

# Transcript

Wynne Leon

Welcome to the sharing the heart of the Matter podcast, where we celebrate authors, storytellers and creators. I'm Wynne Leon, and in this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are thrilled to be with the talented artist and author Danny Gregory. Danny shares his incredible journey from being an ad agency creative director for 30 years to becoming a renowned author and artist. His books and newsletters are not just inspiring, they are a daily call to create and live with purpose. They read like good philosophy. Urging us to embrace creativity every day. Our conversation with Danny was nothing short of inspiring. We delved into morning routines where I meditate and Danny creates art before breakfast. Why? Because as Danny delightfully quips, our inner critic tends to get up later. Vicki and I discovered the magic of illustrative journaling with Danny. Art, as he explains, helps us adapt to life changes, builds our confidence and gives us control over our perspective. It keeps us from being stuck in the mundane. Denny's enormously popular YouTube channel is less about teaching how to draw about understanding the chemical process of creativity. He reminds us that our inner critic is no more correct than we are. And. Talking with Danny is like having a good coach who not only teaches US skills but also provides the mindset to be most productive. Join us as we explore the scenic and beautiful places we go as creators. You won't want to miss this insightful and inspiring conversation with Danny Gregory. We know you'll love it. Hi, Danny. Hello, Vicki and I are so delighted to see you.

Danny Gregory

I'm excited to be here too, in my garage.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, in your garage, which makes it, you know, that's the first for us in 100 episodes. We've never had anybody in a garage that this is. This is cool on many levels. Yeah. Actually. Yeah. And as I think about it.

Danny Gregory

I'm glad to be breaking new ground, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Right. Danny is trusting us. This might make for like a quick getaway plan. So if we hear the garage door go up, like we'll we'll talk fast, right? Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Danny Gregory

I'm back out.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. Well, Danny, you describe yourself as an author, artist, and tea drinker. You've written more than 15 books, and you've contributed to many more. So could you tell us about your past? What's your story?

Danny Gregory

Yeah, so I spent 30 years working in advertising. I was a creative director in several different New York ad agencies and I was a copywriter as well. So I was in the creative field, but I didn't really make art and I. I kind of found my way into making art and eventually it became something that interested me so much that I left my job in advertising and started to teach people online about making art. And you know, I've always been a writer since I was a little kid. So that's. Very much what I think of primarily as my identity, and I've written books primarily about. Art making, but also about just the issues that creative people have, you know, and we all seem to have similar ones when it comes to. You know the things that stop us and the the things we tell ourselves about making art. So that's that's kind of what's interested me is to help people through that.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. Well, I just finished art before breakfast and it to me it read a lot like a philosophy book. I don't tend to do art before breakfast, but I meditate before breakfast. And you know, that was something that you said that didn't stick for you. But it's the same idea of doing something. Thing. Before you dig into the noisiness.

Danny Gregory

Right, I think, I mean, I think going back to the artist way, you know, and I'm sure you guys are familiar with that Julia Cameron's book, the idea that when you wake up and your mind is hasn't been filled yet. And also I think that the idea of.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Danny Gregory

You know, being empty that way, but also not that this is time for yourselves. We I think the thing that I hear from people the most is where you find time to make art. Umm, you know, I

just one day I'll take a workshop. I'll. I'll go away for the weekend. I'll. I'll retire or I'll whatever it is.

Wynne Leon

Hmm.

Danny Gregory

There's always a reason to not do it now, and you know, and for me. Like if you don't really need more than 15 or 20 minutes to do this, and that is comparable to meditation, to yoga to, you know, whatever it is, the things that we have as part of our morning ritual. So why not? Make art part of it and then I think it'll. Make your whole day better.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, reminds me of a quote someday. Is not a day. Of the week.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah, right. Yeah. So you touched on. I was gonna pick up on that when you in your Friday Denny's essays, you know, and we'll link this information for viewers and listeners.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

As you said, I think this was on March 14th. Whatever you decide to do, make it funds, suspend judgment. Lord, that's hard, you know? Relax, you know, and just think of it as dirtying some pages. You know, I've heard that before, but that's one of those things. That just bears repetition over and over again, and and you put such a a fun spin on that that I think it's a little liberating and people need that because, you know, some of us can have really good intentions. But we'll talk a little bit about the inner critic, too. But the critics voices are so loud sometimes that even though you want to carve out those few minutes. It gets swept up with everything else, yeah.

