

#228 We Create Magic

Dr Susanne Evans, David Lee and Me

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[00:00:00] **David:** All righty. for a change of pace, I will be facilitating said conversation, which, really looking forward to this. 'cause this is actually one of my favorite topics. The whole idea of how we can bring our best self to the world.

and so it'll be neat to hear your practices, guiding principles, et cetera. what just popped into my mind actually, after I got invited to facilitate this conversation was, a really powerful experience that I had on nine 11. The, in the United States, the original, nine 11. And what happened was actually the morning of, while things were happening, I was actually giving a talk, to a group of HR professionals.

It was an association meeting and it was all about keeping your well filled so you can bring your best self to the world. And it was really well received. I love sharing stuff that I think will be helpful. Just had a great feeling when it was over. It's like I'm, helping to make the world a better place and I'm making a difference.

And after, the applause and everything, I see a friend of mine walking down the aisle toward me and we were supposed to have coffee right after the meeting, and her face looked like totally stricken. what? did something bad happen to her? And then she told me what happened? And I remember being so disoriented, it was one of those rug pulled out from under you.

The earth opens up what I imagine people who've been in big earthquakes. I've been in small ones, but big ones where actually the earth opens up and how like literally ungrounded you feel. And I was so disoriented. All I could do was go out surfing that day. Or actually the ways were too big for my surfing ability, so I went out boogie boarding, but just to be in the water and grounded in that sense.

But when it was over, I just had this sense of futility. what's the point of me trying to do my work, against this craziness and evil in the world. And that feeling really dragged on for weeks. That sort of why bother, unmoored feeling. And then finally I reached out to, a colleague of mine who's probably, I don't know, 10 years older than I am.

I really, respected her, thought she was very wise and she also did speaking and training, facilitating. And I asked her like, how do you keep going on, in the midst of this? And you think about, in today's world it's even more of a question. And one of the things that she said that I just so needed to hear, she said.



one of the things I do is I remember, something, a mentor of mine said, and it's something I'm sure both of you have heard, he said something like, when the people who are trying to bring light into the world, pack up their tent and go home, then the only ones who are impacting the world or the ones who are bringing darkness, I'm like, okay, I'll get back on the horse and I'll fight the f good fight.

But what's germane to our conversation is what really hit me, at least, like the explanation I came to for me was stop trying to make an impact. On this big stage of the world thinking that's what you have to do. And then how can I get more micro and looking at my little corner of the world? Yeah. and make that better in those little day-to-day interactions, how I respond, et cetera.

So that's what comes up for me when I think about intention. so Susanne what comes up for you in terms of how you think about it?

[00:04:38] **Susanne:** Thank you so much for sharing that story. 'cause it's, it is a great story and I think one that probably resonates with most people these days. I, in recent times have definitely been through periods when the state of the world just feels so, Sad and overwhelming that you just start to feel tired, It, like what, as exactly as you said, what is the point of me trying to do these things because, I'm not making any difference. And I think you are exactly right that idea of controlling the things that you can control is really important.

And so for me, definitely showing up as my best self is really being quite disciplined about focusing on things I can actually do something about and trying not to worry about the things that I can't and being quite mindful in my practice about that. for example, I'm very, rigid about the news that I consume.

So I don't consume a lot of news because I find it just, it sets me up badly for the day. and I, and it. Affects my state mentally. So I am very mindful about how I consume the news if I want to, if I wanna find out something that's going on. and I'm mindful about my use of social media for the same reason, because I can feel myself going down a sort of spiral if I spend too much time on it.

And so it's having these kind of practices of trying to bring in more things that bring me joy and getting rid of the things that don't, and being quite, robust in that. And I feel like this year for me so far has been a really interesting year of some really lovely new things coming into my life and new pieces of work and new clients, which is fantastic.

But also getting rid of stuff that no longer brings me joy or no longer serves me and actually being quite, Conscious about that, and actually it feels quite good to, to step away from things as well as to step into things. Sorry, that was probably a long answer.



[00:06:35] **David:** No long answers are great.

1, 1, 1 quick thing I just want to, respond to when you talked about social media

a simple, like practical, tool or strategy I heard, and I think it was from Chris Williamson of Modern Wisdom Love the podcast where he, I dunno if he was quoting a guest or he came up with this, was simply notice after you watch something or read something on social media, notice your energy level and your emotional state after, and ask yourself, is this what I want?

It really makes it like a very granular practice. and just like you, it's like I, I was sharing with another friend, recently how there's certain, so social events that I find really fascinating. like watching a spy thriller or a murder mystery. And so I can get caught up in it, but then I realize, no, it's darkening my mood.

So don't indulge that curiosity. okay, you've had enough. Let's bring in some light. What about Susan? Yeah.

[00:07:58] **Susan:** I won't say I'm the opposite because that's not true and it's not about the darkness but there is something about, for me, thriving in chaos. And thriving when the chips are down. And so my response to the world being the way it is at the moment, in particular, let's say nine 11 is almost too long ago.

I was so young. but it, my response now is I always think of Margaret Mead and her quote that, never doubt the strength of a small group of people to change the world. Because nothing else ever has something like that. I'm paraphrasing, but basically we all have. The ability, I believe the capacity, whatever the word is, that suits you to make a difference in the world.

