



Madeleine Dore - Interview Transcript

(Unedited)

Matt: Hello writers and welcome to the London Writer Salon. We are Matt and Par, your hosts for today's interview, and also the co-founders of the London Writer Salon. And our salon interviews are a chance for us to go behind the scenes of a writer's journey and dig into the stories behind the stories. And so each week we invite to the salon, a writer that we admire to explore the craft of writing, the art, of building a writing career, and the reality of navigating it all.

Parul: And today our guest is Madeline Thor. Madeline is a writer, interviewer, podcaster, an author. Back in 2014, Madeline started an incredible blog, extraordinary routines, where she explored the routines of creatives. She's also behind the podcast routines and what she's also behind, side project sessions, an event series to help people work on their passion projects.

And of course, she's an author. We're gonna be talking about her book today. I didn't do the thing today. It's a compilation of what she's learned from her blog. And she has a newsletter on ck, which we'll be going into, called on things.

Matt: And so we've prepared a bunch of questions today. We'll talk about blogging, podcasting, book writing what she's learned, interviewing a bunch of creatives about routines, about getting out of ruts and rethinking routines in ruts as well.

And then how you might find a routine and a creative process that works for you. So about 60 minutes in, we will turn it over to you though. So if you have any question at any point throughout this interview, please pop it into the chat. All right. Without further ado, welcome London writer. Madeline, I need to unmute you.

Madeleine: There you go. Thank you. I thought I was being very delicate with a little cough before I spoke, but then I was stuck on mute. Hello. Thank you so much for having me.

Matt: Oh, so happy to have you here. And so actually the first, how we got to know you is that we shared in our words of wisdom, one of your quotes from your book, which was submitted from by one of our writers here.

So it's so fun when, this comes full circle. So we're, grateful for whoever did submit that quote to us. What was your relationship with writing growing up? We love to start kinda winding back the clock. What, was that for

Madeleine: you? Yeah, I love this way. This question. It's it was a pause.

It's a pause for reflection because I was trying to think I. What it was like writing for me and a memory was quite vivid of, putting together a, collection of short stories and specifically passing them onto my grandmother because it was a, beautiful kind of I guess poem or, Limerick about her.

And I was about 12 years old when I laminated and binded this little collection. So my first book really in many Senses and I remember just the, beautiful positive feedback from the people that did read it, including my grandmother. And I remember that she said I, hope you never stop.

Meaning, I hope you never stop writing. I, stopped she was referring to her and creative expression and painting and things and speaking about how there was a period in her life where she stopped because of raising children and all that kind of thing. But I remember even at the age of 12 sort of thinking, it was the first time I heard that you can stop something.

That there was this thing that was just At the time flowing. And I didn't realize that the world in many ways could stop it. And what was interesting is that as a teenager and then of early twenties, there really was a pause in my writing, this kind of chunk of stopping. And that's starting again when you've had this freedom and the flow and the, lack of self-consciousness in writing and then growing up and those I guess the awareness comes in and trying to free yourself and tap back into that childish enthusiasm is easy said than done.

But clearly there was a way to push through. But it was really interesting to see that was something that can stop and start in our lives. That's a beautiful reflection and

Parul: of course you explore a lot of this in your book and we'll be getting to this. So fast forward a few years, maybe a few more years, where you started to think about career and what you wanted to do with your life.

What were your early career

Madeleine: aspirations? I graduated and went straight into journalism school, so that was very much following the kind of riding path. And I. Took a sharp

turn from that though. So I did a minor in journalism and then I vented off and thought that I wanted to start a recycled fashion, vintage fashion business.

And so I switched majors and went into business and commerce. And so it started to be a bit of a winding road. And on that path I ended up finishing my degree in Copenhagen. And there I found this incredible magazine sitting at the university, which was profiling these creative entrepreneurs.

And it was by a local creative agency called Art Rebels in Copenhagen. And they had an arts. A talk series, this magazine that I saw an online art shop. And I just seeing that it was of the world's colliding in terms of, I was exploring more and more this idea of entrepreneurship and in particular creative entrepreneurship and then seeing a magazine about this brought me back to my writing. So I ended up asking them if they needed an intern while I was there abroad, and they said yes. And so I was with them for about six months as an intern. And because I spoke English as a first language, I was able to be the editor of the magazine that they had, which was just a, really yeah, like a, great experience in terms of interviewing and writing and editing a magazine.

And that's when I really returned back to writing and coming back to Australia after that experience as a graduate I actually knew that it was actually journalism all along that I wanted to pursue it in particular about creative people. And so after that experience, I really craved being able to have a, a reason to continue to interview creative.

People. And that's when I started my side project extraordinary routines. And that was very much driven out of the fact that I wanted this job, but it didn't exist. There wasn't this pub publication that would hire me as an editor. And so I really had to create my own opportunity through a side project.

And I think that's the beauty of passion projects is that very nature that you can, rather than working for free for somebody else, for example, as an internship or waiting opportunity to appear, you can carve something out in the time that you have. So it can be so flexible and malleable in that sense.

Matt: We love this concept of passion projects, side projects and, watching your career you're, such a great example of, creating these. And so if we talk, we want to talk about extra extraordinary routines because it leads to the book, but also seems to lead to a bunch of other things for you. Did you have, so you, ended up writing it for, I think it's over five years now.

Before the book came out, did you have. Ambitions to, for it to last that long? Or did you just, were you able to just see like a few months in front of you to say, I'm going to start this and see where it goes. If you can place us back to the beginning. Do you remember those early ambitions for this project?

Madeleine: Yeah we can it's, almost a decade now cause I started extraordinary teams in 2014. So this is coming back to Australia after being in Copenhagen. It's 2014. I can't find a job as a journalist. And so I, I create extraordinary routines very much as a way to continue these conversations, as I mentioned, but also to build a portfolio as a journalist, to have something to show to try to get work in the, in, in the job marketing, specifically arts, journalism.

And it's a very small, pool in Australia particular. So I, so the ambition early on is very much. Driven by this curiosity in the sense that I didn't know how people were building these creative careers either. So it was twofold. It was a way to build my portfolio, but it was also a way to demystify how people make a career as a writer or an artist or something.

A, a creative entrepreneur, something of, their own making. And so it was a way to almost look for the secret in terms of how are these people building a life, a career? How are they getting things done? And so it served that purpose as well as hopefully landing me a job, which it did.

In the end I, got what was the dream job for me, which was a deputy editor role for an online publication called Arts Hub. And so that meant that I started working full-time as a journalist and then kept extraordinary teens as a side project. And I kept that going to keep feeding that curiosity because my questions kept, evolved, evolving as I carried it through the years.

And it probably had the longevity that it did because it wasn't something I did consistently in terms of a weekly output or anything. It was something I picked up and put down when I had the time. When I had a certain question to explore, and so it meant that it can cut, it had these sort of seasons to it and an ebb and flow in and of itself.

It wasn't something that I had rigidly committed to. It yeah, kept expanding or shrinking depending on the time I had available.

Matt: And what, did day one look like of that project? Cuz I, I think oftentimes you can have this grand vision for something and then it can be so difficult sometimes if the vision's so grand to then take that first small step.

Cuz oftentimes it's not quite as glamorous as what you might imagine. I'm curious what that first day, that first step was for you in launching extraordinary routines.

Madeleine: Yeah, that's interesting because I think it's, hard to almost pinpoint a day one because you go through so many different iterations of it depends which day one you count.

Do you count the day one where your epiphany for the idea and you think, oh, I'm really onto something and you, get out the scrap or can you do the big map of it and the plan that, that was definitely the sort of the fun, incredible part where there's a big piece paper in you brainstorming, storming all these ideas, coming up with people to interview questions, to ask the name, getting the domain name, all that thing that's like high energy for that kind of version of the day one.