Danny Gregory

Yeah, I mean, that's another benefit of first thing in the morning is your inner critic tends to get up later I find. So right, so so I think and and, but I do think you know and as you said, we'll we'll talk about this some more, but I think being able to say. Yes, I'll need to assess what I'm doing. I'll need to judge this, but maybe I can wait a bit to do that. Maybe I could just have 15 or 20 minutes to just screw around, play, do some stuff, and then later on we

can decide whether it was a waste of time. But let's try not doing it at the same time that we're trying.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

To make something.

Wynne Leon

Right. Yeah. Because you can't write and edit at the same time. I mean, you can, but it it it will slow down.

Vicki Atkinson

Totally.

Wynne Leon

The whole getting it on the paper.

Danny Gregory

Yeah, you're pushing the accelerator and the brake at the same time to continue the garage metaphor. You know that you're you're you're trying to go, but you're also trying to sort of you're just doing too many things at once. And it takes, it takes different parts of your brain to create versus to assess. So.

Wynne Leon

All right.

Danny Gregory

Keep them, keep them distinct and you know that's that's. Something that I wrestle with all. The time too, but it is it. Is a goal that I think is important to have.

Wynne Leon

One of the quotes that. I love from you is. The drama of the creative process takes a while to unwind and calm down all that adrenaline needs to be flushed from the system. The paint takes time to dry and reach its true hue.

Danny Gregory

You said, I said. That said.

Wynne Leon

I love.

Vicki Atkinson

You did. I know. It's so good. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Brilliant. It reminds me of the art of sort of pottery where you paint a color and it doesn't reach that color until it's fired. Hmm.

Danny Gregory

Right. And I think I was watching, I've become sort of obsessed with portrait artist of the year. Have you guys ever watched the show? It's a British TV show on Sky TV. They've been doing it for about 8 or 9 years and they what they do is they travel around the country. They set up these. It's kind of like the British baking show. If you've ever seen that show.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh, of course, yeah.

Danny Gregory

But it's. But it's for paint, but it's for painters. So what they do is they bring in three celebrities each week. And then they have a bunch of artists who each paint each of them and and it's just it's really worth looking at it. A lot of it's on YouTube. You. Can find it but. I was watching a show this weekend and they were showing how some of these artists use mirrors. To look at their. Art, with so you hold up. A mirror and. You know, you might look at it upside down mirror that makes things upside down or mirror that makes things smaller and it's just another perspective, another fresh look at what you're doing. So you can be looking at your art and be absolutely sure. About XY or Z about this particular thing. And then you look in the mirror and you have a whole new. Perspective and you. Realize that what you were sure was right was just one point of view, and that you can look at it again. And I think that. That that's something that is really helpful to remember, which is you're in a critic, you're your assessment is no more correct than you are, you know, and that there's lots of different ways of looking at it. So you know, don't immediately default to. I'm an idiot. I didn't see that or I didn't do it right but instead to stay. You know, yeah, that could be right, but maybe not, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

I think that idea of of, you know, not truncating the process. I think for me very often when I'm doing something creative, I have a a vision in my head, even if I don't want to acknowledge it of what the goal is or what the outcome is. And often it's emulating something else. That I like and I think what you just said, Danny, is when we get in our own way, when we're looking at what we're creating, when it's in progress in process and it doesn't meet those, you know, whatever those hallmarks are, but got it like shake that. Out of your system.