And I really like David, how you talked about that being in your immediate environment almost. And so for example, I remember bumping into somebody a couple of Christmases ago when I was back in my hometown and I had worked with this individual when we were teenagers in a local pub, right? And now we're in our forties.

And he stopped me and he said that time we were in our forties and he stopped me and he said, we haven't spoken in your Susan. And he said, something I always remember about you is I was younger than you and you asked me one day to show you how to do something. And he said for me, that was crazy that somebody older than me would admit to me, they didn't know how to do something and then ask them, or asked me to show them, and I was like.



Wow. Imagine, let's say 30 years later that this person has remembered that tiny little event I hadn't remembered it. He said it was about brushing the floor. I definitely doubt it was about brushing the floor, but I think for the most part, we're never privy to what other people think about us or the impact we've had on them because we tend to only speak well when people are dead.

We tend to talk about all the times people annoy us, and then we stand up and do these wonderful eulogies, or when they're leaving an organization and you realize the impact you've had on people and in the background there you can see. Possibly I've got under my book poster, there's a little yellow book, and that book is when I left my last organization.

And it's filled with very genuine, beautiful outpourings of the impact that I had on other people's lives that I had to leave the organization perhaps to be aware of. So that's one thing. And then the, I suppose the other thing is your surfing story reminded me just of ripples and I think that's it, isn't it as well?

It's, it was the water and the ripples, and we can make a difference in people's lives. And even by taking the news out of our own lives, we're making a difference if it doesn't serve us. So I think it's about knowing ourselves and what works for us. That's what helps us be at our best. And I feel more determined that the world needs, it needs new light, it needs new people to believe in.

It needs new, fresh energy. It's not AI that's going to save us. It really isn't. And.

Hopelessness

is so dark as well. So I think it's, it takes us to a dark place that it's not that we're going to be dark as in evil, but dark as in checked out. And there's something about keeping a spark of hope always and that brings us back to the light. Hope is so necessary in the world we're in. And it's not naive and it's not any of those things.

Hope is something that when we can connect back into that feeling, we consider possibilities. Again,

[00:12:47] **David:** possibilities. Damn, there's a whole lot here. I made a bunch of notes, as you can see, but I want to give Suzanne first dibs at. Responses to any of the things that Susan shared?

[00:13:00] **Susanne:** I absolutely agree. I think that's the key isn't it, is to be hopeful for the future and to be hopeful that you can make a difference, even in a small way.



something massive like climate change, for example. sometimes that can feel a bit overwhelming and you see the latest statistics or you see a news program or you read something and you're like, oh my goodness, it's. It's all a nightmare. But then we as individuals on our own, can't change that.

But what we can do is to be hopeful in our own environment. we recycle, we try and fly less often. We, these things you can do and you have to have hope for the future. And I think I do, I am a very hopeful and optimistic person and I think that is the key to just keeping going.

and I also think. I'm often around younger people, so my daughter is 21, so that means I'm often around young people and I find being around young people incredibly hopeful, because they do have that energy and they have a different view of the world. And I think that's perhaps key is to.

To be with people who are different from you so that you can learn from them. Your story, Susan, about that gentleman remembering you asking how to do something. I think we need to be taking opportunities to learn from other people as much as we can from their life experiences and from their perspectives.

Because otherwise you get trapped in this echo chamber of people who just are like you. And if you look around your own friends, often our friends are often very similar to us. So it's good sometimes to seek out people who are different, to give you that different perspective. And when I was prepping for today, thinking about, what are the things that help me show up best, I thought, I felt really strongly actually seeing people in real life and spending time with people and having really interesting, stimulating conversations for me is.

One of the secrets. Conversations like this as well, but just the chance to chew over things with people I think is so important.

[00:15:12] **David:** Yeah. that last thing that you shared, about interesting conversations, it makes me think of one of my favorite concepts that I know I've talked about with both of you over the years is the concept of power ups.

Good old Jay McGonigal and her book super better. so for people who've never played video games, any sort, translating a concept of a power up from a video game, anything that makes your character stronger, in our world, it's any activity that increases our energy and boosts our mood. And so I think that's one of the most practical, actionable techniques.

Is be tuned into what energizes you, what brings you joy, and make sure you're not scrimping on that in your life. So I love that. you, when you talked, Suzanne about the, the importance of hope. man, amen to that. And, one of the things that I find really helpful



when I'm slipping into that there's no hope for our crazy world, is, and this gets back to the keeping in mind the tool of power ups is consciously looking for.

And actually I curate videos of people overcoming, adversity and even yeah, even some of the charming ones of There's, I'm sure there's more than one video, but of this horse that was way in the back of the race and all of a sudden, here it comes and ends up winning at the last second, nobody ever would've predicted that.

and it made me think of an interview that I just listened to a couple of days ago where this person overcame tremendous adversity and is now like doing good work in the world. And I loved it. The interviewer said, you're like the four minute mile. And it's an analogy I hadn't thought about for a long time.

