

EPISODE 96

BROCK SWINSON



CREATIVITY BY THE BARREL



BrockSwinson 00:03

I've been kind of curious about experimenting with AI the way that a showrunner runs a writers room right? Really creativity plus productivity is kind of where I see my intersection. I'm hoping what they do is really make or encourage students to write more personal stories. I think that's one way to bypass some of that obvious stuff

Chris Meredith 00:35

Hello, and welcome to the common creative. My name is Chris Meredith,

Paul Fairweather 00:38

My name is Paul Fairweather.

Chris Meredith 00:41

And we are on a mission to lift the veil on creativity in work and beyond through the lens of ideas, stories and visual cognition.

Paul Fairweather 00:49

And today's guest is Brock Swinson. He is a filmmaker, screenwriter, podcast writer, and many other things from North Carolina in the states and standby

Chris Meredith 01:02

to learn loads not just about creativity when he said, writer's block is bullshit, but also about productivity. His output as a podcaster, as a screenwriter, as a teacher is phenomenal. Let's get him in.

Paul Fairweather 01:17

Brock Swinson Welcome to The Common Creative podcast.

BrockSwinson 01:20

It's great to be here. I appreciate it. Thanks, guys.

Chris Meredith 01:22

Really pleased to have you on the show. Thanks for joining us.

BrockSwinson 01:25

Yeah,absolutely.

Paul Fairweather 01:26

So Brock, can we start off with you giving us a bit of a, I suppose a summary of the key moments in your life or career that have got to where you are now?

BrockSwinson 01:35

Yeah, it's all little all over the place. I mean, I studied at Shellman college and then I got to my last day of college and the teacher said something like, okay, you'll go out there and you got a 1% chance to get published. You do that a dozen times, you might be a professor. I was like, Well, I'm not going to do



that, like terrible advice. So what I did instead is I kind of went into freelance, like I don't what was the length of the town now it's called upward. I also moved to Oregon and moved around. I'm from North Carolina. Originally I lived in LA for a bit so I went into some actual commercial work driving trucks doing some editing everything I could kind of get my hands on. I did some weird TV shows like The Guinness Book of Records. So I got to see five people try to break records every day and interesting stuff like that. I think ironically, if not thought more about the hindsight of it. I'll recently some of the weirdest jobs I took like I applied to a job on Craigslist. And that ended up getting me on credit screenwriting, so I ended up interviewing, like some of the most famous writers of all time through a Craigslist ad. And I took it like a \$10 an article job writing about the TV show The Walking Dead. I remember that it referred me to a job at ClickFunnels, railroad marketing, and learning marketing from people like Russell Brunson, and Tony Robbins, and some of the biggest names out there. So some of the weirdest little paths that I kind of just followed my curiosity, maybe instead of the money kind of led me to the money and and now I'm really interested in like all things, really creativity plus productivity is kind of where I see my intersection,

Chris Meredith 03:07

and brought one interest with Paul and I am obsessed with that topic. But what interests you about all things creativity,

BrockSwinson 03:15

I think I've always, you know, been creative and been told I was creative, and some of that stuff, but it wasn't, it seemed like this fictional Muse type thing that wasn't really real. So I was more interested in like, well, how can you lean in and out of this? If this is a muse? How do you make the Muse come moral and that kind of usually comes down to the environment and habits. And after I've interviewed probably 400, over 400, writers and actors and directors on my show, and a lot of them have kind of similar advice. And that's kind of what led to the book that I wrote about a bear . It's called Secrets from prolific writers, ink by the barrel comes from an old expression, don't quarrel with the man who buys and thinks about a barrel. But I wanted to kind of spin it on its head a little bit and encourage you to be the person who buys your food by the barrel and really just think about longevity. I guess the underlying of all that is that I really think you find quality through quantity. So the more you kind of churn out, but better you'll get at least a little bit, you get less precious, all these other things kind of happen beneath the surface too. But that's what really seems to make the, the true, you know, aside from like, 10 guys in history, Jedi Sangha Aaron Sorkin, some of those guys, for the rest of us this stuff pretty much works. Youknow,we'realittlebitmoremathematicalthanyoumight say.