Danny Gregory

Yeah. And I think like, how interesting is it to have a very clear idea of what you want to make and then to make it? It's sort of interesting. But I think more interesting is to have an itch and a kind of general sense of I want to make something and let's see what happens and then to go on a little adventure and to, you know, come to this new place. I think it's, you know, it's like, it's like doing a jigsaw. Like, there's the picture on the cover of the box. You put all the pieces together. You end up with a jigsaw. OK, that's a way of spending your time. But how much more interesting is it to have a blank piece of paper to not be sure what's going to happen on it and then to just start playing around and see what emerges. And that also means that you don't have to make your or your assessment about whether or not. Deep into the process, you've successfully done what you told yourself at the beginning, you were supposed to be doing, you know, and I think that that's something that we struggle with a lot, which is like, ohh, it didn't didn't turn out to be. The didn't turn out. The. Way I thought it was gonna turn out. That doesn't mean it's a failure. It just, I mean. You might have been. Your failure might have been your initial assessment, your initial goal. Might be the failure as opposed to where you ended up, you know, and I think it's like when you think about adventure stories, you know, Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, and you think about people sitting. Going out and not knowing where exactly they're going to go, having a vague sense of a goal but having all kinds of adventures along the way, that's what makes for a great story as opposed to Bilbo, you know, takes the rain and throws at the volcano and books over.

Wynne Leon

Right, right. Yeah, yeah. It's so and it's, you know, it's follows so much of the writing advice, which is you. You know, you're right. To know what you think.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

Right. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, I mean. And that's one of. The things the the form of drawing that I find the most rewarding, the one that's pushed me the furthest. Is illustrated journaling. So what that means is that you're keeping a diary. That is words and pictures. And you know it's you could think of it as like, a scrapbook. You could think of it as a blog, but basically, it's this combination of seeing your experiences, your day through words and through pictures. And so you set out you say, OK, what did I do today? You know, like I think about when I did my illustrated journal yesterday, you know, we did several things. We went to the. Paint store. It was my sister-in-law's birthday and my wife made some crab. So, not terribly exciting. They wouldn't make a great movie, but it made a good spread in my journal because I did one. Thing that was about. Picking paint colors and what that's about and I didn't know the thing it was about drawing a crab. And then I did a drawing of her of my sister-in-law blowing out the candles on the cake. And I wrote about all these different experiences. So. I didn't quite know what I was going to. Make. When I sat down to do it, I just had a general sense of like, these are the things I did today. How can I depict them in an interesting way? How can I have fun making this stuff? And then I ended up, you know, spending some. Time doing some. Drawing and some painting and some writing and. You know, I was, I was really happy at the end of it. I. Was like wow, I. Didn't have any idea even when I was in the middle of it, what it would look like and and again, not huge stakes. It's just a page in my journal, but an opportunity for experimentation, discovery, play, adventure that's way more fun than if I was like, OK, I know exactly what this. Is going to be like let me just.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, yeah. And a great way to solidify the memories.

Danny Gregory

Absolutely. Because you're contemplating it. You're meditating on it. You're thinking about it, and you know I have. Journal pages from 20 years ago that I can look at and immediately be back in that day and remember something as mundane as picking paint chips. But you know it's it's just much more rich and alive, and that day stands out from the day before and the day after they did something. Equally not that. Incredibly exciting, but still just. That's what life is, yeah.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

All of that comes across, you know so much. I, one of the things we wanted to touch on, although this is only can you guys see that, OK, I'd rather you look at that than me, me.

Wynne Leon

M.

Vicki Atkinson

But you know, in the 15 books that you've written, you know, we were talking before when hit record. This is the one that really jumped out at me. And and I told when the other day, one of the things I appreciate about it and I know folks won't be able to entirely see this. But as you you put this book together and maybe this is how you approach, you know, all the others too. It very much reflects for me, Danny, what you just described about that combination of where's the visual and where is the storytelling to go with it? And just I I mean it's such a rich and wonderful book of visually. But the way you use, you know your drawings and illustrations to highlight specific points. UM, it really is. Is unique in that way and super impactful, you know, and I've I've got so many pages dog geared that you know really stood out to me. But I think that approach of combining those two parts of you creates really wonderful things for your readers.