So people don't remember. for years, It was quote, a known fact that no human could ever beat the four minute mile mark Roger Banister does. And then dozens of people, do shortly after. And it just made me think about, and like back to your story, Susan, with the guy from 30 years ago, the impact that you made on him we never know, just us.

Like whether we're intentionally trying to be our best self or just being you, like you were just being you back then. You weren't trying to, how it can inspire either somebody, inspire them to. practice a new way of being in the world. so let's say with him maybe being humble enough to ask people younger than him, or you might be the four minute mile, some real dark night of the soul that you went through or I went through, might be that breakthrough story for somebody else.

Susan, any thoughts? And there's so much more I wanna say about your stuff, but I don't wanna go on and on.

[00:18:37] **Susan:** Yeah. Overcoming adversity and. I like that you've talked about the horse race because adversity we think is the earthquake or the nine 11 often, but adversity comes in all shapes and sizes, and it's very easy to dismiss one person's adversity as not being challenging enough, or, oh, that's not really difficult.

And I think because we, we are all unique. We all have been brought up in our own ways. What goes on inside of us doesn't go on inside of anyone else in the way we process and consider and our experiences and everything. And some people have lives that you just can't imagine living because they just from the outside.

Just seem like the worst life ever. But there's also the opposite, isn't there? Where from the outside it looks like the best life ever, but we don't know how people got there and adversities, they've overcome and so on. And I think like a lot of things in life, it's when we look back that we appreciate those stepping stones or those breadcrumbs.



When you're going through the adversity, you are in it and it's often a dark place and you don't go, oh, this is going to save me and I can use this later in life to inspire others. That's not what it's about. I suppose I always come back to. Sharing stories of adversity from your own perspective, your experience, the power in them is helping others see that they're not alone.

And I think that always in times of adversity that I've gone through, I always felt alone. And even I wonder still if I was going some through something or when I go through something again, will I have that feeling of aloneness? I believe it's a universal experience. And when you see other people have gone through similar.

It opens you back up. It's that spark of hope again, isn't it? that's why it's so important to share stories and share experiences. It's not about you going, look at me, I survived. It's about laying the yellow brick road for the people coming after you. That's what I think.

And the other thing I was going to say earlier is that impact is never linear either. It's not if I do this, then that happens. We cannot look at life linearly, even though we do. Like I'm 52 and I was 51 and I'll be 53, But it's not like that. Something that I put in motion in my twenties could come up later, or we just don't know where things coalesce or integrate in our lives.

And I think that's quite magical as well because facing into older years and hearing so much about ageism and everything, that's a bit hopeless. I think. Like I am still young. I've got so much energy, like I am ready to take things on and make that difference. And I think I've gone off now on a complete rant.

It's like everyone has a contribution to making this world, everyone. And we do not know how impactful that contribution may be. Impact is not about scale, it's about the difference it makes in people's lives. And if you see that while you're alive, present to your family or your neighborhood or your colleagues, amazing.

And if it goes beyond, wow.

[00:22:47] **Susanne:** I really like what you said about impact and like story sharing. So I was asked to speak on a panel, towards the end of last year about resilience and to share stories of resilience. And it was an amazing day. It was a female orientated day, really inspiring, but I was like. Fourth on the panel fourth of five, and all these amazing women are telling these stories about resilience.

And I'm like, oh no. my story is really tiny and co embarrassing, they were like loss and death and illness and business catastrophe. And I was like, my story was basically about how I was midway through doing my doctorate and it all got a bit much for me and I had to stop.



and it's the first time in my life I'd ever failed at anything. and it was a big deal for me at the time. and I learned a huge amount from it. But there is that kind of feeling like, oh my goodness, that. It's not important enough. It's not big enough. But actually, I told my story and it was great to share it.

And afterwards I had so many people come up to me and say, thank you for sharing that. 'cause that's happened to me. and I framed my story as a by saying, I started it by saying I'm a good girl and my whole life I've been a good girl. I went to school, I worked hard, I got the grades.

I went to university, I got a good job, I got married, I had a child, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, all these things. And then suddenly it was like one thing, too many, and it all fell over. and that seemed to really resonate with people. but in the moment I had this awful moment of oh, I shouldn't be up here.

I don't have anything to say. It's not as meaningful. But there was somebody there, a coach who worked with trauma and she came on and did a session afterwards and she was saying that trauma, we think of trauma as big things, but actually it isn't. It's whatever it is that affects you. And I think that's such a good realization and for all of us, when we are going through difficult times and adversity, we need to remind ourselves that it doesn't have to be massive, but it can still really affect us.

[00:24:46] **David:** Yeah, it's interesting, your example makes me think of, an epiphany that I had years ago when I was, early into following David Whyte and, his amazing stories of the Galapagos and, Mountain climbing in Bhutan, and here I'm, my little life and I'm like, oh God, my stories are pedestrian compared to that.

And then it hit me, just like with your story, Susanne versus some of the more dramatic ones is most of our lives are in the simple day-to-day experience. And that's where the challenges are mostly, and that people can relate to. And then it made me think of another thing when Susan, you're talking about that alone feeling when you're going through a hard time.