But then after that, it's very much mimics the creative process in and of itself where you go into you're on this high of having this incredible idea, and then maybe the doubt sinks in. You go, oh, how am I gonna pull this off? And so that day one for me I, remember that I, had done my first interview.

I, I started with a friend who I really admired, who had incredible passion projects of her own. And so I remember interviewing her and then just the recording sat on my computer for months and months, and I just couldn't bring myself to transcribe it. I just thought that and, it was a way to delay the process.

The, starting, there was a fear in starting the project. So if I didn't transcribe the interview, then I didn't have to face the fear of. Thing out into the world. And it was actually, I ended up interviewing another friend, Spencer Harrison, who's an artist. And I remember him saying to me, that done is better than perfect.

And that's just the little tidbit I needed to be able to push through the perfectionism that I was experiencing and transcribe it. And so I remember I actually started the day one of launching, it was sharing that interview. I actually, sorry. It's interesting though, cause it's so long ago.

Little memories. But I thought that I had to have this big fancy website to launch it. And I was speaking to web designers and I, was getting the quotes and was just like, I'm never gonna be able to afford this. This is again, another block to the project. And it was a friend who said this thing called Squarespace, cause this is going back 10 years ago.

And so they helped me set up a Squarespace and I was able to do it myself. And I remember just having that uploaded and just sharing the very first interview on my Facebook. And it went from there. So that was probably the day one, was in the end really listening to the Dunny Better Than Perfect in that instance.

Matt: Such great advice. And was there a moment that, like you noticed readership picking up or was there a pivot in pivotal moment that like things maybe shifted for you? Or was it just kinda like a week by week, day by day kind of drip, with this? I

Madeleine: think there was some pivotal moments in terms of, so in terms of there was I, sort did a stepping stone approach to the interviewees.

So I started with friends, people that I knew, and then I asked them if they had anyone in mind that you, they think that would be interesting to speak to. So stepping with their, connections. And what's really helpful with interview projects, I think is, interviewing someone and then when you are cold approaching someone you might not know is trying to find a link, that connection that someone might actually know this other person that you've interviewed.

And it builds that trust. So that's how I stepped up in terms of the people that I was interviewing. And, it was in that beautiful kind of heyday of Instagram where if someone shared something on their feed, it would in that one post I would get thousands of people following my Instagram account.

So it was definitely a different sort of social media. I guess growth in that sense. But there was also some press started happening, so that was exciting. I remember getting in some local newspapers here in Australia as someone who was interviewing interesting people about their routines. And because it was such a niche, I think, and at that's what's.

Kind of what I found really worked for me in terms of a passion project is having something quite clear in terms of what it's about, meant that there was opportunity for press coverage and those, and press would just actually reach out directly. So there wasn't there wasn't necessarily a strategy behind that.

It just started to happen. So that was maybe a definitive growth moment. And then also because of the press and because of the growth, I was approached to do a column for another publication. And that's called the Design Files, which is one of Australia's biggest blogs. And so each month I would have a very special

dedicated column so I could do an interview for them and that would go out to their audience, but I could syndicate it back onto my blog as well.

So I think that sense of collaboration is really what helped it grow. So it's the, profiles, the press, and then collaborating with other publications.

Matt: It's really amazing what happens when you just put something out into the world and, you're such a great example of this concept of not waiting for other people's permission.

There was something you wanted to do and you started it, and then opportunities came from the back end of that. So I'm just reflecting back because I think sometimes yeah, people can forget that you can take your future in your own hands. It might take time but, if you put things out there great things happen.

So love your story Madeline, with this. I do want to talk about another side project that you started in 2018 called The Side Project Sessions. Which ultimately, I think you wound down in 2021. And, this is often the nature with projects, is that sometimes they have a, lifespan and, they have a natural conclusion.

And I wonder, looking back, what kept you going with extraordinary routines? That project, but then winding down something like side projects sessions, and if you want to give a little context on what side project sessions was that might be helpful too.

Madeleine: Yeah, so side project sessions very similar to London Rider Salon in terms of, it was about getting together with other people to find some time to to, work alongside others.

And just that, that magic that you all know very well, there's nothing like it. And I'd seen for myself how potent that time with other people and that accountability in that sense of community can be. And so in 2018, I started these in-person events. So they were in Melbourne and we, it was a Sunday morning and we'd come along and we'd do 3 45 minute focus spurts with 15 minute break between.

And those breaks were a great time to have a snack, have a coffee and, chat. And so it was a really great way to connect and I was very much born out of needing a space for myself to focus on my side project. So I was working as a

full-time freelancer and I found that the time for extraordinary routines was it would just slip by.

And so having even just three hours on a Sunday with other people, it was the ultimate accountability. If you are finding yourself not able to focus on something, creating an event where other people are gonna come is a great way for you to get that, done. And so that was a fortnightly event series.

And then starting that once again putting something out into the world, people saw that. And people from Ohio America got in touch to start their own chapter. Someone in Sydney got in touch to start a chapter. And it started to proliferate into different cities, which was really exciting to me cause I.

Community events like Creative Mornings, for example, which if people haven't yet attended, it's a great way to get inspired with creative people. So I got really jazzed about this, thing that I could grow and expand. It could be a global empire. And what happened is that sort of, that was two years of doing cyber project sessions, people starting to want to license the idea.

I got all called up in creating legal documents, in creating IP documents, design, branding host manuals, all of. Admin. And what happened was that not only was my time that I had wanted to work on my own side projects completely chewed up with the admin of side sessions, but it was taking up a lot of time and internal stress and worry outside of the sessions.

And so this very thing I'd created to serve as my own sort of outlet for creativity and connect other people had become very, heavy. And so in 2020 obviously we all know that there was the lockdowns. And what that meant is it was a, real circuit breaker for me to be able to see that this thing that I thought I had to carry was no longer serving me in terms of, there was no time for my own creativity and I had to let go because not only was it that it wasn't.

It when you are someone who's feeling like something's heavy, then for the community itself, they, you need someone who's uplifted by it rather than someone who's finding it burdensome. And so I needed to let go for my own sake, but also for the other people who are attending. And so what I ended up doing, just writing out a manual that anyone could do anytime, anywhere, and just set the whole idea free.

So anyone could start their own side project sessions essentially. And it didn't need me anymore. And that letting go created space and that creating space.

Within two weeks of letting go of side project sessions in 2020, I'd finally had the epiphany for my book idea, which had been in the works for, years.

And what that meant is that I had this time to write the book proposal. I sent it. Ended up getting the book deal in 2020. And so I think that the reason why I think it's quite clear why side project sessions had to let be let go, but extraordinary routines that was now I suppose it was coming to its conclusion cause I was starting to wrap it up, but go through the archive and, everything was then being poured into the book.

So it needed more hyper attention during that period to be able to have the be the birth of the book. I suppose it was like the gestation period. Yeah.

Parul: And I love the courage that you ha you seem to show both in starting and then the courage to let something go when it needs

Madeleine: to be let go.

It can be hard, can't it? I think that we, cuz we, we associate ending things as failure when actually it's, it just something, not everything's designed to last forever. Be that a project or a relationship or a career or whatever it is, I think it's, there's a great freedom in letting things go and, letting things find the next part of the cycle.

There's always a beginning and an ending and I think that's the part to embrace. I love that.

Parul: And as you said letting go of the side project sessions led to an epiphany for your book. I wonder if you can tell us what that

Madeleine: epiphany was? Oh, do you know what it's actually the, title. But in, so this it just came to me.

So I didn't do the thing today is like what I kept repeating to myself, which maybe we, some of us could relate that getting to the end of the day and saying that, and then I remember saying to myself, Oh, I didn't do the thing today. And, that's okay. It's not the measure of a day. And I wrote this sort of little I guess musing about that.