Chris Meredith 04:34

That is why it is credited as he's got a mathematical formula to it. It's kind of what you're saying, which is a lovely insight. I'm trying to work out why that would be that doing basically doing lots the more you do it and as they already have 10,000 hours and so on, but you get to a point of expertise by just putting in the hard yards. I'm guessing this advice is writing as well as painting and photography and acting, and whatever it might be, whatever creative pursuit, what is it about that repetition that that discipline that helps do you think?

BrockSwinson 05:12



I think it's more of just, it's all the things you're not doing right. So everybody talk like less, sometimes I'll do a parallel, like going on a diet or working out, look at all the things you're not doing. You're not eating processed food, you're not even sitting on the couch, right? So when you think about scheduling time to write every day, you're not going to be the type of person who's just wishy washy about ideas. I mean, not I was definitely that guy as a kid. And, you know, through college, even like, I think I wrote one script in college, and I carried it around in my head for four years. And you know, just with a to-do list, you can't carry eight things in your head, you want to start to write them down, get them out of your head, and then go deeper and expand upon them. I think, really, that's what you're doing. You're setting up an environment, you know, for possibly the muse to come. But it's more of just setting a situation to actually do the work and then also omit things you're not doing just because you're actually sitting there on the workday.

Paul Fairweather 06:05

I see. We had a guest the other day, Nick Jaffe, from Tasmania. And he had a thing that he said, he said, It's, he talks about doing something on a whim. And we said, you know, is it okay to do something at a whim? And he said, Yeah, as long as you follow through, which is what you're saying, it's, you know, look, I'd never heard that term, ink by the barrel, and never, like, I love that idea. And I know someone, I think the fight was somebody that bought a big thing by the barrel. And that's, that's a fight, you'll never win. So. So I'm really interested. And look, we've spoken to a lot of people about creativity as you had. And I'm really interesting, this thing about, you know, that you unpacking that productivity, because it's becoming more and more a part of the theme, you know, it's not just about ideas, you know, it's not just about, you know, thinking about something, it's actually about doing something. So in terms of, say, the guests that you've interviewed this, you know, over 400 of them, any standouts in that thing about, you know, getting stuff done, productivity,

BrockSwinson 07:10

I've really tried to kind of do a variety and like, all people will go to my biggest hits. I've interviewed Ethan Hawke and Aaron Sorkin and Mel Brooks to these giant names, and almost like they're too big to give you real advice, which is kind of ironic, like you need if you want to be a movie writer, you need to go listen to the guy who just broke into the industry. He's going to give you the most advice about what's going on today. And some of that, but I think productivity is really, I don't know, I've almost learned more from people like Tim Ferriss about, I think it's more of just like sitting that situational block up. Like I said, the environment, the habits, it's really the boring things, and also incorporating risks. That's a big one. Like, I think when I was there, too, I would take these freelance jobs. And I like to write 10,000 words on a Monday, but then I was burned out for four or five days. So the best people, you know, I'll ask new people breaking advice, I'll ask older kind of veteran writers longevity advice. And it's always kind of a combination of the two, they seem to be working on three to five projects at a time that allows them to kind of, you know, chat room, a book called writer's block is bullshit. I don't believe that writer's block. If you talk to enough, you know, screenwriters to have deadlines, and all the different things, there's no such thing. So I think really just like setting that, that time off and putting in the work, and you're going to just kind of move along that way with productivity.

Paul Fairweather 08:31



Yeah, I see. That is a comment. We had someone who was the producer for big brother here in the UK. And she just said about the writing. She says, you know, writer's block, you know, yeah, great. The show starts in two hours.

Chris Meredith 08:47

Look, you might remember, you might remember who said there's a famous quote that says, Yeah, only write when inspiration strikes. It's just lucky that it starts at nine o'clock each morning.