It's it, the synchronicities are in life are just so fascinating. I just actually pulled up from a talk that I did in the mid two thousands titled, from Exile to Pilgrimage and. It was about an epiphany that I had from being immersed in David Whyte's work So I first saw him in 1998. And so during that chapter of his career, he was really focusing on the experience of exile and, feeling well, you know what feeling exile is about.

and I could really relate to that as a, the stranger in a strange land feeling like not fitting in on earth and what's this whole human journey thing, blah, blah, blah. And then I got introduced to Parker Palmer's work and in his, I think it's Dare to Speak book he. Talks about seeing life as pilgrimage.



And this is obviously not a quote, but it was we're all on our unique pilgrimages and as we're like trudging along to whatever we're doing, there's all these other people on their pilgrimage. And actually What really brought it together for me was at that time, a friend of mine was walking the Camino that, the pilgrimage walk.

And I'm like, that's the perfect metaphor for life. Everybody's walking the Camino for their own re yeah. And they're in their own world, but there's all these other people who are doing it with them separately. Together. And. When we're feeling, and I certainly know that feeling too, of being like, I'm the only one burdened with this, and boy this sucks and everything.

And they're like, no. Everybody else is on their pilgrimage dealing with their challenges. So having that bigger perspective from exile to pilgrimage, I just love that.

[00:27:57] **Susanne:** That's a really funny synchronicity. 'cause when I came on this call today, Susan said, I like your necklace. It's got the Camino symbol on it.

[00:28:07] **David:** Oh my God.

[00:28:11] **Susanne:** That's universe. Universe moves in mysterious ways.

[00:28:14] **David:** Yeah.

[00:28:17] **Susanne:** I have always wanted to walk the Camino. Actually,

[00:28:21] **Susan:** I've done from maybe I'll li Lisbon to Santiago. Did

[00:28:25] **Susanne:** you?

[00:28:26] **Susan:** Yeah, I did. About, it's oh, almost eight years ago now. It took me about four weeks,

[00:28:37] **David:** I would imagine.

[00:28:37] **Susan:** What

[00:28:37] **David:** was that like?

[00:28:40] **Susan:** So it was so interesting, David, because as you were speaking before you got to the Camino, I was like, what David is talking about reminds me so much of the Camino.



And then you come out with a Camino and I'm like, oh my God. and I can relate my Camino four week journey to so many other things in life as well. Like writing a book, actually menopause, all of these different things that I can put like Camino journey alongside and 'cause the first week of it was like, oh, excitement, this is something new and a novelty and it's going to be amazing.

maybe the first two or three days and then the feet start getting sore. And the reality of having to find accommodation every night and where's the next meal coming from. And the focus really becomes on what am I going to eat? Where am I going to sleep, and how are my feet? And everything else goes out the window.

And then the reminder that you're on this is a journey. This is part of the pilgrimage. And if you're not present, you will get lost. And I did I went five kilometers out of my way because I wasn't paying attention to the signs. Those lovely shells are everywhere and arrows, and if you miss a marker, you're gone.

And that brings you back to, what am I doing this for? And then, you start to meet people, your feet start getting better, you take a rest. 'cause I didn't wanna rest. It was like, no, I have to keep going every day. And basically my partner and my brother pretty much ordered me from afar to take a day off.

And I arrived at this hotel and I was delirious from the heat. It was 35 degrees. I got to the counter and I was like, just, I'd nearly given up halfway up this hill. I was just like, yeah, it was awful. And the receptionist looks at me and she just says, breathe. And it was such a reminder to back to the breath and that's all it was.

So then I started to go, oh, there's just one foot in front of the other as long as the feet aren't sore and so on. And by the last week there is just joy, like absolute joy. And I'm passing other people who are starting off their journeys and you see them in pain and they don't wanna talk to anyone.

And you go, it's okay. They're gonna learn their own way and blah, blah, blah. And then the weirdest of all, you don't want it to stop. I did not want to stop walking when I got to Santiago. I was like, no. That can't be the end. What do I do now? That was amazing. Yeah, exactly. So there is this incredible, like it's the adversity, isn't it?

You overcome the adversity, you get into your stride, you go beyond yourself and all your suffering and your pain and your thinking, and you have fun.

[00:31:44] **Susanne:** Wow. I admire you for doing that. I really do. I, it's on my bucket list doing that one day



[00:31:51] **David:** on a very mundane but practical level man, what a cool story. But also what a great example of a very practical, tactical tactic that I'm sure both you do and find helpful. And I do, if I'm feeling either low energy or stalled out, not necessarily walk the Camino, but do some activity where I see a result and then you get that dopamine hit and you're like, yeah, I can do the real hard stuff now.

And so that's another simple, like a great example of using a very, Fascinating and unique experience to illustrate a really useful tactic. your case. It's a big win, in everyday life. It's a small win to dopamine released, boost the energy level, et cetera. And what a also, man, what a another great example of when we're going through a hard time to remind ourselves we could do hard stuff.

Like I bet you think about early Camino versus at the end we're like, yeah, let's do another Camino here. you can never forget that lesson. That's cool.

[00:33:21] **Susan:** I remember one of the most striking things that has stayed with me all those years was, my feet were like, people were talking about me on the Camino because my feet were so bad.