And then having that musing, I saw that, oh this, whole sort of measure of productivity, maybe we've got the wrong, maybe productivity's the wrong goal. It was the, what I'd been working to working on in terms of productivity guild.

It was crystallized just in that epiphany moment, walking down the street and writing that poem out.

And so the original title, which was in the book proposal, was How to Measure A Day, was the original book title, because that's how the poem began or ended rather. And that was really interesting, like that's what sort of led to the book deal. But in the end, the, another epiphany was required because how to measure a day didn't quite fit.

It looked, it was the antithesis of what the book is about. In a way it wasn't clear. And then I realized actually the real book title was there along as well, all the, in the same poem. I didn't do the thing today. So yeah, I think just having that for me, the book title, not to put too much emphasis on it, cause obviously that very anecdote shows you can change it, but it, gave me this frame and allowed me to organize all the chapters under the book title, which then allowed me to have that book proposal come with ease.

I really felt like I needed that because I've been working on it, as I said, for years in terms of a book proposal and in your book,

Parul: fantastic book. I really do love it and recommend it to anyone who's interested in exploring this, all that we will be talking about shortly in the book at the end.

You acknowledge your agent Georgia, and you say you thank her for helping you navigate publishing the publishing world. At what stage did your agent come into the picture?

Madeleine: Yeah, this is this was a tangle. So I, as I said, had epiphany. I wrote, I already had contact with an Australian publisher. So I had a meeting with an Australian publisher in 2016, I believe.

And we'd chatted, about the early iteration of the book idea. And she said, love it. Can you get me a sample chapter and we'll talk more? And I was like, great. I'll get that to you at the end of the month. And we go all the way to 2020. I clearly hadn't got that. Chapter sample to her. And that was really, I see now looking back, the book just wasn't ready.

It, it needed more gestation. And I think again there's really something to be said for patients. And I'm so glad that I waited the book that it is now because I had that time and space and more research. I think it there's, something to be

said for more thinking time, more breathing room and just sometimes the, topic of you haven't explored it yet for your own sake.

There's more for you to uncover. And that's if we go back to the process being the important part, then really honoring that it's important. And so I went back to the publisher with this epiphany, breakthrough book proposal that I had, and they actually got back to me straight away with a book deal, an Australian world Rios book deal.

And I was happy with that, but I, in my heart of hearts, knew that I really wanted to get a US book deal as well. For, many reasons. Being the Australian publishing industry is tiny. You are much bigger market. It's much more sustainable for a writer. So I really wanted to split off the rights and keep the US book rights.

And so that's when I needed an agent to come in to help navigate us. And in a moment of serendipity, my friend acquaintance Georgia, Francis King, had put a post on LinkedIn to say that she'd just become an agent. So she's been a journalist and an. Herself and she became an agent that week and I said, oh, hi, I actually have an Australian book deal on offer, but I wanna see if I can do this thing and separate the rights.

And she said, I think we can do it. So then we so engaged Georgia signed the contract there and it was actually quite a risk because now what I had to navigate was reworking the book proposal for the US market. I had to take a seven page book proposal and turn it into a 70 page book pro proposal, which took about two years.

Oh, not two years, two months. And what that meant is that the Australian publisher, we had to put them on hold and that I was very fearful that could just completely fall through and I could get no US book deal at the same time. So I was very Anxious during that time that I could lose everything in terms of a book deal.

And in the end, it worked out really well at risk in terms of not only keeping Australia there, but we were able to get a book deal with Penguin Random House in the US and separate those rights. So essentially getting two book deals. So I can highly, recommend even though it is a tangle and you'll need perhaps a lawyer or an agent to help you navigate this, if you can keep the rights for your books.

I think it, it's a really great way to make it more sustainable for you as a writer because you are keeping those advances rather than just getting a percentage of them. So it was a longer process, tangly harder to navigate, but I think worth it in the end. I'm,

Parul: curious about a few things on this.

No, don't wanna go too deep, but I'm, curious, you sold, so you sold the Australian rights to Australian publisher, the US Rights, or to the US to hang around house. What about the UK

Madeleine: and Europe? The publisher that I went with in Australia is a UK, Australia hybrid. So they've, so they, and so the Australian one, they kept the uk but also the world except North America.

And you could carve them off further, but it was tangly enough,

Parul: and why did you why, you have to make a bigger proposal for the US who, who advised that? Was that the agent?

Madeleine: Yes. So it's just, it's a the US is far more intense would be the word. So a, bigger proposal, the more robust you can make it the better chance you have of an editor opening that email, reading it, setting a meeting with you.

So the process seemed a lot more formal in Australia as I can just have direct contact with an editor if you have their details. Whereas in America, there is that agent buffer. And that the editors are getting so many proposals that your proposal needs to stand out. So the agent will send them all out together and then give people a deadline to set a meeting with you.

And then you have a meeting all at the same, I'm sure people might be familiar with this process, but for those who aren't the, then you set these meetings in the matter of days and then people put in a bid for the book the next week or by a deadline. So the bigger proposal was really just to give it the best shot possible.

The, chapter outlines were far more detailed. There was a big marketing plan included and in the end it was a lot of work, but it really helped with the writing process of the book because the, level of detail I'd, done the plan for the book within the proposal. So no time was lost in terms of it.

It's a really great investment and it's, really what helped the book be noticed in, the us

Matt: and. Do you remember what the, main pitch was for the book? Like the premise and, how did you position it? Yeah and, position it from anything else that was out there, which I know is a, big part of the book proposal process.

Madeleine: Yeah I, so the original title, how to Measure a Day it was letting go of productivity guilt. So productivity Guilt was very much seen as the, problem I suppose that, it was addressing. And at the time, if we go back to 2020, it was there was this real sense of productivity pressure in that moment.

Shakespeare writing King Lear during a. This we had to optimize our days while a global pandemic was happening. And, so this sense of kind of this pressure that people felt, but also this sense of, but I'm not keeping up and maybe we can it was the timing was having been researching this around people's days, around people's productivity, around people's creative process for five years before this moment, it was well timed in terms of this culminating.

So I think it was really the antidote was, I suppose the pitch, the antidote to this pressure that we're all facing to this pressure to be perfect, this per pressure to be productive, this pressure to optimize when we're all fallible human beings who are not robots. I think that's maybe that the timing of it was uncanny, maybe.

Matt: And it's sustained. It's still good timing for this message, and we'd love to dig into some of the content from, your book because it's all beautiful stuff and stuff. I think a lot of us need to hear. Before we do, you a, copy you can flash up? I do for everyone. This is

Madeleine: the, this is a gorgeous copy.

The UK Oh, the UK And Australian cover is this one. The American one is on the banner.

Matt: And actually, before we get into the content, I'm curious about the design, because you've, you clearly have an eye for design. How, I influence, how were you able to influence that design of the cover or, how did that influence then your brand and all of that stuff?

Madeleine: Yeah I, did put together a mood board for the cover, so the Australian designer is Evi O and one of my favorite designers and artists, and also does incredible covers for books. And so I was able to put her forward and the publisher went with her as a designer and then I was to put a mood board together.

And then Evie put a wonderful cover together. And I thought it the, kind of the tumbling shapes really speak to the fact that our days have different shapes, but also we can tumble over and our plans can I just thought the metaphor was beautiful. The US there was much less. Control in the end.

But interestingly, they, the sort of, they saw the same mood board, so I think some elements came through in terms of color and design and, perhaps some metaphor. But yeah, there was, there, it wasn't quite I don't know. I'm trying to be delicate, but there was some in interesting sort of concepts coming through.

And so in the end, I think that there, it was, it, there was maybe perhaps influenced by. not sure if they saw the Australian cover somehow because they are similar. But yeah, so there, there was a, in the end, you're allowed to approve the cover. Looking back, I, this isn't just about the design, but about the book process in general.