BrockSwinson 08:57

Right? Yeah,

Chris Meredith 08:58

I forgot. I should know who said that. But yeah, yeah, it is

BrockSwinson 09:03

harder. Like it's, it's kind of hard to do on your own. Like, it's one thing to have deadlines and accountability from outside perspectives. I do encourage people to go find jobs on freelance sites, if you can't seem to, you know, keep those promises to yourself. But there's a good metaphor about the show here. Starting at lob, it's like, it looks like everybody's kind of just screwing around all week. But there's a show every Saturday and somehow, they get 10 or 15 scripts written in shot if they dumped everything else. So if you can kind of impose that on your own, it might be that you're just writing an email to your followers or writing a blog once a week or not. I really just did this 30 Day prolific challenge with about 1000 students. I'm kind of teaching to be prolific. And the whole idea is to take a little video training for me every day. It was like two to 10 minutes and I'll show him a clip from an interview that I did. But the whole goal was not to make it crazy like set it really attainable. Just try to write You know, 20 minutes a day or something like that. If you've never done that before, I really would say focus on time rather than word count. Because word count is daunting whenever you can take away more of the friction for yourself. You could disrupt developers' habits, and then so many people that never did anything before I did a couple of like one on ones with people. And like this one woman learned how to work from poetry to short stories, I had a girl at high school finish a book. Now she's writing a movie, and just like taking 30 days to make a little tiny habit and really chips away.

Chris Meredith 10:31

I'm sure James would approve of it, if you're familiar with his book habits. Which is which is it's it's it's don't set a goal to lose 10 stone and weight or whatever, set a goal to adopt a healthy lifestyle. And it's more about the way you define yourself than it is than that. So that sounds very familiar. I'm one when in your intro, you talked about curiosity, kind of taking you to the money. So those things you kind of didn't expect to deliver something leading, there's something much more interesting. And I wanted to talk about how you bounce that idea, which is a classic creative habit like this. And what about others with this idea of the discipline, the tech, the quantity, not quality of the frameworks. So how do you know how and when to pursue something that looks just interesting? And how when to sit deep to what your plan is?

BrockSwinson 11:28



That's a question I ask a lot of people and especially those, so So for those that are not familiar to there's a couple different types of screenwriters, sometimes a studio will approach you and they'll give you an idea. That's normally where you see transformers for or whatever the big blockbuster is, but they're not just as many really the best movies you see are probably spec scripts, which just means they sit at home and spend the time to write 120 pages on their own because they believe in that idea. I like to ask those people like I'm sure you've got more than one idea. How do you kind of narrow down that path? And it's usually something like intangible. It's almost like an obsession, right? Someone told me it's like having a splinter in your eye. Like no matter what's happening outside or anywhere else, you're obsessed with this idea. There is a hook in you to go follow this thing. Like logistically, what I'll do is write a bunch of these little ideas out on my phone just so I don't completely lose them or forget them. And then almost as a combination, like does it stick with me for a period of time am I truly like obsessed with this idea, like some of the scripts that I've written, I wrote one in college about a guy who was a pickpocket traveling from college to college, and he was kind of like, and that was very, what I was obsessed with that. I like the idea of school, but like that you had to pay to go to it. And it was kind of the underlying theme of that story. And later, I kind of got obsessed with 1920s, North Carolina where I'm from boot shine and NASCAR had boot shine and, or moonshot and all that kind of stuff bootlegging them to NASCAR. So I wrote a story about that. It's just like something like rap, I found myself reading book after book about some subjects. And usually it's more of a theme, but a plot and like what that I mean, that's hopefully pretty standard. But people are not familiar with that plot for the big hooks and those will kind of come and go and some of the like, like parasites when asked for a few years ago. Yeah, the director of that was obsessed with class warfare for 10 films in a row and then like or whatever it was, and his chip film went out last year, but he's obsessed with that theme his entire life. So I'm, personally, very obsessed with certain themes. And that's what makes me write movies. And almost no matter what I do, I'll end up running a movie about these certain handful of themes around some of that stuff.

Chris Meredith 13:43

So that's it's very interesting that so you're kind of saying celebrate, embrace your obsession, this kind of, yeah. Oh, in them, pursue them with vigor. I love that thought because it answers the question so beautifully, which is your hand you know, when when to kind of flip off to something curious, you'll say, no, no, you'll feel it, you'll feel something that you and only you want to explore some Goda Yeah, well, wonderful reference, uh, that. That film the one that the Oscar, I didn't know that 10 films that are out that plausible,

BrockSwinson 14:16

pretty much like Snowpiercer, he did several in a row. I just worked with one of my students. I talked about one of the moves from poetry to short stories, couldn't wrap your head around it. She loved the idea that she could write a poem in about 20 minutes, so I kind of encouraged her to follow the theme. I said, Why don't you write 10 poems around one theme and then pick out the pieces you like and then you'll start to see some tent poles and that's where your short story will come from. So you can go to a method that you're familiar with to get to something you're unfamiliar with was kind of what I would encourage her to do.