I had the worst blisters. I hardly ever get blisters. And they were just awful. And a lot of it was road walking. But anyway, I'm I, one of the days that I, that it was a low day, I bumped into two people that I had met two weeks earlier, like early on or maybe 10 days earlier. And they didn't know each other, but they were walking together.

So they were doing the walk together. And I said, this road walking is really slowing me down because I was on my, and the woman looked at me and she said, Susan, did you ever think that maybe slowing down is exactly what you need? And I was like, whoa.

And there was something about, I was making it harder on myself, like I was the one driving the agenda of having to get to this place and having to do these things. No one was forcing me. And the realization that we don't make things easier on ourselves when we can. I know I often chose the Har road for whatever reason, but, yeah, the tendency was there to prove something.

But to whom and for what

[00:34:53] **Susanne:** I took from the story that kind of the power of the pause and how it's. Knowing when to stop is so important, and I recognize it in my own life. And going back to the story I told at that event, that was exactly it. And I think I know now that I need time to do things sometimes.



So I, I have days when I'm incredibly focused and can get a lot done, and I have other days when I can't. So if I'm up against it with a deadline, I will not be at my best. If actually I've got time to do something and time to sleep on something and then come back and look at it the next day, that's when I do my best work.

And I think it's taken me about 50 years picking that one out. But it's, I can't do things last minute. I can't rush stuff, a deadline for me, someone saying, I need this. By the end of the day, you're not gonna get the best outta me doing that. Whereas actually, if I can work really hard all day on something, and then the next day.

I can spend time like rereading it and looking at it again, that's where I do my best work. I had a great day yesterday, really focused day. I was really in flow state all day. Got so much done, wake up this morning and I was like, nah, that's not gonna happen today. So I took the dog for a walk instead, a long walk, quite outside, and by mid morning I was all right.

But if I'd had something I had to do at nine o'clock in the morning, I probably, I would've done it of course, but I wouldn't have got much joy out of it. I think.

[00:36:22] **David:** I love it. That's a great example of, I, I find both personally because yeah, I have a lot of those days, like you started out this morning where it's oh God, I, there's no creative juice, no enthusiasm, et cetera.

and so one of the things I think a lot about is the interplay between. whatever state I'm in, in this moment. And then the stuff that I have to do is this about me respecting the state that I'm in and just chilling, like going for the walk, going in the ocean or whatever. Or am I being asked to apply my state change tools to shift myself into a different state and like developing the intuition, awareness of which am I being asked for?

But not being a Johnny OneNote and always thinking like I gotta, gotta plow through this and end up like doing a lousy work product when if I just walk the dog like you did, then, I feel all energized, et cetera.

[00:37:35] **Susanne:** I. And I do think that, getting outside for me is that shift.

ideally by the sea, but I live too far from the sea. but just being outdoors, wandering around, even in on a horrible day, just a change of scenery. If I'm wrestling with a problem, just going out and doing something or going for a swim or something like that is, is the way to fix it for me.

[00:37:59] **Susan:** Yeah, I think we're, I don't know where it comes from, whether it comes from school or whatever, but we were trolled, try harder, focus more, all of these things that aren't really necessarily the best way to get something done. And because then you go



into work and the workplace is designed around being present, being in the room, not necessarily being fully present, but being visible as being productive and all of these kind of things and.

Actually, we ebb and flow, don't we? And that is not a nine to five ebb and flow. That is a state, we can have three or four days of full on amazingness and a month of nothingness or whatever. and learning your own rhythm is so important, but there's still, I don't know, it's almost like a permission slip still sometimes to do that, to, to sc off in the afternoon or, it feels like I need to ask someone, is it okay if I don't show up today?

But the difference between not showing up that day and actually showing up. Now for this conversation there, there's no comparison. When our best selves show up, we create magic in ourselves, for ourselves, for others, with others, and I think it's always there. I think the capacity to access that is always there, but it needs rest. It does need to recharge, it does need rest, but it's always there and that's incredible as well. We can rely on it, but we have to treat it right.

[00:39:56] **David:** Boy, if anybody. Is struggling with giving themselves permission to do the rest piece. I recommend that they, at the very least, watch, a Dan Pink video based on his book when, where he gives amazingly to disturbing research on the impact of lack of rest and that, the impact. Susan you talked about ebbs and flow, it's, a term ultradian rhythm.

So you know, the 90 to 120 minutes, the ups and downs throughout the day. And like one example that he talks about is, the incredibly high percentage of medical mistakes that happen between two and four in the afternoon or, CEO earnings call, the reports that they do and saying something that's disastrous to the price share, that's because they did it during that natural trough and energy level, et cetera.

It gives a whole bunch of other examples. yeah, I, and it's funny you mentioned that. 'cause I was thinking, I went for a walk in the sunshine before this, also, and I was thinking like, okay, what's important to me? And boy, getting enough rest, it's just so hard to be your best self when you're not getting enough rest.

And it's like, why constantly fight your physiology? Like, how about work with it? Yeah.

[00:41:38] **Susanne:** I also think it's that concept of active rest, which was a new one to me relatively recently. But, this year I've been trying to do more, artist dates. So Julia Cameron talks about taking yourself off on an artist date every week, ideally to do something on your own that brings you joy.