Danny Gregory

Yeah, I mean it. May go back to my days in advertising. You know, when you when you make a print ad, you think in terms of the words and the pictures together in fact. Typically in advertising there are two creative people who work together on an AD. One of them is sort of more or less charge in charge of the visual. The others in charge of the words, and there's a lot of cross pollination too. But but that's to me has always been, you know, that's that's the way to communicate ideas is. And it goes back to when I was a kid, and I love, you know, illustrated books. Kids, books are always, you know, so rich in their visual part of it. And then the story it's they're so interactive. Right? Because people even allowed to you, and you're reading them over and over again. All those kinds of things that that reading experience me is really so wonderful. And I think when it comes to learning ideas, that's really important.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

All the books that I. Right are not really intended for you to sit down at the beginning and read it cover to cover them more, because that's not even really how I write them. I tend to



write them in terms of. Here's an idea. Here's an idea. Here's an idea. You know, maybe let's summarize the whole bunch of ideas we just encountered, but a lot of times that's how I like to read a book of advice. Just to kind of dip into it here and there and you know it's not.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Danny Gregory

You're getting ideas all the way through it. You don't have to read the whole book to get the point. And and I think the visuals help to do that too. It's just to me a natural kind of way of communicating. And as you, as you say, of thinking through ideas is to do it with words and pictures, even if it's doodling or. Something like that. You don't have to be 1 or the other.

Wynne Leon

Right, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Well, and you do that so well. Yeah, so well.

Wynne Leon

Well, that they well, yeah. So and I love that you have a shirt that says create every day cause you talk about creating a A make building it in as a regular cadence. You know whether it is you know as you mentioned Julia cameras you know right 3 pages every morning or drawing your journal or that type of. Daily cadence and one of the statements that you've made about that is things will happen. You can't possibly predict.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

Yeah, because it's a. It's a. It's like, almost like a chemical process. What happens when you're having ideas right when you're thinking about them? That's to me so much with what the fun of it is, but. Creativity is about, ultimately, about combining stuff, right? We have a lifetime of experiences as human beings. We also take in all this material all the time, looking at pictures, watching videos, reading books, and it's all I like to think of it as a big. Cauldron of Stew. Soup that is always being added to and and as all these ingredients are dumped into this cauldron, they're interacting with each other. They're breaking down. The spices are being added, new chemical things are happening. That's what's such a cool. Part

of being a greater person is that you are at the, you know, you are the source of all these changes and combinations, and that's where the new stuff comes about. It's nothing is original in the sense that all the ingredients preexist your process, but the outcome is original.

Speaker

Mm-hmm. MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

There's a part of UM, shut your monkey that I wanted to call out to you about change. It's on page 68 and I think you know sometimes what you just described about the soup, the creativity and the combinations of things can be a little overwhelming. But I also think. You do such a good job of reminding people that that life is super fluid and just hop on, you know, pick a spot, you know, but jump in because it's all going to change. But. We wrote while we were all tinkering with the latest gizmos, few saw this. You're talking about your career in, in advertising. Few saw the real sea change approaching, that the whole business of making TV commercials would eventually end up in Hospice, undone by social marketing and YouTube and tweets, skills that people have been polishing. Since the Korean War were suddenly little help, Mad Men sobbed into their martinis, you know, and then you offer, you know, some wonderful tips about, you know, how to kind of deal with change and hop on and write it out as opposed to retreating. And it's super encouraging, but that. I think what you bring from the world of advertising forward is, is such a a compelling crossover.

Danny Gregory

Yeah. I mean, look at the. Time, I mean, I wrote that book. Quite a while ago, and certainly before AI and now we think about.