Paul Fairweather 14:46



I love tent poles. Let's watch the other but I was really interested in this thing that of the courses that you ran and you knew this 30 Day Challenge. You know what what is it you know what, what's your advice to them? You know, someone listening to our podcast, you know, they say I'm not a writer, and I was that person. And I said that I could write by accident because someone asked me to write a piece and was horrified. Sarkar I've got an editor just write it, in that etiquette work with it two days later I did it. The guy around me said love your peace and oh my god, you kind of read it like, you know, it was supposed to be edited. So jumping in and just doing it. But what advice would you give to somebody listening? So yeah, I secretly always wanted to be a writer, but you know, I don't think I could ever do it. What would be one thing that you would say?

BrockSwinson 15:36

Yeah, there's like almost too many different paths to give too much logistic advice. One thing I would say that I talked about in my book is to separate the writer from the editor. And what I mean is like your own editor, you really have to like some people to do a continuous flow, they literally write as fast as they can by hand and they just take them out of time they write about it. And it's like, a lot of junk will come out of that, but then maybe 10% of it might be valuable. We talked a little bit I think I would say a couple episodes, you got to talk a lot about AI. I'd been kind of curious about experimenting with AI. The way that a showrunner runs a writers room writes your pitch. I pitch ideas to AI to see what it spits back to me and I'm kind of working back and forth to see which way it goes. I don't really do it with books I don't do it with screenplays, but I'll do it with an ad idea because I write ad copy and I mean, that's pretty standard. I think you can't really get to the heart of something with AI but it's more of like a cheap or free rider's assists they kind of start with to get all the blank pages and then then you're kind of hit the ground running after you're done with the blank page.

Chris Meredith 16:39

See use the AI is a kind of sounding bullet saying hey, how about this is what math and AI is chaos or rubbish but the order something with

BrockSwinson 16:48

yes more. It's just like the way you talk to it. Right? So the funny thing is we're my other writing partner for the screenplay as I write my books by myself, right. Now read screenplays with a partner that kind of moves things along faster. I notice a lot of people like you're always a draft to add because you work with somebody. So we spent a couple hours talking about some ideas. We had this, we have a loose idea we're doing now that it's basically like the like, let's say Casa Blanca took place in the 1960s in Miami. And rather than the tension being Nazis, the tension and it's something like Jack the Ripper, so we're starting this like a serial killer type story, right? So we went back and forth, we didn't really go deep I was like, Hey, let me show you this day. I just got all my GPT. And we put in all of these same prompts that we went through together. And I think we have to vary and we might have said something like now okay, making the solid Tarantino and after like, I don't know, eight or 10 questions today, I came up with something pretty close to what we came out with, which is kind of crazy. And even like, it maybe went over the top more I think we naturally hold back a little bit more. So we kind of found a balance between the two. But it was more about like, our intuitions right about this, as opposed to like letting it do the work. For us. It's more like confirming, like what's already out there.



Chris Meredith 18:03

Since you mentioned AI, we'd love to hear a bit more about that everyone is talking about the impact of AI on creators and particularly the moment in the States there is a screenwriters strike if I understand it, right. And so we're at this really interesting, interesting I hope that's the right word kind of this moment where the screenwriters are saying, hey, we deserve better pay for what we've got in the background as a piece of technology which potentially could do their jobs for them. Or maybe you're to have a job where you I guess first of all what how do you feel about AI? Does it feel like a big threat? You're obviously using it very closely? Does it feel like something that we can harness? What is your relationship with AI if I can put it that way?