I didn't realize that I could have a, bit more input. I didn't wanna be difficult. And I look back now and think that It's okay to be this is your but the first book and you can you have more control than maybe you think you do is what I could as an imparting lesson to anyone else is to ask for the things you want.

You may as well try to.

Matt: Thanks for that. Let's dig into the content.

Parul: So I'm, pondering a quote in from your book where you say creativity is present in the way, the ways we get to know ourselves, express ourselves, question what we believe in, discover what we want. It's in how we live our lives. As a novelist, Henry Miller put it to make living itself in art.

That is the goal. And that sounds beautiful to me, but when I think about some of the administrative parts of my life, the spreadsheets, messages I have to apply to, I find it hard to think of that as art. And I wonder how you might, describe the reality of making our lives art

Madeleine: artful and creative.

Yeah I, know what you mean cuz some of it can seem a little mundane, mundane clay to play with. But I think that for me it's, very much stems in that societally we, have very much an emphasis on productivity and achievement and linear progress with things. And so the measure is very much.

Often about how productive we are or how much we get done or how much we accomplish or what we do. And so for me, living artfully or living creatively it's, very much about using creativity as the measure instead of productivity. Because productivity, if we get to the end of the day and look at just what we did, it's very narrow.

It's you either tick the to-do list or you don't. And to me that's a bit of a pity to get to the end of the day and judge it a failure because we didn't get everything done. Whereas if we get to the end of the day and we measure it creatively, We can actually get creative with maybe sending the text messages and the creative thing or the spreadsheet isn't the creative thing, but arguably you can make it quite artful with all the different colors and shapes and things.

But you can, instead maybe the act itself isn't very creative, but how we judge it, we can be creative, we can choose to be curious about our days, or we can be curious about the feeling itself of productivity, guilt that we have. I think curiosity and creativity. Maybe curiosity is what can deepen our relationship to things and creativity is what we can creativity.

It's creating something new. So if we get to the end of the day and we decide to judge the day differently, we're creating something new in terms of the lens we have for our lives. So I think that there's, that's one element is using creativity as more like a lens, but also to, to do things creatively.

And I think it's empowering because not all of us are artists or painters or poets. And even myself, I felt so for so long that, oh, I haven't interview all these creative people. It hasn't made me creatively prolific. I'm not a painter, I'm not a poet. But then I saw so clearly that. Sort of creativity is a human trait.

It's not necessarily an act in of itself. So it's really just freeing creativity up for all of us to be creative with our schedules, to be creative with our conversations, to be creative with how we make dinner or our sort of the, different things that we have to wrestle with in the day can be creative just as much as sitting down to write or to paint.

I think it's, yeah, it's very much just about. Seeing also the creative process that's inherent to things. And that doesn't have to just be, again, a book. It's the creative process of even a day working in the office. You, will have different energy fluctuations, you'll have different dipping out of attention.

Sometimes a, project might be in its real kind of action phase, or it might be in the thinking phase. And if we judge things by create a creative lens, then we can

actually honor the thinking phase of so many things rather than just think it has to be all about the doing. So that's how think we can all be artful with our days and our working lives.

Matt: And one of those things is rethinking ruts. And we can look at ruts, and this is a big part of your book is, rethinking what a rut is. And I wonder if you could. Give us your philosophy on ruts and then maybe we're actually curious if you've been in a rut recently, and maybe how you've either reframed it or climbed out of.

Madeleine: Yeah, I just wanna do a little shout out to Nicola who's put here. I made two people. I grew them in my body. Creative. Exactly But in terms of rethinking reps and getting creative with that it's, interesting, I think researching routines for so long and the emphasis for me was very much about finding the perfect routine that would make me prolific.

It was interesting to then encounter this really close relationship between a routine and a rut. And, that very much being that a routine, we very much associate with this sense of momentum. Rhythm, there's a flow. We aspire to have a routine because we see that as a, the sort of secret elixir that will make us prolific.

So they're almost put on a pedestal, but then when it comes to a rut we it's something that we're told to get out of, to get over, to move on from. You don't wanna stay there too long. And I just saw that as an interesting paradox because really, Routine can give us momentum, but it is a pattern.

It's something that's repeated day after day, and when something's repeated day after day, it can of feel like a groundhog day and it can feel like eventually you're stuck in this monotony rather than momentum. And then that's where tips over into. A rut. And so I see them as this part of a cycle, yet one is put on a pedestal, the other is seen as something that we should be ashamed to be in.

And I just wanted to rethink that. Cause I saw that many of the people that I interviewed and myself included, is there's a lot of richness that can come from the rut, the stuck part. Because it's when you are stuck that you realize, oh, maybe this isn't actually serving me anymore. Maybe there's something needs to shift and change.

Maybe this routine served for a moment, but actually now it has become monotonous and there's something that I need to change up. For example, like we were talking about earlier, about when to let go of something. I think that's

when we can encounter a rut. And that pause is the very thing that can connect us back, help us survey our lives and be the very thing that can help us change.

And so I see a lot of richness in the rut cuz it's the very thing that makes a slow down survey. And then we can move on again into the routine. And so what I've found. In terms of, I wouldn't say that I'm in a rut right now. I've, had this really interesting kind of to the book coming out that was a beautiful way to tie up the projects and I had this clean slate and so it meant that I had to return to more of a incubation period.

And that looked very it it was this empty chapter to, to begin. So it wasn't so much of a rut, but I think the rut came for that, if that makes sense. So it was in the delicious pause. And now new ideas have been able to come. But to, I think it's going back to the routine rut.

I think that what's interesting is that. Interviewing people when there have been in a rut. You can't force yourself out often. You have to do, you do have to have patience. There's this beautiful metaphor of, or analogy of being like making butter. You have to churn and churn.

It feels like nothing's happening, nothing happens. And then suddenly there's, butter. So I think that's how you make butter, but just allowing for that to happen. And then interestingly, when you are in a rut, often what people turn back to are simple things. It is about returning to taking care of our body, getting the sleep that we need.

All of these pillars that actually add up to look like a routine. And there you are back in a rhythm that's serving you. And we're in a new cycle and a new beginning. And that's how it all I think everything's connected, isn't it? The ending, the beginning, the ru, the routine, the ebb and the flow.

Matt: Yeah, hearing you talk, it reminds me of, two things kept come to mind. One is Katherine May's book Wintering. I don't know if you've, this concept of wintering, it's really a, season of life, A season of the creative life. And hearing you talk about ruts, it's a really nice reframe. And then the other thing is one of my favorite quotes by Rilke the poet about living the questions.

I don't know if you've heard of that. Yes. This idea of, we always, we want the an answers, but sometimes we just must live the questions and then one day we wake up and we realize we've grown into the answer. So yeah. Love, love that. Delicious, pause. Madeline, thank you for that.

Parul: And you, yeah.

I love this connection between the rut and routines and on the topic of routines. You talk about how when you've interviewed many creatives, they often use a form of anchor points rather than a rigid routine. I wonder if you can talk a little bit about this concept

Madeleine: how someone might use that. Yes.

I think that was really interesting when I'd asked people if I could interview them about their routine, a lot of them would whisper but I don't have one. I don't know what you're gonna interview me about. And what would often come out is that there really was just these, sort of thinkers in the day that were flexible.

And that sort of, there was that, that again, that creativity being applied to, things. And one of my favorite examples would be Austin Cleon, the author, artist and writer who I'm sure many are familiar with. And, what was great about speaking to him about his routine is that he had a, portable routine in a way.

And so he had. His anchors, or he had called it a checklist of things that would make up a great day, but didn't have to happen every day. So I think he had writing walking sharing a piece in his newsletter and reading. And those things could happen at different times, obviously, around maybe other obligations that he had.