Vicki Atkinson

2016 I think, yeah.

Danny Gregory

Was it? Yeah. But you know the, I mean, the effect that artificial intelligence is having on all those creative jobs now is so much more profound than what I had imagined. But yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

I think so.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

But to me, that's such an important aspect of our creativity is that it is. This tool for. Our lives to help us deal with the inevitable change that's going to happen in the world, in our, in our own circumstances, and be a great person means they're rather being locked into one way of doing things. Your whole existence is about coming up with new ideas and taking whatever is happening and coming up with new versions of that. And so if you get. Frozen and calcified and blocked. You know what you're really doing is you're not allowing this incredible tool. You have to be used for your own life to make your own life better, you know, by just being free and not, you know, and a lot of. Times. The commercialization of creativity. Requires consistent and predictable outcomes. What I mean by that is. If you're an illustrator professional illustrator. You're expected to produce things in a certain style, you know, with a certain. Look. And you, as an artist, I know a lot of illustrators and some of them don't necessarily feel locked in by their style, but that's what they're selling, right? Because you need to be able to present your style and say these are the kinds of illustrations I make. And then I give you an assignment and then I'm expecting that you're not going to reinvent the wheel, but you're going to deliver. That consistent look, you know, but that doesn't mean you have to be completely. It doesn't mean that you can't be flexible doesn't mean that you can't have variations. And now more and more that's, you know. Because otherwise you know a robot could be trained with your style.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Danny Gregory

Right. And then you've lost, then you've lost control of the situation. So. So I think if you think of yourself as an inventor of new things in every aspect of your life, you know. It always surprises me when creative people. Find a uniform. You see this in fashion a lot. Where? Fashion and particularly male fashion designers.

Speaker

Hmm.

Danny Gregory

Wear uniforms. They dress the same like when you see Ralph Lauren. He's always wearing the same thing, right?

Vicki Atkinson

Denim shirt. Yeah, yeah.

Danny Gregory

I mean. He's right. Exactly. And I'm sure when you see. You know, and this is true across so many designers I remember I once wrote down a list of old and they were just. They were so consistent. I thought your whole job is like being creative and offering new fashion every season. Why do you? Wear the same thing. What's that about? You know, and I. And I think like, you know, can we be that way?

Wynne Leon

Ohh. Yeah.

Danny Gregory

You know, or are we locked into this commercial thing where it's like with an actor and act actors are expected to play certain kinds of roles? Mm-hmm. You know, I always admire the actress who suddenly do something completely. Different. Right this I was just watching a TV show of. 1950s French detective called May Gray and it stars Rowan Atkinson, who used to be Mr. Bean. Mr. Bean, right? Completely crazy comedy. Now he's playing dead serious film noir and I thought, I admire that. Like he's he's not locked into it and and that.

Speaker

Hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, of course.

Speaker

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

I think it's it's something that we all want to be just, otherwise it's boring. This becomes a job.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, right. I'm gonna need to check that out. You know, with the last name of Atkinson by marriage. Rowan Atkinson is like, you know, he's. He said, that's the other. It is right? Yeah. Oh my gosh.

Wynne Leon

You think you seems relative? Yeah, well, I love the the embrace change. Danny Gregory philosophy. And we know you have a school sketchbook. School. What else is on your on your radar?

Danny Gregory

You know, I do a lot. Of stuff on YouTube now because I've found. That. YouTube is, to me a better way of reaching people than. Books are frankly. You know, because I can. I mean we have. Over 400,000 subscribers to our channel now, so. I can make a video and reach lots. Of. People in a way that. Even a book can't anymore. So I I find that. You know, I continue to want to encourage people to, to draw not just because they can then become people who draw, but because it's an opportunity to push yourself into doing something that you're afraid of or that you don't feel like you know how to do and that drawing. It seems like just about any kind of activity drawing is a thing that everybody says. I wish I could draw anybody wishes they could draw, and I always say, well, then start drawing. You know you, when you were seven, you did it without wishing endlessly.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

About it, so just start. Doing it, and guess what you're going to do it badly.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes, right.