BrockSwinson 18:49

Yeah, I would personally just use the kind of the way I mentioned I had this big investment in pace. Morbi started to kind of experiment with it a little bit. He was talking about it. So I've always had a dislike for it and ignored it like okay, yeah, it's not that great. This thing's pretty solid, especially around marketing stuff. And the thing is, though, it's like all it can do. I mean, this is a great, a great deal. But I look at it more like the internet . It can do the best research you've ever seen. It can answer these questions. It can mimic people and everything else. But there's something not quite there. Right. So I kind of like to cook a lot, right? And I think it can, but they're using machines to do McDonald's. And I think that's about how to relate to writing like it's pretty close. It can do some things there. But it doesn't understand pH levels or something is not there. There's not that little bit of creativity, but it's just missing. So I'm working with a ghostwriter as well. I've written about 10 books as a ghostwriter. Before I wrote my own book that was kind of last said go find people to work for develop your habits that way. When I'm working with a gun now it was kind of a luxury food importer in Las Vegas. He was the go to guy for About 300 famous chefs in Las Vegas, right? So, when I'm coming up with outlines, which are boring for me to write, I'll go to AI. And we'll come up with five outlines that are very different. So I can come up with that idea, loose idea, like, how do we write a book about importing students, and then I'll expand upon that it can write that out, but it can't go and take his story and turn it into something like I can't. And we have to work together on that. And even though he can't like he's, he's done interviews that have a lot of content out there. But like, if you guys know, as interviewers, the good questions come from like three or four questions deep before we really get into something. If I give you a q & a, it's just surface level, we're not really getting to anything like that, to me to get to this. He's telling me about collecting Star Wars toys as a kid. And I'm understanding his perspective about not being wasteful later in life, and I don't think AI is not there yet to see things like that.

Paul Fairweather 20:55

I actually think I was just thinking, and I've been trying to put my finger on it as well, because I've been using a similar way. And my first thought was that it doesn't really sort of have, you know, lacks a bit of a soul or something. But I think what it is, is, and it's what you just mentioned there, it's that connection. And it's that connection, Chris, and I, you know, talk a lot about metaphor, you know, as a tool, and I don't think it has that metaphor, because that metaphor often comes from that personal experience. And as you're saying, you know, you use sort of a link to him collecting those toys, and then him being efficient later, and, and not wasteful. And I think that's, that's the thing, I haven't asked the asset, whether it can do something, a metaphor, but because it's very factual, it doesn't seem to have that. And that metaphor is really where I think the richness comes from, you know, it's like this, because it's

not saying it's like this, it's saying, This is what it is, you know, I don't think it can say, it's sort of like this, because, you know, then it's failing in a way because it's supposed to be giving you the facts. So is it

Chris Meredith 21:56

the beach it's interesting, you mentioned, like having an intern isn't the issue that interns kind of get more experienced and know they would work their way up their career ladders and so on, as this particular intern is working its way up the ladder fast. And maybe by Christmas, we won't be talking about an intern, we'll be talking about some of the MSU. And then by the New Year, suddenly, we'll be dealing with again, the world's greatest greatest script writer in the Tarantino style of whatever's Do you worry about that in the future? Or do you think it's always going to be an intern?

BrockSwinson 22:30

I almost see it always intern, it is hard to go 10 years, 20 years down the line. But the thing is, it's always just going off the information. It's already there, right? So whenever there's a shift in a movie, think about it and this goes back to the year 1990. That, like 25, amazing movies came out, the matrix came out, the six sets came out all these different movies, right? All of those were like a shift in the narrative of things we'd ever seen before. There was nothing like about 20 of those different movies that came out that year. Now, unfortunately, the studio's have kind of pushed us in a direction where there's less interesting things happening. So it does still like you know, I wouldn't be having a I could probably write faster periods to that I could probably I mean, I could probably tell you what happened to that movie on a boy and that AI could do the same thing. But it's not going to tell you about the Shawshank Redemption. It is something that really is gonna stand the test of time but To Kill a Mockingbird, and there's something about the actual like guides for we don't know it yet, right? So you're only going with what already exists. And sure there are cycles and things like that. But I don't know, even even sharing things on social media, I don't really know what's gonna hit like Something just hit people differently a different way. And that's kind of a combination of algorithms plus people. So it is out of salt. See it really embracing us that way. I could probably write Besucher as it can probably write, you know, Hallmark Ron cut some of the rom com movies. But whenever there's a big shift of the narrative, it's something completely different I've never seen before.