He's got small children and so it was flexible. And that's a good day, but if they didn't happen, that's okay as well. But it just meant that, those anchors could travel with him. On through different types of days. And what I really appreciated about this kind of checklist or the anchors is that they had this inherent kind of compound interest in a way.

And so if he was doing his daily writing, then that would go into his weekly newsletter. In the weekly newsletter. Through sending that out, he'd start to see themes that he was curious about. And those themes could go into talks and those talks if they really resonated, could become books. And so you see how doing that little thing can have that momentum for the bigger things that were part of his career as a writer.

But I think it's just identifying. Those small good things that we have in a day. And instead of I was certainly someone who would draft up this really elaborate

schedule of exactly what time things would happen. And if they didn't happen at that time, then the whole structure for the day would topple over.

And it just meant that I didn't just pick up the piece and think I can read in the evening if I didn't read in the morning, or whatever it might be. Again, routine might really resonate for many people and it might be something that they just feel a sense of flow with and they don't have any struggle with routine.

But for me that rigidity just led to a lot of self blame. So just having that flexibility and holding it lightly, I think is really what it says has, proven useful, holding

Parul: it lightly. I love that phrase. Another topic that or concept that we struggle with is time management.

And I feel like. Whether it's in writers hour or just when we have chats with, each other, with other writers. They talk about time going by so fast. And you talk about time, being very slippery, and I'm curious about how you think we can get everything done when time is so limited. And I know you have this concept time Sludges.

Madeleine: Oh, yes. You can talk about yeah, I think that I'm, sure that you, cause you had Oliver Birkman as part of one of your live interviews and so I think that he's a brilliant writer to speak in terms of this notion that our time is limited. And so it's really about acknowledging that rather than trying to think that we can get everything done.

And so I suppose my I, suppose acknowledgement of time being slippery is very much that sense of we, we see it very as it's very linear clock time. It's got these neat hours, but anyone who's we've all had that experience of a minute dragging on forever when we're waiting for something.

Or it might be that an hour just flashes by. And so it's actually not it's, subjective in a way, depending on what's, happening. So that's the sense that time is quite slippery rather than neat, linear and ordered. Living in time feels very different to when we are planning for future time.

And so for me that was helpful to describe that as time being more like splodges. So they, spill out in d like different directions rather than these neat hours. And so Splodge time one person that I interviewed, Becky Orin, who's an artist, she's really prolific and a lot of people will ask her, how do you get everything done?

And she, when I put that question to her she said that she'll, she's really good at just grabbing splodges of time. And so if she has 15 minutes before something else, she will try to use that rather than thinking, oh no, it's only 15 minutes. It's not gonna help at all. So that was really, resonated cuz I was very much someone who would need the perfect time to, before I could begin it needed to be a stretch of a few hours or I'll write the book when I have a writing retreat.

But of course, even when those perfect stretches of time come, it can be really hard to get yourself into the flow of something. So I think that's what's so great about things like London Riders Salon and it's having that sort of commitment where there's, other people accountability because without that, I think that you, the perfect time is an illusion.

And so really just grabbing the splodges that are in front of you, I think can make a world of difference. And I'm someone who's been living out of a suitcase for a while, so it means that I'm always changing in different. Location. So I don't have the perfect desk or the perfect time, and I've had to get used to writing on my phone, for example or writing in different environments.

And so that's very much splodge time is just grabbing it imperfectly. And I guess, I suppose I wanna underscore that doesn't mean that we need to grab every single spare minute because that's a different kind of pressure. It's just knowing that time will always be imperfect. So skip into it when you can rather than waiting for the, perfect time.

Matt: Really nice reminder and, this seems to be a lot of your book is, just giving us permission to take these, ideas or these, hangover, these concepts that we've maybe hungover, hungover concepts that maybe are no longer serving us and give us permission to seepa them. So love that.

I'd like to talk about ambition and so we do a monthly. Every month around goal setting for writers. And one of the things we do is we kick off with this quote by Neil Gaiman about your mountaintop. What's the mountaintop you're aiming for, who you want to be, what you want to accomplish. And you offer a, counterpoint to this grand mountaintop.

And you talk about micro ambitions, and this is a concept from Tim Mentionin. And I wonder if you can tell us about micro ambitions and, how you, use micro ambition.

Madeleine: Yeah. It's interesting cuz in my book, the chapter on ambition has those two quotes, the one from Neil Gaiman, and then the one from Tim mentioned juxtaposed.

Because I think it is really important to have your mountain. But what Tim mentioned says in his commencement speech, which is really powerful, is that he's never been one to actually have those long-term goals. So I suppose what we could take from that is not necessarily having a mountain necessarily.

He's actually an advocate for micro goals or being micro ambitious and just focusing on the step in front of you. And the reason for that is because if you look too far ahead and you're fixated on that thing in front of you, you might miss what's at the corner of your eye and what's at our periphery or the out of the corner of our eyes, or often those incredible opportunities that we can't plan for.

So even so many people's career, I think, and even if I look back on mine the, column collaboration that we spoke about or having the press and, even the book in the form it is, there were all opportunities that were at the periphery. They weren't far ahead and I like combine those two analogies because I think it's important to have your mountain as an anchor to know which parts the periphery to pay attention to.

I think that can work really well in unison. If you know what your mountain is and you have a sort of outline of, where it is you're headed it means that you won't be necessarily too distracted because there's lots of the periphery. We can actually be f more finely tuned. And at the same time, still just focus on the step in front of us because sometimes focusing on the mountain means that we feel really, far away.

And we judge that and think, oh, I'm not where I wanna be right now. I'm a failure right now. And we can fall between that gap between where we are and, that mountain. And so I think the micro ambition just keeps us planted in the day so we don't fall through that gap, but we can still steadily make our way to the mountain.

Perhaps. There's a lot of mixed metaphor in there. I

Matt: love it though. I, wonder if, would you mind sharing maybe one of your micro ambitions at the moment and what, the, that might mean for you? It might help give us a little context too, like what might be a micro ambition for you in

this moment and if you feel like sharing what might be a, kinda like a mountaintop if you're open to it.

Madeleine: I think something, this is a relatively, this is a practice that I've been. Engaged in for the last few months. And, just a way to be very, micro ambitious in terms of writing. Because I have finished, concluded a big project that was almost a decade long concluded a book and this clean blank empty canvas to, to play with.

And that was overwhelming cause I was like if I can do anything here, I am not doing anything. And so I really wanted something to anchor me in the day. So it's going back to that idea of having the anchor, but also making it very, small because I did get lost for a little while in that.

Empty canvas of okay, it has to be a novel or it has to be the next book. And it was too big. And so now this practice of, actually just taking something from the day and this was inspired there's this beautiful quote by Walt Whitman, which is all about writing into the gush. And so if you feel the inspiration, don't delay it for later, just write into that moment of inspiration no matter what it is.

So it's very spontaneous. And so what I've tried to do each day is write into the gush. And so that's again, just. Taking my phone and taking a note from the day, something I've observed. Maybe a friend said something really wise to me. Maybe the yoga instructor said something wise. Maybe I had an epiphany.

Maybe it was just something beautiful that I saw. Maybe it was a moment of synchronicity and just capturing that in a sentence or two, or just letting the gush kind of flow. So that's been a very micro thing and, that's what I'll do is even, even if it's just one word for, that day it's, at least recorded and then I can go back to it and write more around it.

And now I've started sharing those for the first time. So it's very a little, this scary thing I used to keep in my phone as a little diary. I've started to share those with my paid subscribers on CK as something more intimate for them to connect to, but also a way to flesh them out now as well.

So it's taking these little snippets and expanding them. But the practice is very micro ambitious.

Matt: I love that. And we, you talked at the beginning about living creatively, and this is very much it. You're, the living, was it living into the gush or following the gush?

Madeleine: Oh, the writing into the gush.

