

EPISODE 105

SCOTT ANDREW JAMES



A POETIC CREATIVE TYPE



Scott James 00:03

The reason I create is not to create videos or to create, you know, with a one layer of Yeah, I do it so that I can sit across from somebody and make something in the moment I think poetry used to have an elevated status and maybe a different mean, because I actually when I look around at the world, I think we are still using poetry ever. If there is some work that you want your creativity to the present with more art of choosing

Chris Meredith 00:47

Hello, and welcome to The Common Creative, I'm Chris Meredith.

Paul Fairweather 00:51

My name is Paul Fairweather.

Chris Meredith 00:53

We were on a mission to lift the lid on creativity at work and beyond through the lenses of ideas, stories and visual cognition. And we have a very special guest this week.

Paul Fairweather 01:03

Yes, with our guest this week is from Austin, Texas. And Scott is a book coach. You see sort of day job, but he's also a roaming or Rosing poet, and creates poetry, events, weddings and Bar Mitzvahs priced on on a word or phrase or a story on his grandfather's body six Smith Corona typewriter an absolutely fascinating conversation about poetry, but also about the application of the creativity and how they might be applied elsewhere.

Chris Meredith 01:45

Yeah, a masterclass in how to bring out your creative muscle. He applies it through poetry, but there's some huge learnings about how to make sure you access your intuition how to how to stay hydrated how to sleep well, in order to support your creative habit. So absolutely definitive episode for becoming creative. On how to be creative. Yeah,

Paul Fairweather 02:12

look, absolutely fantastic. So without further delay, let's get it with Scott James. Welcome to the common creative podcast.

Scott James 02:23

awesome to be here. Thank you very much, Paul. Thank you, Chris.

Chris Meredith 02:26

Scott, great to meet you. Thanks so much for joining us.

Paul Fairweather 02:29

Scott. Just before we as we get started, I'd like you to quick give us a quick part of history about how you came to be a typewriter poet and a book coach?



Scott James 02:42

Yes, I would say. So I grew up in Wisconsin, United States. And when after I graduated from college, I taught high school English for about a semester. And realize this is not for me. At that had been the thing that I had thought I was going to do on you know, all the way through. And so I graduated, got the job, did it for a couple months. And I hated it. So I did not renew the contract. And I moved to the border of the United States and Canada in a place called the Boundary Waters and became a Wilderness Canoe Guide, which led me on to a 10 year all of my 20s are spent in the woods, traveling around the country, meeting all kinds of people leading trips. And I believe that that. So that's to me the first building block of like, I'm not if I don't like this, I'm not gonna do it. Now. I'm gonna go now I'm gonna go live in the woods for 10 years. He

Paul Fairweather 03:46

you gave up 10 year for 10 years

Scott James 03:49

I gave up 10 year for 10 years. And I don't know what the rivers and the trees and the deserts and importantly, no office, no cell phone, etc. And so I feel like I have the tenure, a decade long apprenticeship with the wilderness, which so it wasn't until I was 30 that I bought my first car, got my first apartment at cetera, and that and so I found myself in San Francisco. And that was around 2005. And so I was I moved there because of the beat poets. They had nothing to do with tech. But of course, when I got there, everybody had a blog. So I learned blogging, I learned social media I was at, you know, I was helping people move from nothing to build their first Facebook page, their transition from MySpace to whatever, arguing with people about whether hashtags were going to last on Twitter. And so that was how I cut my tea that came from the woods and I I found myself in San Francisco because I wanted to be like Kerouac. And all these worlds kind of collided. And so from there, I did that for another five years met my wife. And we fell in love and moved to Austin, Texas, which is where I live now and have for about 12 years. When I got here, I was like, I want to find a job that combines my sort of love for books and tech, and I ended up at one of the largest hybrid publishers in the United States. And I became the director of branding. And I loved that. But it left this big sort of creativity hole. So I love that work. And the kind of people I got to hang out with and the kind of work I got to do, but I also needed to fill, flex the creativity muscle. So I've I ended up after a few years, going to a backyard barbecue called the Feast of fools, so very much celebrating the holy fool. And I took a typewriter. And I didn't say this before, but I had taken this typewriter have been handed down to me from my grandfather, he was a storyteller and a traveling sales guy. And he legitimately used it to sell the precursor to the Xerox machine. So like a carbon copy type machine. So here's, here's the typewriter. You and I,