Chris Meredith 23:59

And that I'm guessing leads back to your point about another thing you use the obsessions, but something that feels like somebody who's stuck in your eye that AI will never get anything stuck on its side, it'll never have that kind of overriding desire to understand and explore a particular topic, and effectively did to learn new things about it in a way that the world doesn't. i don't understand. Yeah,

BrockSwinson 24:21

I'm doing something pretty different. Right now. I'm actually working on my first documentary. So I'm trying to step into the film world. So I'm working on what went from like a two hour movie to an eight hour series. Now it's about a stuntman. It's called Daredevil society and the ideas about the last 100 years. So we're going from solid films, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, all the way to Jackie Chan to Keanu Reeves today. If for whatever reason, there's not, there's not a lot of attention on that. And I kind of see three writers the same way. They're like the hidden people behind the movies, right. So all these things are happening. This is how film got started with silent films doing slapstick and



following Harold Lloyd stuff is insane. And so Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton. And there's still not an Oscar category for stuff. It's been 100 years. And then he's still completely overlooked. So what I'm doing is going through the whole evolution of how we change from Silent films to talking to westerns, on horses, car chases, everything else, and also asking people how they do the things and everything else. And there is no collection like that right now. So I'm having to go do personal interviews. I'm finding that what I can do is really just enter breadcrumbs there. I'm using AI a little bit to fill in some pieces and reading old books, but it's really again, I kind of just see it as another researcher helping me out.

Chris Meredith 25:40

So that's the opportunity for human beings to kind of, to kind of look for breadcrumbs if no one's explored that before. It kind of thank goodness, that means there isn't a machine. That's all over it already. And that is what we need to do. I think that's lovely, a lovely thought was the bread crumbs.

Paul Fairweather 25:57

I find it amazing. There's no category by category. Yeah, it is absolutely mad. Yeah, yeah. Sorry, Brock. I, I talked over you.

BrockSwinson 26:09

I was just gonna say that. Yeah, I think it just kind of adds on what you guys are saying. But yeah.

Chris Meredith 26:21

One impact. Again, this is another AI question. Is there a risk, it's going to hamper our ability to do new stuff. And that's it, let's go with the idea that there's nobody really investigating and celebrating stump stump here. And that if AI becomes a sounding board, or the kind of research tool for the world, what AI will say is that because it's a bad idea. And you know, it's risky, we won't do it. How do you get new ideas when there's the wisdom of AI?

BrockSwinson 26:54

I think people are gonna do it anyway. Right? So if I've pitched plenty of book ideas that have been turned down, or I'm ready, I'm funding this myself. I'm proud that I've raised about \$20,000. So far, I'm just doing it right. It's a big difference. And pitching an idea, writing a spec script, and then just making a movie, because then you can just say, here it is, this is done. This is what I've been working on. I'm getting some like fan feedback and some stuff like that, because I don't want to, I want to do justice to what I'm doing. I don't want to miss something kind of obvious. But yep, I just went to some AI and asked me what to do. He would turn out more things that are popular, like there's aciduria on his chin, there's the MiG tune coming out. It's just like, Let's make Joel 10 times bigger. I mean, those things are probably pretty obvious. They're gonna keep happening, but at the same time, like Ben Affleck's company with Madden, and they came out with a story about Michael Jordan, as many points as it hits on. It wasn't studio funded, they funded the movie themselves, I think it's not called the iceberg, it's called artists united. It's something like a new company, but they're doing a different model. They're not asking for money, where the studios lose, they're making the movie, and they're gonna get a big, bigger chunk on the back end. I'm doing the same thing that actually worked with this interview. These guys are the robin Blox company out of the UK, they have the same idea. They raise money through fans,

they sell blu rays, DVDs, then at the very end, their bikes go sell to a streamer, but they're making their money and they're beginning to put a lot of time and effort into something. I think that's kind of the big difference. The blueprints have already gone to this very thin funnel of marble and big stuff like that. And the big people are just taking the chances anyway, I think that's gonna keep happening.