I can find that writing into the gush, the yeah, the beautiful, the full quote by Walt Whitman is, stunning. So it's worth, I'll find it and you can share it. We'd

Matt: love to share it. One more question on that. Have you committed to any sort of frequency of publishing those, or is it just when you feel compelled?

Madeleine: So this is very new. So I think it's been week three of actually publishing them. I'm, I've embraced being very inconsistent for a very long time with my projects cuz I think there's something to be said for just, again, having the time and curiosity and allowing things to ebb and flow around our lives.

We don't even sometimes when you have all the time in the world, it's not the most conducive time for your own writing or. Practice. But very recently experimenting with ck. I, wanted to see it's this it's, tricky to determine what should be a free essay or free to subscribers and what should be paid.

And I've started to share free essays, but for more personal things, it's these little snippets. So it's only three weeks of doing that. And because they're snippets from the day, it makes sense to share them as a little bundle from the week. And so now I've committed to sharing them each week on a Sunday.

So it's the first time sharing something weekly and I feel very, ugh. But because it's so small and it, cause it's just these little micro things in the day, it feels quite digestible. And I'm finding myself in a little consistent rhythm, which is just unheard of. But here we are.

Matt: Really cool. Thanks.

We'll make sure to share your subick and we do have some questions about your philosophy with, Subick. Hopefully we can go deeper. Quiet over to your

Parul: part, but I wanted to, yeah, I wanted to just share, Lindsay's put the quote from what Whitman in and it, I'll just read the first line of it. The secret of it all is to write in the gush, the throb, the flood of the moment to put things down without deliberation, without worrying about their style, without waiting for a fit, place, fit, time, or place.

It's a beautiful quote, isn't it? Also, it's so wonderful, but also just hearing you talk and thinking about what Matt said earlier about living the question I, have spoken to writers who feel a pressure after a project is over to have the answer

about what they do next, to know, to have that certainty, and I'm finding it really inspiring to think about how you are just living the question, going with your curiosity.

Actually putting, fairly minimal pressure on yourself

Madeleine: just to see where it goes. Yeah, I guess I put the, wrote the book on not putting pressure on yourself without the first one. I didn't do the day, do the thing today. So it's very much been a reminder just for myself really. And just being able to embrace saying, I don't know.

And what's interesting is that I think that when you give that space and just, you don't, I think when we rush to fill the space, we actually, we rush into things that might not actually be suited and then we of get stuck. And so allowing for the space, and I think it's often, for me anyway, it's a lot longer than I think it will be.

I think I've got a very slow gestation period with ideas. But then looking back, you see it was there all along. Now that I'm getting closer to the next thing, after giving it so much space, I think, oh, there you were hiding. And it was just nice to be able to see it that way.

Parul: Wonderful. We're gonna move shortly just to talk about the writing process itself and sub. I just have one final question regarding the concepts. In your book, you talk about different modes. You talk about focus and rest, order and chaos, company and solitude, and you also have these concepts of absorbing and squeezing.

I wonder if you might talk about any of those, maybe all of them. Yeah. What do they mean to you? How might we apply the

Madeleine: idea of these? Yeah. I think it ties into so many of the themes I think that we've touched on is that everything yeah. There's there's always a cycle, I think. And so for me it's been really important to frame that It can either be the, doing or the thinking.

It can be the creative process. But as a kind of metaphor analogy, I'm just so wary of putting another one in there. But here we are good to go with another metaphor, but I to think of it as us being like sponges in terms of there's a period where we do na need to actually absorb inspiration.

We need to take things in and that could be reading or it could look like nothing. Or it could be thinking it could be restoring. But it's very much about Breathing in that inspiration. And we need to be able to, have something because then as a sponge, we need to then have that inspiration to be able to squeeze and have that outpouring of inspiration and have that action and that doing.

So for me it's been really nice to have those two sort of phases to think of because sometimes I can identify, okay I'm, in absorb mode and it's time for me to take that in. And even recognizing on an individual level that some of us need longer to absorb than others. And that's not a personal failing by any means.

We're all just different. And as I said, I feel like I have a longer period of needing, the ab absorb, absorbing. But then when that's that squeeze is there, sometimes you, need to be careful not to absorb for too long, because that's that would be inertia or you could get soggy.

We don't wanna get soggy. We wanna of know when it's also time to of squeeze. And sometimes there's been periods where I'm like, oh, I'm ready now. I'm actually ready for the, busy period. The action, because that's the flip side of it as well, is that we can also. Sometimes busyness serves us and sometimes our natural mode could be to be busier.

It's really just acknowledging when it is something that might be causing stress or we're again, it's curiosity, isn't it, to look at where we are and what we might need. And identifying, for me, it's just helpful to have that frame of, I need the squeeze. No, I need more absorbing.

So I think that's whether you put it in the metaphor of the creative process or whether you put it as the ebb and flow, or whether you take on the sponge I think it's just helpful to know that we're not linear and we're not the same every day, and we're not the same as other people either.

I think that's the simple truth, but it's, we forget it.

Matt: And we can take whatever metaphor works for us. Yeah. Which so we've covered so much from the book, and just a, quick time check. We probably have about five more minutes from us, and then we will turn it over to everyone listening here.

So now's a good time. If you do have a question from Madeline to pop it into the chat. Is there anything that we haven't covered from your book that you

think it's actually really important for us as writers to talk about or to think about or, maybe just a passing message from the book.

Madeleine: I think that the way that I wrote the book is actually for it to be dipped in and dipped out of, depending on what quandary you're facing or what stumble you have.

So there's a chapter on perfectionism or there's a chapter on routine as we've looked at, or this idea of expectation or balance and, even comparison. So I think it's the imparting messages that, that, I guess overall it's about finding permission to, see what works for you and to acknowledge that we're no one size fits all.

But also that we'll, kind face different challenges along the way and we're never quite done. We don't just beat perfectionism and then we're over. We're there's this sort of we grow with, it. I know that for me as a writer, comparison's been a huge thing.

And I think that's really the, best anti. For me, the whole project of extraordinary routines was about getting up close to the people that I was comparing myself to in many ways, and going behind the scenes and seeing that they had the similar or different stumbles as well, or struggles or self-doubt or questions.

And that kind of really helped me help the comparison dissipate in a way. And now my advice would be to, get up close to comparison if you can or to see how it's a guide for you. So for me, I'm often comparing myself when it is something that I want and so it can alert me to the wants.

And once I identify those things, then the important thing I think is to enact it in your own life in the way that you can. Because the biggest antidote overall is to, do your own thing is the very thing That means that you're paying less attention to what other people are doing, cuz you're finally focused on what it is you want.

But getting your, sense of direction to look at your own life rather than someone else's is, remains a challenge for me. So I just have to keep coming back to those things.

Matt: Thank you so much for your openness here and we do encourage everyone to check out the book. It, is such a nice companion for.

Writing journey. Before we go to audience questions We do, I do wanna touch on CK you've managed to build a very impressive 9,000 subscribers. And I'm curious, you, we talked, you talked about this new experiment of, sharing your kind of what's inspiring you, the writing into the gush and that's for paid subscribers.

I'm curious if you can share your philosophy and maybe it's evolved over time on what you decide to make free, what you decide to make behind the paywall and anything you can share there. Cuz I know there's a lot of writers here who are maybe about to start a stub sack. They're in the middle of it and this might be a, an apt question for them.

Madeleine: I think with CK it's very exciting, first of all. And I think that there's, still so many question marks and there's, no certainly no formula that seems to be the right one. And, so I think I'd encourage anyone who's starting a subs or trying to grow one or just wanting to be there really is to experiment.

And one of the best there's some really great resources on sub themselves, so being part of the writer's hours that they have where you can ask any question is great. Because I saw a little gem there from a sub called Cafe Anne, who's got a great newsletter. And their model is very much donations, so everything's free and it's about sort of those that can supporting it to help.