And, it can be anything but something that, that you really want to do. And, I haven't done it every week, but I have really been making an effort to get myself off and go and do things.



and the first thing was really thinking about what those things might be for me, and making a list of them.

So there's been a lot of visits to art galleries and museums, which as you both know, is a real passion of mine. but also I've booked myself onto, An archeological dig. I did one last year, which was amazing, but I was actually in the field digging and honestly, at the end of it, I felt like I'd been run over by a bus.

It's such hard work. So this time I'm gonna be in the Bone Lab at Durham University, analyzing bone for two days So I'm trying to build these into my schedule and really being firm about the fact they are in the diary and nothing is gonna get in the way. I'm not going to say, oh, I can't do that anymore 'cause I'm working.

I book a ticket, I book a hotel, I book the stuff. So it's there. I treat it like a work appointment and it's made a huge difference to how rested I feel because, okay, I'm not lying down, I'm not asleep, but I'm doing something that's totally different. And that active rest I think is hugely important.

[00:43:13] **David:** That's cool. It also makes me think of, in terms of like restorative practices and soul nourishing practices, of novel. So one novelty. And then also one of the things I've thought about over the years, they'll talk about minimum daily requirements of certain vitamins and minerals, is I feel like we also have a minimum daily requirement of sensory input.

And so making sure we have enough beauty, enough novelty, et cetera to feed us and what a cool, like super food doing.

[00:43:53] **Susanne:** I can imagine some people would not enjoy being in a lab full of bones, but to me that's like heaven. So it's a dream come true to be let loose on that.

[00:44:03] **Susan:** And that's it, isn't it?

It's everyone's different. So yeah. finding that, knowing yourself, and it's back to at our best, like knowing what we enjoy and it doesn't matter what other people think about or if no one else wants to do it. Take yourself off.

[00:44:20] **Susanne:** I think that else, that's it, isn't it Susan?

I know would know, would want to do that, so I'm going on my own. But there's an organization for people based in the uk it's called Dig Ventures. And you fund the archeological dig with your fee and then they invite you to come and join in. So I learned how to do a dig last year. This, I'll learn how to analyze bones.



I'm doing another one in October where I'll be on a fine table, so I'll be cleaning stuff. So you are contributing to the heritage of the country and, you are actually doing something meaningful and you get involved in every aspect of it, though they are amazing. I have to say, if anyone listening is into that sort of thing, take a look 'cause but if you aren't able to get to something, so if you are abroad then you can do it virtually and you can do virtual finds and virtual digs and all sorts.

It's amazing.

[00:45:09] **Susan:** And I think that's the other thing, isn't it as well is, I don't know whether this is something you were always interested in. Perhaps it was, but it's never too late to start something new or find something that brings you joy. And even if you can't understand why, I had coffee with someone this morning who is probably 10 years older than me and said that they had recently started violin lessons.

I was like, wow. And they said they had been in another city in the UK and overheard someone playing and it stopped them in their tracks. And so I, I said to 'em, I must have touched something deep inside. I'm not sure that was their version of it, but to me that's what happened was that there was this recognition that this music does something to my soul.

And so they went and bought a violin and have started lessons and I just think that, so cool. Yeah.

[00:46:11] **Susanne:** That is cool. I'd like to learn to play the harp. that's always been on my list of things to do. When I was a child I wanted to play the harp, but my parents said it was too big. I learnt the cello instead just to really annoy them.

It was marginally smaller.

[00:46:29] **David:** Oh, I love that. I wanna go back to, it's a combination of one of the thing, the thing that you opened up with Suzanne about focusing on your circle of control. And then, Susanne your neat story about the impact that you had on that guy, who knew, 30 years ago.

And it makes me think of, one of the simplest ways we can, bring our best self to the world, so under that umbrella, simplest ways to help our corner of the world be a little brighter as well as a, it's a wonderful power up, as well as nourish shots, which is what your guy Susan did with you, is to let other people know the difference they've made.

And, giving comments, letting people know you see them. And I think of it as quote, spreading goodwill. And it made me think of, I was actually just thinking about this the other



day, an experience I had, oh, eight or nine years ago now. But, it's, I can remember it like it was yesterday. I was, at a trader.

Joe, do you have Trader Joe's in England?

[00:47:51] **Susanne:** No.

[00:47:52] **David:** Okay. So it's a cool grocery store chain, but it's known for hiring really cheerful people and great customer service. And I'm going through the line and I was feeling really sad. There's something that happened in my life that I was just, feeling really heavy and sad about.

And the checkout lady, was probably in her, I would say, seventies. And she was dressed up in, you could call it uniquely quirky or eccentric, depending on how you are. So she had these domino earrings, a really wild shirt, and just, like sparkles and everything. Anyway, just, but not.

Bizarre. yikes, just charmingly eccentric. So anyway, so she starts chatting me up. we had an ice storm and she's asking if I had to scrape off my windshield and everything. And it's funny because as a New Englander, like one of the downsides of being New Englander is that at least some of us, like if somebody's like super friendly in your face, it's what's up with that?