Chris Meredith 28:35

So it's, it's down to people backing themselves, excuse me, people backing themselves. It's gonna be down to kind of recognizing that the big studios are trying to make money and therefore they'll go with what's predictable and safe and out of that formula. Again, that has huge implications. It's really interesting.

Paul Fairweather 28:57

In Brock, you mentioned earlier, just in passing, when you're thinking about how you're using AI, you mentioned the way a showrunner will run a white writers room. Is that what you are? You said? So what is that? What does that look like?

BrockSwinson 29:15

Sure, yeah. So like, I'd be a lot of showrunners. I'm publishing an interview in the next couple of days with Peter Gould, who ran Better Call Saul, right? So he's come in, he's worked with some other producers. They've got some big ideas of what's going to happen across you know, or what used to be 24 episodes. Now, it's usually like eight or 10 episodes. They bring riders and a lot of times you watch the show, you'll see the showrunner, the writer usually writes the first episode last episode, and might write a couple more in there, but they bring in eight new voices or whatever it is to fill up the writers room, and they're pitching ideas and then once they have a pretty good like series Bible, which is like a treatment or like a summary of what's going to happen. They send those episodes out and each writer will write one or two or you know, it's Some combination that was show runners, so comes back and usually rewrites all those, but they only get credit for one or two that they write completely through. So it's more about working as a team to come up with the big ideas. And then we go into digitally, right? So my perspective is I'm bouncing ideas off my running partner, we're messing with the AI just to kind of get something that could happen. And once we feel pretty good about some of those arcs, then I'll go and like to write it myself. But again, I'm just kind of eradicating the blank page and getting a treatment out there. I'm doing the same thing with this. The chef book, what I kind of pitched to him is like, our this like cooking book importing foods book. I'm like, let's use this AI. This is just the scaffolding, ignore it for the most part, but the scaffolding is what is what publishers want to see, too. They want to see this real obvious thing you're going to sail. My secret island, putting all of his perspective and interesting ideas kind of almost hidden within the book. But I really want them to learn XYZ like well, I want to walk away with this idea. And that's the human touch. It's just not anywhere else.

Paul Fairweather 31:06

That's fantastic. Thanks for that insight. Do people do writers like being in that, you know, let's say the bowl came from that rite of Arabia, you know, is that a good thing for a writer?

BrockSwinson 31:18



Yeah, I mean, it is sort of an apprenticeship. It's moving faster and faster than it used to be for career writers like that. Now there's so many shows on so many networks you might like. I just interviewed a guy who David West read and wrote. He did a Broadway play out of 28 episodes of the show called Shits Creek. And now he's running his own show for Apple like it happens that quickly. Why did you get these accolades? But like James Cameron does this I didn't personally talk to him. But the magazine created screenwriting by right to interview James Cameron. He brings in two or three writers. And that's how he writes his avatar, I'm gonna bet she has a big idea. You worked with them, they kind of go off and come out with chunks of it. That's how he's kind of, he's going to turn out a couple of those in a row, I believe. Mm hmm.

Paul Fairweather 32:00

Now that's fantastic. Thanks for that insight.

Chris Meredith 32:03

Yeah. Want me to switch topics? We've been talking a lot about writing. And pulling, like if there was creativity across anything, looks like I was a business person, actually. But it could be painters, Paul's also quite a well known painter, or musicians or actors? Or how much of this applies across different kinds of creative? Have you spoken to people outside of writing? And what does that teach us?

Brock Swinson 32:34

I feel like I've mostly personally talked to people within writing. But as far as setting up the habits and the time to do things, I think it really goes across the board with what you want to get better at. And the other part of this is like, you don't have to publish everything, right? It's a big thing to publish everything you do. But you can also hold back, you can be a painter who chips away at something, but it's still like, I've got a friend who does sketches with a console and is grabbed by that type of thing. And you'll spend 25 hours or one image and then maybe not even use it. That's kind of what that's almost all discipline in itself, but also talk to writers who like, okay, they write 120 pages of a movie, but I get 200 days back page 119. They're like, Oh, this is what this is about, to scrap the whole thing to move forward. But I think if you can really push yourself to do that, that's where you're gonna get the gold from and it's like, you're gonna kind of discover that you are simply by writing as much as you can. That's why I eventually found my okay, I lied about the same themes over and over and over. So I might as well just know that going in. But it took me probably five screenplays to understand that about myself.