Chris Meredith 06:28

if it was people listening, that's a beautiful old school typewriter. This and it's the one that you see in the police movies, all those comic fantastic buggy,

Scott James 06:38

that 1946 Smith Corona, and it comes in a case and like a briefcase. And so I of course, was in love with this for the same reason I was in love of Kerouac, etc. And so I was on the road, I was driving



around the country, with my typewriter, writing poems in the middle of the desert, next to the river, and then giving them to people, as sort of takeaways, you know, this was pre social media. So this was my lead behind this was, I would send people typewritten letters. And that was to me, sort of, and I would write poetry on it, of course at campfires and things like that. And so I stopped doing that, in that way, during the San Francisco era. And, but when I got to Austin, like, my heart cried out for it again. So my wife said, You gotta go do this in her wisdom. And so I had found myself at this backyard party, with my typewriter. And instead of typing columns out of my head, I decided to ask people, like, can I write a poem for you? And the first time I did it, it like, just, it's filled my heart with, you know, joy, put me in flow state. And it suddenly, it took me the magic moment for me was, oh, I don't, I don't have to think about this. It was freedom. It was like, I can just play with this. It put me in a state of play. And so I did it that night. And then soon after I put myself on a mission have to write and give away 1000 pounds in a year. That was sort of my creative, SMART goal. And I gave them all away. And by the time I hit number 500, I was getting invited to conferences to write poems for people. And by the end of the year, I had a full blown minnow. I had an email newsletter I was giving doing poems at weddings, business conferences, and it has just gone from there. And it's been 12 years now, since I did that. And so my worlds have continued to sort of weave in and out of each other and, and I love it. So I'd

Chris Meredith 08:58

love to hear more about the typewriter, because for most of us, yeah, just the act of writing or creating poetry seems like a huge obstacle, but then throw in a piece of old school technology as well to navigate Tibor to express it one letter at a time. Why? Why does a typewriter give you that freedom? Why not a pen? Why not recorded on a on tape recording device?

Scott James 09:23

I mean, I do that too. I think there's a couple of reasons. Number one, I you know, I love the sort of the ancestral as you live lineage of the typewriter. So I love that it's my grandfather's I feel connected to it. But number two, it's a great object, you know, so because I do interactive, co creative poetry. People are attracted by that in a way that they're not distracted by like a person with a pen. You know, you get a lot of questions. It's a curiosity. Yeah. And it's, it's loud. There's actually I can't remember the word but there's a really cool A group of of, it's almost like Secretary artists who in Mexico City, and they, they have, they will set up in the central square. And it's more like, you could go. And if you needed a letter typed to someone, you could go get a type there, or they would create it. And so I think there's, there's sort of, there's a curiosity aspect to it. And but I love it because it's very tactile, it's physical. Yes, like, I don't know if we can hear this, but it's just like, there's a bit of a ASMR in there, there's a bit of a, you know, when I, when I do this, when I do sort of the what I do at events, people will come up, they asked me, you know, I say, if you can give me any word, or tell me a story, and I'll turn it into a poll, and as soon as they tell me, there's sort of that aspect of saying a hope, or a dream or something, a pain out loud, to a complete stranger. But, and then after that, the thing that is so common is people say, Oh, I love that sound. So I think one of the things that really differentiates it is that it just makes noise. And most writing doesn't make noise. And, and so it's a feature of the typewriter that it makes noise and that it's pleasant. Is this, like a record, like record static,