Danny Gregory

That's fine. You've never done it. You haven't done it since you were seven, so you're probably going to do it badly. Suck it up and do. It anyway it's. OK, to do things badly when we're starting out. And then what I try to do is talk about. What does what does badly really mean? When it comes to create. Act. What does it mean to do it badly? Well, it goes back to what we were talking about before, where you start out with this preconception of I want to be able to draw my dog and then I do a drawing of it. And it's like, it doesn't really look. Like my dog. So. Therefore I failed and so you can look at that two ways. You can say, well, maybe if I draw my dog every day for a month.

Vicki Atkinson

MHM.

Danny Gregory

I'll be able to draw on or why did I draw it badly? Like? What does that mean exactly? When I look at this drawing? Not only does it not look like the. Photo of him, but is that? A bad thing, yeah. I could just take a photo of him, so why do I need a drawing that looks like a photo? Or but maybe? What I drew is a love poem of how I love my dog and the fact that his eyes are too big is because I love to look into his eyes or the fact that his legs are too short is because I'm always helping him up. Onto the couch so you know. You're telling a story by. Your ineptness in a way.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

And you're showing what it is that you prioritize, and that's telling something so. So there. So rather than being a pass fail situation where you go, oh, I suck instead you look at it and say let me try and understand what it exactly happen. Here and you know, the next time I do it, I'll probably make other kinds of mistakes, but maybe I won't make those mistakes again. And if I keep eliminating mistakes, guess what? I'm learning something each time. And then what? Drawing well means is getting the results that I wanted. Having some control over the outcome. Rather than just blundering into it and going ohh, is that 100 things that were wrong here? I don't. How to fix any of them?

Speaker

Well.

Danny Gregory

Yeah, this is how you figure it out. And it's the. Same as when you learn to walk. You know, you fell down a lot, and that's just part of what you have to do to internalize these things. So I find that talking about that on YouTube is kind of like an endless thing. There's so many ways of talking about it. And to me, it's just about. Something bigger than learning to draw. It's about getting confidence and control of your life, taking risks, having adventures, all the kinds of things that make life more interesting. Not just can I draw, you know.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Right. And there's an, I think, an intimate quality to that. You know, as you described, the creation of something and you know the critics, you know, we we kind of like bolster

ourselves or the people that are going to look over our shoulders and go. This doesn't look like that whatever the subject is. And I think especially for me in the age of AI, reminding ourselves that we can create.

Speaker

50.

Vicki Atkinson

This is the right time for that message. You know that it is possible to do that and then what you just said, Danny, which I love the story telling about the drawing, you know, and and its oddities or peculiarities or how it relates to the subject or doesn't. UM, that makes it a full picture, literally.

Danny Gregory

Right. Yeah, cause I think if you sit down and. You do a drawing. Use that same pen to write something next to that drawing, and you can write. Oh, this sucks. I'm no good. And you can go into a whole thing like that or you can analyze it a bit. Or you could talk about what were the things that were going on in your mind while you're doing it, because chances.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah.

Danny Gregory

Are part of the reason that you didn't get the result that you wanted is because you weren't really fully concentrating you. Weren't in the flow. And get into a flow state. You tend not to be self critical because you're you're moving forward, you're creating and you're making. But if you keep stopping to assess what you're doing, that breaks down the process and then you don't draw. As well. You know, so criticizing yourself. See does the opposite of what you think. It's not gonna make you draw better by pointing out your faults. It's gonna distract you and divert you from the concentration that you need to get into that place where your observations turn into lines. Because it it's it's an incredible thing if you think about it, you have your eyeballs. Making these little tiny, tiny movements that they make as they're focusing and moving along the the contours of the. Thing that you're. Drawing and that then that information goes through your neurons in your head and ultimately transforms, translates into motions in the muscles, the tiny muscles in your fingers. To move a pen. Yeah. An incredible thing that's going on. And again, it's like if you imagine like, somebody was doing surgery and they had some, I call it a monkey sitting on their shoulder constantly telling. Them that they were doing it wrong. That probably wouldn't be the

surgeon that you'd want to have operating on. You right. So but in in a. Lot of ways this is a similarly kind of precise behavior, and if you're distracting somebody from it constantly while they're doing it, you're not going to get the same results. That's why I like to tell people just wait. Later on, we'll talk about later on whether it's any good. But now by try and get into this into this flow state of of focused creation and I think you'll be happy with what you're doing and that takes practice. Just getting into that state, it takes practice. Yeah, I think I I find on on YouTube when people come upon my videos on YouTube because they want to watch a video to.