Chris Meredith 33:40

And I have that confidence to have a big trash can. Ready to be proud of it. It's kind of got me that big fool trashcan got me to the point of learning something new to assets. Again, that takes huge bravery.

Paul Fairweather 33:57

Brock, I love that in all the conversation I sort of wandered around everywhere a lot about AI. But you said what you are saying about, you know, ventually, you'll discover, you know who you ask to that writing, which I think is a great place to pull it to an end on. You know, I have so many more questions, but unfortunately, we're out of time. I'm just absolutely fascinated by your own productivity, or productivity as you guys call it. Basically, in all the different things you do and you know, film and writing

and interviewing people, so you're such a wealth of knowledge. So Well, thank you for sharing your insights and observations and experiences. It's been absolutely fascinating.

Brock Swinson 34:45

Absolutely. And I think I might summarize some of that. I think I might worry about what AI is and how it is going to affect the future generations. I can imagine if I was sick in high school that I could just go and drop something on the computer. I'm hoping what they do is really make orange urge students to write more personal stories. I think that's one way to bypass some of that obvious stuff. And at the same time the old school is the old type of 131. Writing as important as it used to be? I don't think it is. I think that's not, I don't even think some of the grammar matters as much as it used to. It's the way I write sales copy. It's not what I learned in high school, and I don't do anything now that existed when I was in high school, there weren't podcasts, there wasn't this type of market insight. And so I think just really being more involved in knowing you're going to be productive and creative, but also being flexible, I think is kind of the path to navigate all these waters.

Paul Fairweather 35:38

I love that productive slow third flex. Yeah, that's great. Fantastic. Thanks, Brock.

Chris Meredith 35:43

Thank you so much. We've covered so much ground I've learned so much for getting a big trash can to buy ink by the barrel.

Brock Swinson 35:52

Actually, I'll do one more thing too. I'm giving away the book for free and the book and audio books over at Brock Swanson doc on that he can go and just download that you'll get the digital download and audio book. My goal is to give away 100,000 copies this year, I've given away a couple 1000 already. So we're dwelling our way through that.

Paul Fairweather 36:08

Oh, fantastic. We will put a link in the show notes. So that's fantastic. I've got to get a copy. Let's make sure.

Chris Meredith 36:15

Me too. I'm definitely going to get a copy.

Paul Fairweather 36:19

Okay, thanks. Thanks for

Brock Swinson 36:20

Thanks, you guys.

Paul Fairweather 36:25

Chris, that was fantastic. I didn't really know where it's going to go. But a conversation in AI about AI was really enlightening, which has earned its place in the AI mini series. I feel a



Chris Meredith 36:40

a little bit more optimistic about AI now. I mean, it's like an internal I think I love that thought that you can work with AI. We've had other guests who are less optimistic about what AI will do so that was powerful, but also about creativity, this idea of having something in your eyes, something you've got to pursue and make your own. I think that was a really interesting idea about how creativity works in the brain.

Paul Fairweather 37:07

Yeah, and look I love. Here's one bit of advice about if you're stuck and you can't stick to your own deadlines, jump onto something like a freelancer and do a job for someone else where you're pushing to meet a deadline. I thought it was a great insight and tip. Because I know that one of the things that I find really difficult is to stick to my own deadlines. So that was a great piece of advice. All the things that we've mentioned, our rock, as mentioned will be in the show notes. So you can find him and get a copy of his free book, which is so fantastic. We'll head to his

Chris Meredith 37:43

podcast creative principles, which is certainly on Apple podcasts, I'm sure all the major platforms as well with a great test.

Paul Fairweather 37:51

So if you liked the show, please leave us review five stars and then count that high and under review. And most importantly, tell your friends because as we share more about the idea of creativity in life and business, the better the world will be. And we'll see you for next week's show. Cheers bye for now.





BROCK SWINSON **(Special Guest)**



Podcast - <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/creative-principles/id1292130289>



Paul Fairweather - Co-host



Chris Meredith - Co-host



Two Common Creatives