So I was in my morose state 'cause of what was going on and I was being a classic New Englander at first. and then she started talking about her daughter and like oftentimes I would've felt like she just needs to say stuff. So that's what she's doing. But there was just such a warm, wonderful way about her that I really felt.

Like my dark cloud lightened up and the moroseness disappeared and we had a wonderful conversation. And so I'm walking out into the parking lot and I'm thinking, man, that was so sweet of her. Does she know how much she brightened my day? And then it hit me. It's why don't you tell her? So I turn around and I go back and the introvert part of me is thinking this could go terribly wrong because what about if I get in line and now I go up to tell her this, and there's a long line of people waiting and I'm like bearing my heart to, I'm like, please, don't make this turn into an embarrassing thing.

So I go into her line, there's a guy in front of me, he checks out and. I get up to her ready for my little speech and I just shared with her, I said something like, I just wanna let you know how much I appreciate just how cheery you are. I was just feeling really in a bad mood and sad, and you just brightened up my day.

And she goes, thank you. Wait a minute. I'm like, okay. She walks away, she comes back with a bouquet of sunflowers and gives it to me. Oh, that's so sweet. and whenever I would



go to Trader Joe's after that, I would always try to find her line and say, Hey, how you doing? And we had this sweet little thing, but I love that experience because back to your story, Susan, we never know.

Like the impact that we can have and the difference she made. And back to spreading goodwill. It's like act on that impulse to compliment somebody like, so Susan, like you letting Suzanne know you like the scallop shell like act on that impulse to let somebody know, I love those earrings or whatever, or, that was really neat what you did.

So spreading good will is like such a win-win.

[00:51:38] **Susanne:** But I, it's funny, isn't it? I try and make a real effort. If I see someone walking around and they look amazing, I always try and say to them, you look incredible. Or if someone smells good, that's my other favorite is just to say, you smell amazing and people love it. Love, but there's a part of you that's oh, I don't wanna be weird.

But, in the main, I think if it's done with a good intention, it's people love it.

[00:52:01] **David:** Yeah. And you think about if they made the effort to look amazing or have on a cool piece of jewelry, they would appreciate that it was noticed. Yeah. That's cool.

[00:52:14] **Susanne:** I always try and do it. I'm well known in my family actually.

It drives everyone mad for just talking to people and also eliciting people's life stories from them in supermarkets and my whole family is like, are we done? can we go please?

[00:52:32] **David:** what a gift. That's neat. My

[00:52:35] **Susanne:** whole family, my, my mom and my dad are both the same. If you, if all three of us went to a supermarket, we could be there for days talking to people.

It's like a family gift.

[00:52:46] **David:** I love that.

[00:52:47] **Susan:** And it's back to something you picked up on earlier as well, David. It's the ordinary stuff, isn't it? It's just the day-to-day simplicity and everyday beauty of things that it's so easy to spread a bit of kindness or a bit of joy or acknowledge the human. And I think, you both said people might think it's weird or they, what if they think it's weird?



I think we as humans are really good at knowing when it's genuine. There's something that we just pick up on it. 'cause there's nothing worse than going into a shop. I think when the salesperson comes up to you and is like trying to get you to do stuff and has this thing learned off and they're following you around, I'm like, just get away from me.

And then you walk in and somebody, just opens it to the person who's in front of them and deals with you as you, and like you said, sees you. And I think that's what you are doing, Susanne with how you're seeing people and you're like helping them remember themselves. And I think there's a lot to be said for.

That recognition of who we are. 'cause it's always that we need the reminder because we got so caught up in everything going on and remembering who we are and that we're all humans, all came into the world the same way, more or less. We're all gonna go out the same way, more or less. And my favorite one is, we all go to the toilet.

I think that's a great leveler. no one is any more amazing a human than the rest of us. We just have it in different ways.

[00:54:33] **David:** There is a quote I'm gonna remember.

[00:54:37] **Susanne:** It's always good if you meet famous people remembering that one, if you meet someone really famous and get a bit tongue tied, then you have to remind yourself of that.

[00:54:46] **Susan:** They're just people.

[00:54:48] **Susanne:** Just people.

[00:54:49] **Susan:** Yeah. And they want genuine too. I would say a lot of them crave an actual conversation.

[00:54:55] **Susanne:** Yeah. Yeah. I think most people do I laugh and my family laughs at me for the fact that people talk to me. But I do think people want to be given the space to share and if you are an open person who invites conversation, then it's, people welcome it.

And I think it's a sign, exactly as you said, Susan, of how desperate people are for connection and the chance to share their story. It's really important,

[00:55:21] **David:** man, that. That is such an important takeaway is the hunger to be seen and how rarely people feel seen. So just showing genuine interest. Yeah.

[00:55:38] **Susan:** somebody, or there's a saying.



If you've got nothing good to say, don't say anything. And it's that if it's not something you can do. Then don't do it. But I think we are often hit with the impulse. And I think that's what you're demonstrating, Susanne is you follow through with that impulse that David, that you did that day in the supermarket as well.