Vicki Atkinson

Ah.

Danny Gregory

Teach them to. Draw. You know, I should sit down and and find a video on YouTube that'll teach me how to draw my dog. And so they'll type in how to draw your dog. And then sometimes they'll find my videos in which I. Say to them. Yeah, that's that's not gonna happen. You're not going. To find a video that's going to. Teach how to draw. Yeah, yeah, it's it doesn't. It's not really how it works. And and it's OK. It's OK that you aren't going to get that immediate. Gratification because really. Why should you? Like we we we think of, we think of YouTube and Google as an opportunity to learn stuff and to get answers. But there's some things that that the answers aren't that simple. And when it comes to drawing, there certainly are techniques that people have taught, you know, draw, draw an egg shape and then.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

I didn't have and then, you know, draw, you know, lines at this angle and use perspective vanishing points. There are things that appear to be a set of rules and steps that you can go through and get results. But that's kind of a trick that, that, that I think people who teach art have kind of come up with to get you sufficiently engaged to do the real work, which is you got to kind of do it and practice at it and play at it and screw it up and have.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, but isn't that such a sad thing that, you know, some teachers think they've got to teach a sequence so that you feel enough mastery so that you don't leave so that you keep



at it. And that's what I love about your message because it's it's for discovery based, you know, and and honor the process and let it unfold.

Danny Gregory

Right. But we want results. You know, we want to say like, tell me exactly how to do this. We want it to be like putting together a piece of IKEA furniture that you go through all the steps and you end up with a bookshelf. But you know it, it's kind of like, you know, if you want to play tennis.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

You can. You can't really read. A book about how. To. Do it you know. And if you want to run a marathon, you can't. You can certainly read a book or a magazine about it, but it's not really going to get you to do it so. This is the. Same kind of thing this drawing is. Is even more interesting because on one level it's a physical activity. As I said, you know, using the the tight muscles in your fingers and your eyeballs, it's a physical thing that you're training yourself to do. But it's also so much of a mental thing too. And there's so many. This, you know like. My wife is really into tennis and we watched tennis matches sometimes and I'll say. I don't understand like you know. Nadal has been playing tennis since he was like 4 years old. How is it that he can't serve perfectly every time? I don't get it. He'll get really irritated at me that and she'll say, you know, cause there's a million other factors. I'm like, yeah, but he's played professionally. He's played on TV. He shouldn't know how to do this every time. It's crazy that most of the time he's not getting it right. And I think that we have. The same feeling about drawing it's. Like, well, you know, you should know how to do this and. It's that what makes it so rich is that it really is involving every aspect of who we. Are right. Right. It's. It's like our memories and our senses and our emotions. All these things are going into it. It's not a mechanical activity, like putting together a bookshelf. It's it's it's an extension of who you are. And yeah, and who you are right now at this moment, all those things make it so interesting and and to. To you know, to make it even more complicated, we also have a part of us that's trying. To stop us from doing. It you know, just saying. Like you don't have to do this. You're. No good at this. Look you made. A mistake, you know. Talk something out the way you thought you know. So. So it's really. Really a complex thing so. You can't just watch a 5 minute video. Know how. To do it, yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

No, and not to like beat the monkey dead, but I think you know, even for this old girl, you know, getting in touch with what your your monkeys do. And how you're being inhibited. I thought I knew. But in reading your book, I think I need to challenge myself a little bit about, you know, the ways that those voices kind of appear. And it's what you said. It's, it's mental, it's physical, it's emotional. It's our history. It's what someone said to you 5 seconds ago. It's what you're going to. Do in. Minutes, but it's a swirl, but I think taking command over that and then feeling that kind of urgency to create because it's good for. You. It's a. It's a worthwhile endeavor. Get in touch with your monkey.