Chris Meredith 11:29



even though you're logged in, you're familiar with social media, or this sounds like this lack of technology. So a bit of a theme that you can have 10 years in the wilderness, away, no cell phone, no internet. And now, even though you've been to San Francisco, and you can see what technology can do. Your job isn't to is an old school type of money. There's a message for creatives there, which is watch out for technology, it's not necessarily helping you like you're getting in the way. Is that true? For

Scott James 11:58

me, it's getting in the way. Yes, I'd technology gets in the way. Actually, I just had a conversation today. Where somebody asked me oh, you know, should I? I'm thinking about getting on Tik Tok, what do you think? And I explained to them while I'm actually going the other way I spend, I used to spend a lot of time on Instagram. And now I spent a lot less time. And she said, Oh, I love your videos. Like because I make these videos where I'm reading poems. And I said, that's true. But the, like, my mission. My, the reason I do this, the reason I create is not to create videos or to create, you know, with a one layer of Yeah, who will I do it so that I can sit across from somebody and make something in the moment. So I think it's different because some people make really just, you know, really beautiful things with technology. But you are right, the more technology that becomes available, the more I move away from it. And that's like a feature. Yes.

Chris Meredith 13:02

Yeah. Fascinating.

Paul Fairweather 13:04

I'm really interested start. I don't know he's nine. But there was a there's an English artist, who does these amazing images using a typewriter. But actually that it's, we I'll actually get it to the shoulder, we will move on to the show. We've had no success yet. But he does. He's easy. So incredible. Images, I'll put in the show notes. And you can see it as well. So look, I think, I don't know if we pre warn this, but Well, I suppose there's no pre warning because we haven't grown. But when you know, we'd like you to write a poem for us. Okay, yeah, let's do it. So what do you want for us? Do you want? You want to say do you want a word? What do you want? Well,

Scott James 13:47

let's do it the way I would do it, so I'm going to move the video of your a bit, and it should still work. So

Chris Meredith 13:56

for people listening, we can now see Scott and his typewriter that fabulous old school typewriters. So as great

Scott James 14:03

as I would say. So because there's two of you, you can do it together. Or you can each do your own. And the the invitation that I offered to the two of you is you can give me any word, any idea, a phrase, or tell me a story, and I'll turn it into a poem for you. Well, I

Paul Fairweather 14:28

seek the comic creators.



Chris Meredith 14:30

Yeah, exactly where I was gonna go. The story I think has to be about the fact that we came together amid pandemic. We started this podcast without ever having met each other face to face. And even to this day, I've already met each other four or five times Facebook calls in Brisbane or by me, and I'm gonna Sydney so we're different states. So if you're able to do something about that and coming together from i We 1000s of miles to each other, we're certainly a long way. rum each other, I've got a quick story to tell if Scott needs a couple of moment as he types, which is that there's a room in the Vatican with four paintings on it. And the four paintings are designed to capture each of the four bodies of human knowledge, become a bit of a temple to everything that humankind knows. And one of them. One of the four bodies, of course, is theology because it's an automatic. Another one is philosophy, which is kind of dangerous for religious organization, because philosophers ask questions that ought to be answered by the Bible. Third one is the law of the human knowledge of law. But the fourth one is poetry. So according to, I think it was 15th century thinking in the Vatican. Poetry was one of the four bodies of human knowledge. It wasn't science, it wasn't art, it wasn't anything, it was poetry, I was really struck. But we're now talking to a poet. And I'm struggling, we don't value poetry practice as much as it was once valued. So maybe we'll have more of a value of poetry. After the spoken Scott,

Paul Fairweather 16:15

maybe that's actually that's interesting, because I'm just, I'm just observing. We'll put this on YouTube. But he, he's typing away one finger or two fingers, so I'm interested. He's all this typing is done. If he, he never learns, but he obviously doesn't make mistakes either. I don't see any tip X coming out, Chris.

