mind, an image of. How this thing is going to look and a lot of the time, maybe most of the time that what comes out doesn't look like what you had in your mind. What's the?

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah.

Dave Williams

And that that. That certainly can be frustrating. It could be disappointing. However, you know this is kind of like the word weird where it's yes, there are. There are negative connotations to it, but they're

also positive. That when the piece doesn't look like you anticipated, it could surprise you and you could open yourself up to really neat surprises. That, hey, I wasn't expecting that, but I created that and how neat.

Speaker

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

Hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Dave Williams

Is that and this kind of circles? Back to your question about anxiety, that? What if you? Created something that surprised you and delighted you. And you can remember that later to say. When those those nagging little voices come in and say what if you're not good enough, you could say, hey, I was good enough last week, last month. You know, those other times that man, it was strange and it was different. I really liked what I did, you know.

Speaker

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. Well, and I and you sort of, I mean maybe what we expect to create is what? Everybody else would create and what what? Maybe what we really create. Yeah, is every reflection of our own self. Yeah, yeah.

Dave Williams

Yeah, that's going back to kind of the beginning. It's like this is what's the what's the witness of wind and how is that different from everybody else who's not win?

Wynne Leon

Yeah. Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and and I think, you know, one of the IT I hadn't thought about this until just now. But what you're both describing is.

Dave Williams

You know, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

You know not to go down a psychology rabbit hole, but I think it's really easy to get sucked into needing external validation about worth. And when you create and it becomes part of a public domain, you need to kind of steal yourself for that. But then to be bounced around by the feedback or people's impressions, the difference between. You know, getting swept up by external validation when it's all good and then something not so good. You need that internal. You know, sort of that the guidance, the compass to do what you said, Dave, I, but I like it, I see the worth in it and gosh that's a that's a hard thing for people. It's a gift you give yourself, but boy, it's a gift that gets returned a lot, right? No. Right. Right, yeah. Oh my. It's so good.

Dave Williams

Yeah, it's that. I guess it's that being kind to yourself to say. I don't have to show this to everybody.

Speaker

Yeah.

Dave Williams

MMM. Doesn't have to go on the. Public, but it has it has value to. Me and in that in that.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Speaker

It's.

Dave Williams

Very, very worthwhile, you know.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah. Wow. This is so, so good. Well, and I know, you know, from a creative point of view, they also in her book, she very generously makes mention of other books that have inspired her creativity. And so we'll have to, you know, tease our listeners and readers to go learn about that. But it's there are a lot of volumes there that we would all head nod and go. Ohh yeah, those are things that you know it's a process.

Speaker

Yes.

Vicki Atkinson

And you, you have to keep at it. Right.

Dave Williams

It is. It is. Yeah. Yeah. There are other books. And some of them are particular to say writing or drawing. And but I I what I like about her book of Felicia Days is that it's quite a generality of we're not going down 1 certain outlet activity just if you can apply this to a lot of things on. Spectrum.

Vicki Atkinson

Right, absolutely. And you can pick it up and start anywhere, put it down, pick it up again. So it's a like a handy resource if you feel, I think kind of stuck and you wanna get reengaged, go back to it. So it's I think it's a good thing for inspiration just like visiting with both of you good for inspiration. Yeah.

Dave Williams

Yes, I like it.

Wynne Leon

Too.

Vicki Atkinson

Thank you so much, Dave. It's always a pleasure to to speak with you and when and I are are just so happy right to learn from you. And this was a great find and we're just thrilled to have had time with you today. Yeah.

Dave Williams

Ah, same here. We had a it's wonderful to have a conversation with you guys, especially. I mean, I get excited about creativity and and all that. So yeah, it's it was great.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. What and it?

Dave Williams

So thank you. For having me, yeah.

Wynne Leon

And it is the ripple that keeps paying it forward because we talk about it and it you know. Yeah, it versions out to all the listeners that get inspired too. So thank you so much for. Your time. Thank you.

Dave Williams

Definitely. Absolutely. Thank you guys.

Vicki Atkinson

Thank you.

Wynne Leon

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