Danny Gregory

Umm yeah, it's it's hard cause you I called the book. Shut your monkey. But I didn't call it. Kill your monkey because. Because I think in the end your monkey is still kind of part of who you are and when you're making stuff and when you have ideas and you're inspired. It's related to this psychology that maybe is inhibiting you too, so you can't complete. There isn't like a one. And that was the struggle I had in writing this book and in researching it was that every book I would read about the subject of the inner critic never had the definitive. Answer and it's really, you know, and you can even find a definitive answer, but then it can elude you after a while. You can say like I know that like you know just don't stop being depressed, you know, snap out of it. It doesn't really you know you can you can have a great day and you can feel like completely in command and and on top of it.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Sure. Yeah.

Danny Gregory

And gentle with yourself and all those things. And then the next day, something. Happens and it can. Slip away from you. It's an ongoing practice that you have to continue to struggle. That's why people go to shrinks.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Danny Gregory

Every week for years. You know, it's not. They don't. It's not like an answer. Here it is, you know, 5 steps to being healthy. It's it's, it's an ongoing process and ultimately it's difficult to tell people that because.

Speaker

Hey.

Danny Gregory

Like this guy's going to, you know, shoot my ear off for a week, telling me how to solve this. And then he is telling me that he probably won't solve it. But that's the truth. You know, that is.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

The truth and so, but also my history in advertising says, you know, say tell people the whole truth right away. But if you want to. Sell them on something. You have to. You have to beguile them a bit and you have to make a promise which isn't very it's dishonest, but it's only part of the story, you know.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, you know, my my 9 year old daughter likes to draw cute feet.

Danny Gregory

30 seconds so.

Vicki Atkinson

Little bit.

Wynne Leon

Food. And then she kind of falls in love with her cute food and tell stories about it. And I love that sort of innocence of that process where you can not only draw, but you can fall in love with it. You can tell your story, you can tell its story. Yeah. I just. I wish she would.

Danny Gregory

Of.

Wynne Leon

The cute food. Because she doesn't eat very often, but.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes.

Danny Gregory

It's true. I mean, think about the Mona Lisa, right, the Mona Lisa.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

Da Vinci owned the Mona Lisa.

Speaker

Hmm.

Danny Gregory

You know, and he and. Suppose that he kept like. Working on it like throughout. His life, and it was originally a Commission that he gave somebody else, gave him but. He fell in love. With this thing that he had made and you know that's that's part of what its power is I think is his love for it. It's like we all kind of feel something going on there and I think.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

I mean, what's the Greek myth about about that of? That My Fair Lady, is is based on can't think of it right now.

Vicki Atkinson

Ohh Italian pygmalion. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker

Right.

Danny Gregory

So so you fall. In love with your creation, you create something you fall in love with it. How great that is. And that's that to me, is. I mean, it happens to me quite.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Danny Gregory

Often I'll do a drawing. I'll. Go. Wow. I can't believe that I made that. Yeah, all the time. So I go. Wow. I can't believe I made that.

Wynne Leon

Works both ways. Oh my God. Well, we are so grateful to you for coming on and making this podcast, which was just. I mean, it's so good.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes, absolutely. Gosh.

Wynne Leon

I love your your process of your philosophy, the dose of perspective and and of course your daily dose of creativity.

Danny Gregory

Yes, good. Well, thank you. Thanks so much. It was this conversation kind of went all over the place. I'm sorry if I was drove off the road, but.

Wynne Leon

No, it's perfect.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, but.

Danny Gregory

That's having my garage, yeah.

Wynne Leon

Bring it full circle with the car. I love it. It's so good. No. Grateful. Thank you, Danny. Danny. Yeah.

Danny Gregory

You bet. Nice to talk to you guys.

Wynne Leon

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