You went right back and you acted on it. And I think when we act on the impulse and we survive, 'cause like we feel like we're being threatened somehow, then you'll do it again and again. And you, it sounds like you grew up in that environment, Suzanne. The conditions helped you to be like that naturally.

And it's an amazing gift to the world.

[00:56:22] **Susanne:** Yes. It was positively encouraged.

[00:56:25] **David:** I love it.

Are there things that either of you wanted to bring up that you haven't yet?

[00:56:39] **Susanne:** There was something that I was thinking about when I was thinking about today and I, and it goes back to what we were saying about knowing ourselves, and I think it's important and it's important to recognize the things that you struggle with as well as the things that you find easy. So for me, I am definitely a people pleaser and, and with work in particular, if a client rings me and is oh, can you do Friday at two o'clock and I'll look at my diary and I'll have something booked in for me?

Then the temptation to. Take that and go, yeah, sure, fine, I'll take out the swimming session, I've got booked or the, the art gallery visit and I'll put this work in instead. and so I've had to learn over time that doesn't serve me, and that my impulse will be to go, yes, of course I can do that.

And sometimes I have to say no. And the sky doesn't fall in when I do that. it's fine. And my husband, who has some very good terms of phrase, often says to me, Susanne availability is not a skill. And he says that to me to remind me.

[00:57:47] **Susan:** We have,

[00:57:48] **Susanne:** we've

[00:57:48] **Susan:** had this one before. I remember this before.

It's a brilliant phrase.



[00:57:52] **Susanne:** He's very wise. and he says it to me quite a lot when I'm like, my diary's too busy. and he'd be like, availability's not a skill. you can say no to things and say, I can't do that, but I can do this instead. So for me, I think it's about, recognizing that kind of dark side, the shadow side of stuff that perhaps we default to but doesn't serve us.

And then trying to put something in place that makes that easier for us. The other one that I talk to clients about a lot, and I know I probably said this to you before, is success not perfection. So if I've got clients who are perfectionists and are like finessing something and it's driving them nuts, you just have to be successful.

You just need to do enough so that this thing that you're trying to create does what it's supposed to do, rather than being the most perfect, policy, document, presentation, whatever that you've ever created. And so I think it's about having those little mantras that you can come back to that bring you back to the path that, that is most helpful.

What about you, Susan?

[00:58:53] **Susan:** I was looking at it as well as show up as at our best is often about, we default again to grandiose things that we've been thinking about earlier. I'm an Olympic medalist, or I'm road across the world. Like the people that were on your panel, Susanne and it's more about day to day, isn't it?

Because. It is in every moment that we have the ability to make that difference. And I think, showing up, like what is it to be your your best, do you know your values? what do you value? And there's something about an alignment then with that, that if I stay true to myself, I can show up as my best self.

And the temptation is not to stay true to ourselves. The temptation is, like you said, Susanne to please others or to be a perfectionist or, we all have these tendencies that take us away from actually our true center, I think. and we want to do this thing for someone to prove something or whatever.

I think that's my, one of mine is I want to prove I can do it. To whom I don't know. But, and there's something about just remembering that we are as ourselves enough, each one of us is enough, and recognize that in yourself and be proud of it and remember it. Love

[01:00:25] **Susanne:** that.

[01:00:26] **David:** I think the last thing that I want to say, is it goes back to, Suzanne again when you talked about things I can control and then a couple of different themes, and also about being on the panel is one of the things we can control, and I know we've, the three of



us have talked about this a lot, is the stories we tell ourselves about stuff, including the stories we tell ourselves about the tendencies that aren't so impressive.

And, one of the things that I really work with and think find really helpful is for those not so impressive tendencies is remembering to be compassionate. With ourselves and not because it's a kind thing to do, although it is, but it's just such a practical thing to do because if we shame ourselves and make ourselves like a dummy, a loser, whatever, then we're not going to face the truth.

We're gonna hide that from ourselves. accepting like we're all, both shadow and light and we all have strengths and weaknesses. and actually it goes back to the exile versus pilgrimage. We're all on our little pilgrimage work in this whole life journey. and so having that compassion and making sure the story we're telling ourself is a compassionate one as well as an accountable one.

And. I think I, I don't remember exactly what it was. I think it was something that you said, Susan, that made me flash onto, a conversation that I had years ago that I've been thinking about lately, where there was a woman, that I met at a conference who, like super sophisticated, world traveler, high level position at a marquee, company.

and she said something like, her former boss. Did something that betrayed her. I don't remember the details, but she said, that's why I can't trust people ever again. And I remember thinking, that's not a really useful story and that's on you. Like you get to decide. Now, obviously I didn't say that, like that would be a great way to end the dinner conversation, but it, it also speaks to unasked for, perspective and advice.

but it was interesting because I'm thinking this incredibly sophisticated erudite, global traveler is just like the rest of us can get caught into. N irrational stories and not holding ourselves accountable for, we're accountable for the stories we tell ourselves. So anyway, some of the dots that we've shared today.

so being mindful of being compassionate to ourselves as we, so we can acknowledge our shadow side, our quote, or imperfections, not flaws, and then holding ourselves accountable.

That's all I gotta say.

[01:04:10] **Susanne:** Is that Good points of finish, I think.