To help keep it free. And she just said that the more she just delved into the very things that she wants to do and just followed her own fun with her ck the more it started to resonate with other people. So I thought, okay, how do you have the most fun with what you're doing? Is a great place to start.

And so I thought here I am writing these, writing into the gush each day and sharing these little snippets. Maybe if, that's a practice I wanna keep and I wanna commit to myself to do that's fun for me. And so that can be the very thing that can be also what paid subscribers get as an intimate peep as well.

But I guess just to rewind in terms of start starting CK I already had an existing newsletter that I sent very. Ad hoc. So I'd, probably had an email newsletter list that you could sign up to for maybe a three, three or four years. And I'd send one once a month and then I'd go on a bit of roll for a few weeks and then I'd be silent for six months.

So it was incredibly ad hoc, but I think I got a lot of subscribers to that newsletter on MailChimp, just through the Extraordinary Kings website. So probably amassed about 7,000. On that list. And then when I started CK I was

able to import that list and begin with that and just let everyone know, okay, this is now no longer extraordinary routines, but it's my writing that you've been following along.

It's now just generally on things. So I was able to introduce it and explain the project concluding and how this new thing was coming to be. And I think that, you've when you change something like that with the project, I think there's a lot of people that saw that my writing was coming through more and more through extraordinary routines anyway, but you're, expected to get a bit of drop off because people might have been specifically interested in that project.

And so CK being on there now for eight months, it's been able to grow in terms of free subscribers. And I think that's very much through the community on CK. A lot of people can recommend you and obviously you share the articles and so on. But when I started, I had the essays that I would write once a month with a paid subscribers only, and then free subscribers would get.

My curated list of recommendations. So the things that I read that month podcast, I'd listened to, things to see, do quotes, poems a Goodwill Whitman, quoted all those things. So that was in a monthly roundup. And then I didn't see any growth at all in terms of because there was nothing to share cuz the essays were for paid subscribers only.

And so then I decided to experiment and I, wanted the essays to be there for people to discover the work and also to different topics. And then my recommendations, the things that I'm reading, the things that I'm writing. In a way they're more personal, and so it makes sense to reserve them for those who really resonate with your work and offer them something deeper.

So that's now what I'm experimenting with, if that makes sense. Essays free, more personal things for paid subscribers. And I think that's lot of people I think also subscribe to support your writing, and so you can experiment and you can have fun. And yeah, hopefully, again, have no, this is just very much a live experiment with CK but I think it's been more fun to do it this way.

So that's the main thing.

Matt: Yeah, that's an and a nice reminder to have fun with it. And, thanks for being open too and, yeah, sharing your experiments and, this is what we're all about here is is, trying things and I love the way in which you try to hold it lightly. So we'll continue to, follow and root you ru on, root you on from the sidelines.

Thanks Matt. Yeah, you're welcome. Madeline. So we have some questions coming into the chat and I wonder if we turn to those now. We'll try to see how many we can get through in the next 15, 20 minutes or so. So if you would like to show your face wonderful people hopefully you can do that.

Let me make sure you can. Here you go. If you'd like to press that stop video button, you can enter the space and then that way Madeline can see all the wonderful faces who have been listening to every word listening into the gush as we've chatted. And how this will work is if you did ask a question in the chat and your camera's on, we'll give you a chance to ask it and we'll get through as many as we can.

If your camera's off and you ask the question in the chat, we'll ask it on your behalf and we'll, do, we'll see how many we can get through, and Paul and I will take turns picking on you to ask your question. All right. Carl, do you have one lined up? Nice. Yes.

Parul: I think we begin with Antonio. Antonio Taylor, we'd like to ask you a question.

Really silly asking

Madeleine: it now. But Madeline, I you about for years

Parul: the

Madeleine: podcast, I know you read so

Parul: closely and with such

Madeleine: attention, and I just wondered how you build that

Parul: into your sort of creative

Madeleine: practice almost. Because again, I feel so guilty sometimes

Parul: about it reading something in the.

Madeleine: Yes. It's so nice to see a face to a name, Antonio. So it's lovely to read. Meet you. Yeah. Oh know what you mean. I think that in a way we could reframe that as reading into the Gush. I love that we're listening into the gusher

writing to the Gush. We're reading into the Gush. And so in a way to, to read more, there's this great advice to just have books scattered around and be able to pick them up or read in a line, read in those pockets.

Those splodge time it might just be 10 minutes here or there. And yeah it's better than we, read so much scrolling out or I do anyway scrolling my phone. So I feel the guilt-free option might be the book. But in terms of, I guess collecting the things that I read, I am quite yeah, like fastidious about if I, when I finish a book, I will have gone through and, collected the quotes from it.

And then I put that either in a Google Doc or now I use an app called Minot, M i l a n o t E. It's a Melbourne App, Melbourne-based app. And it's if Evernote and Trello and Notion had a baby it's, I do this because the Canvas is really flexible and you can it's a really great app and I, actually organize my entire book on Milli note.

But it's now where I keep quotes and things because I'm able to start to categorize them. And so I start to see themes start to develop. And those themes are typically what become an essay. It could be something that I decide to pitch as a freelance article. It could be something that I see as fitting for the newsletter.

And it means that when I then decide to write that because, oh, okay there's some quotes or poems or thoughts starting to build in this one topic area. I can then export them from the app and have a a, word document. And then there's no fear of the blank page. Cause there's already some things there and it's just a matter of.

sorting out that puzzle. And again, that's exactly what I did for the book chapters I had, or started to organize them in this app, which then meant I could export them no blank page and just started to work through them. And including quotes I'd found or quotes from my archive of interviews were all the research was ready to go.

So I hope that sort of answers the question about what I do to, organize all the little findings and things. Yeah, it's, thank you.

Matt: Thanks Antonio, for the question. Fox has a question about marketing. Can you share what your marketing plan looked like, either in the proposal or maybe how it.

Madeleine: Ah, for the book. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. So that was, I, it had a breakdown of my audience. Demographics was important. The, readership of extraordinary teams, the followers of my social media, the newsletter list that I had at the time. So having sort of the demographics and the numbers and the stats.

So that was part of I who we could market to or the existing audience as part of it. And then it just had some ideas and there were. I'm looking back. A lot of them didn't happen, but they were in the marketing plan, but they were very ambitious ideas and I guess to demonstrate your creativity, your commitment.

One of them was to to do a, a dedicated podcast season to time with the book launch. So I think that they do like that that idea of maybe creating a little podcast to to, go with the book. Different maybe existing contacts that you have either in media or maybe other writers who could blurb your book or who you could send a book to.

So actually it had a list of people that I'd interviewed and their corresponding social media following. And because I'd interviewed them, we, the plan was that we could send 'em the book and they could share. So basically it, it was a free for all for ideas and they, some of them were outlandish. I think I even, what did I, thought that I would sit because it was a, for the US I was like, I could sit in Times Square and I could interview people about their routine.

That didn't happen. But you can really get creative with it. But I think just as a, as the basics, I think it's about having some demographic information and a couple of ideas that just show that you're committed to it and any contacts that you might have as well.

Matt: I'm curious of the things that you did do, you have a sense on what shifted the needle the most?

Or maybe it's too, soon to tell?

Madeleine: Oh it's, very hard to say. And, I'm not someone who can, I think, going into stats for me, it, it just it, it throws off my. Focus because it all that becomes about numbers. And I try not to, as much as we're, bombarded with them really, and we're forced to look at them and to pay attention to them.

They do make me squeamish. And so I, haven't looked at sales and things like that. But all I can say is that I don't think people really know what works necessarily. So I had the fortunate fun experience of being on the Today Show

in the us which is huge. It's the thing that people want a, as an author, you wanna be on the Today Show to move those books.

I don't think I moved the books much from what I heard. So it's interesting that even the things that you're told or the industry kind of things don't necessarily work. I think it's it's, almost yeah we, don't really know. It's still, we're experimenting or it's anyone's guess.

Matt: It's reassuring.

Madeleine: Yeah. Yeah. And terrifying at the same time, whatever.

Matt: Yeah. Reassuring and terrifying. Thanks for sharing.

Parul: Next up gonna f not fuck. Sorry. Rose. Rose, do you have a question? If you'd like to ask him?

Madeleine: Hi Madeline. Thank you so much. It was such an inspiring talk. Just thinking back to your very first interviews for extraordinary routines and I'm just curious about how the questions in those interviews evolved the more interviews you did.

Cuz I, I'm really keen to start doing interviews, but I just had this fear that I'll do the first few and, just ask really lame questions and waste them. And it's, stopping me getting started. Does any advice you could offer about those first interviews? Yeah. Oh, that's such a good question, rose.

I'm, I'll try to think back, but I think that y I was asking people what they had for breakfast, so I don't think you can get much LaMer than that in a way. So I think that at the beginning the questions were very specific and it was very clear that I was looking for some kind of answer. I was looking for my problem of not having a routine or not being as productive as I'd like to be solved by this person.

I I wanted their recipe. And so they were very specific and in a way, very closed, because if I'm just looking for this one thing, it's not as open as just following my curiosity. And so the question starts to change because it was no longer about me getting a secret from them. It was about me relating to them and seeing, oh, do you have these sort of stumbles in your day too?

Like where, do you of trip up in your day? And so often then, The questions would change according to where I felt like I was maybe stumbling as well. And

I think I became more open. So there was definitely a formula cause I was asking about people's routine and what their day looked like.

And that really just would just ask them to step through the day and they wouldn't ask questions along. And then it would just be a little bit more open-ended in terms of maybe there was something, if they'd written a book that I would have done my research and asked specifically about. But it would very much be far more about listening and finding those gems in the moment.

And I think that's what can be really wonderful is have done your research. I think that can be really enriching as a guide. And I think people, when they're being interviewed, really appreciate the research. Like tonight is just an incredible experience being interviewed by man peril because they've just done such incredible research and it feels great as an interviewee.

So I think there's no stupid questions if you are there having done your work, being curious and listening, because then I think when you're listening, you can find the most enriching next question. So don't close it off. Keep it open and be curious. Amazing. That's so useful. Thank you.

Matt: Thanks for that question, rose.

I'll, just echo it. I, think this is something Parla and I have experienced too. Is actually yeah, doing the research but, I find the most interesting thing is the stuff that's not on the script that we, one of us just follows because we're interested in it. Yeah. But also it doesn't mean even we're like over a hundred interviews in and we still ask stupid questions.

So Yeah,

Madeleine: there's probably actually I like to embrace asking stupid questions cause I think people are afraid to, and I think that's you can get a lot from a stupid question as well.

Matt: Yeah. Thanks for the question, rose. Alice has a question. Do you plan out your writing time at the beginning of the week or do you just let yourself go with the flow?

Madeleine: I think that was my biggest trap was planning it so rigidly because that time would then come and I wouldn't write, and then it would then I wouldn't write when the team c when I could write in that splodge. I suppose

that's what splodge time for me was that I'd write out a draft schedule of when I would write.

Just wouldn't work out that way cuz life can interrupt a different priorities shift and you might get an email that you then need to attend to in that moment. So I know that's not necessarily the most focused advice, but I think that's what's brilliant about having these focused periods to, to actually book into something like the right London Writer Salon.

But for me, if I'm self-directed it really, to be honest, very deadline driven. So I need to come up with ingenious ways to, if there's no deadline, which there isn't for a book at the beginning when you're just in the proposal stage. There was very much years and years of patience, but then having that fake deadline, I think can be really powerful.

So I've, been a fake deadline for friends before in terms of following up for them. And I have experimented with that in the past. But at the moment it's just very much when something might be due. And so I think it's accountable in terms of having freelance editors. For CK I think that's the inbuilt kind of accountability of readers if you've told them, okay, I'm now sending this every Sunday that kind of has the deadline.

And so the writing time might be squeezed up to that moment beforehand. And I just, I haven't broken that habit. I just go right to the deadline. And again, it's something just to work with. There's a really great poem that I shared actually just yesterday on social media about it took me so long to do this.

Like I could have, you could start at midday rather than having taken all day. There's an efficiency in a way. If you acknowledge. Wait till the last minute. So maybe I can actually spend all these this time beforehand, thinking, reflecting, allowing the process to be this isn't answering the question at all in terms of writing time, but all to say maybe to the last moment is, how I write.

Matt: Thank you for that question. Yeah, thanks for the question. So I think that's all for audience questions, but we do, we have one more for you, Madeline and I'm not sure if you happen to have this passage handy, but there was a passage about ambition from the book that, and we have it handy if you don't.

And I wonder to close this, if you might read it for us. I

Parul: don't believe mad has it.

Madeleine: No, I don't. Yeah, I should have told you that. Sorry. No,

Matt: totally. That's our fault. So I'm gonna share it in the quote or in the chat. And I wonder, if you don't mind if you can read it for us. It's a. There it is.

Madeleine: Oh, gorgeous.

Ambition itself is not a character flaw. It can guide and propel us, but when we use it to fill our internal sense of emptiness, we run in circles. Instead of asking what ambition, what goal, what achievement will make us special and make us feel whole. We can com keep jostling with the incomplete parts of ourselves.

We can stop worrying about how the rest of our lives will turn out and simply get through the smaller challenges we will encounter today. We live in this day, after all, not in the one we are waiting for.

Matt: Oh, Madeline, I think that sums up today your message. Thank you so much for your time today. We encourage everyone to, to check out your book.

We'll, make sure to share links to it. I didn't do the thing today. Madeline, any final words for us? Passing comments, thought.

Madeleine: Oh, I wish I had something picky and wise, but this has just been so much fun and delightful and delicious. Obsessed with saying delicious at the moment. So thank you. It's just been such a treat.

I've, followed along to your newsletter for so long, just for the little quotes and events and opportunities that you put in there. So thank you for all the work that you do. It's Thank you

Matt: so much Madeline. Thank you so much. Huge fans of yours. A what do you think? I think we all owe Madeline a underwriter salon.

Please, yourself,

Parul: please yourself. Let's give Madeline what we've got.

Madeleine: Yeah. Oh, thank you. Was so nice to see all your fans. Thank you so much for coming along. Thank you,

Parul: Madeline. It's really wonderful. So brilliant. Thank you. And before you go, now before we go, we have two copies of Madeline's book to give away.

So if you would like a copy, please raise your digital hand and Matt will choose to

Matt: write it. Yes. Alright. If you'd like a copy of Madeline's book, I'm just gonna make sure I can see all people. Even the none. Video participants. All right. Two copies, one goes to Rose. Thank you for the question Rose, and one goes to Michelle Paper blogging.

Michelle, congrats Rose. Congrats. Michelle, email us. Thank you with your best mailing address. Hello, at lender writers salon.com, and we'll make sure to send that book off to you. Madeline, thanks again for everything. Thank

Parul: you for your wisdom, your time. Wonderful,

Madeleine: interview. Thank you. Thank you all for your time and coming along.

Thank you.

Matt: Thank you. All right. Friends, thank you for being here. Thanks for your questions. Thanks for your presence. We love doing this with and for you. Yeah. Next writer's house in 35 minutes.

Parul: Exactly. Hope to see you there. You will love. Happy rest of your day. Okay, night. All right everyone. Bye bye.

Thanks so much. Thanks, Malcolm. Thank you everyone.

Matt: Bye. Cheers, friends, we'll send out the recording.