Chris Meredith 16:37

Yes, good point. Because of the laptop, of course, you can go back and we will do we change it and change it. But it's yet to commit. Maybe it's a bit like watercolor painting or which is when once the paint goes on the on the paper, you can't go back it does want to Dallas and you have to live with that work. Yeah,

Paul Fairweather 16:55

actually, good watercolor paper, and good watercolors. You can you can actually, you can go back. But anyway, yes, it is. It is pretty well, once it's down, it's down. So generally.

Chris Meredith 17:10

I'm hoping this does elevate our appreciation of poetry because he because it strikes me everyone knows how to talk. But none of us I think are very, very few people would say I'm a poet, and yet, drawing really will draw little sketches, certainly photographs, we had to take a photograph on the phone. But some says write a poem. I think we'd all freeze. Even though we have the raw material. We use it every single day. Why is poetry such a scary thing? So maybe this will demystify it for us a bit?

Paul Fairweather 17:42

Well, I did have a conversation once before we'll ask a question. Here he goes,

Scott James 17:46



You got to work with what you got it. Alright, well, we call it the common creative, brilliant, best. And of course, I'll send you the original. Let me read it to you. The common creative, it is not so much the distances between us. As the distances we travel toward the common creative goal. On is that space between the quietness before and after what we try to mean. And whatever beginning we think we are having. The ending is the magic you cannot create, except from the truth. That is my heart remembering why it beats in the first place.

Paul Fairweather 18:28

Fantastic!

Chris Meredith 18:29

I'm tearing up, that's beautiful! Thank you, Scott. Wow.

Paul Fairweather 18:35

Wonderful. Now Scott, you said you get ascendancy originally, you might have to retype it.

Chris Meredith 18:39

Thank you so much for that skill.

Scott James 18:41

Yeah.

Paul Fairweather 18:42

Scott, I'm interested in a couple of things. One is, you know, we will pat our pedaling arm while you are typing. Yeah, you mostly got great focus. You tune out or do you actually put it on mute?

Scott James 18:57

I didn't the I could have put it on mute. That would have been fun. But it typically I'm doing this in very loud rooms, you know, networking events, or I have one event where it's in a very large, one room church. And so there's always a lot of noise kids, there's always kids like trying to, you know, crowding around. So the noise is not a thing. It's a focus, but it's very much clear the mind, beginner mind, you know, open the channel, kind of a feeling, the less I think the better the work.

Chris Meredith 19:32

Okay, About a product. If somebody said draw a picture or a purse, I think we'd all go well, I can't draw but I'll draw a round thing for the edge and then a body and then legs and that would be my my attempt to jump it. But if I said to somebody else, write a poem about the common creative. I think they would just freeze you know, I would not know where's What's your problem? How do you through that steer of putting words together in some kind of beautiful order. How do you start?

Scott James 20:10

Well, the the most honest answer is, I have no idea. I just jump off the cliff. I love it. But the most tactical answer is, I learned this. I was taking improv like stage improv I, when I started doing this, and the there was a technique that they taught me, which was called jump and justify. And I've always found that to

be very freeing. And the idea is, it's made for stage in improv. So the idea is you just do the first thing that comes to your mind, hey, don't judge it, you don't think about it, you don't think about if it's good or bad, or whether it'll work or not. And then everything else you do after that, and everything everybody else does, just has to justify why the jump, the unthinking leap that you took was the only thing that it was the perfect thing to do. And I love that technique. So I use that, a version of that, I think, with this, so the, you know, I try to train myself to get past the, you know, Steven Pressfield, resistance, and then I really like the ethos of jump and justify, which is, I think, very, very freeing, in the sense that it gives you freedom and purpose. In shorter, it's,

Chris Meredith 21:37

it makes me that we pull, maybe you can remember, we had a guest on a neuroscientist who was studying intuition. And I think what we went through is it's definitely a thing, it's not something we will be we guess. And you because you said that I'm thinking jump, but my my guess is it's not an unthinking Jump, jump, it's absolutely coming from inside you, in both paths, a bit of the brain that isn't conscious. And if you allow yourself to younger, you're accessing a really important part of your brain that you wouldn't do if you didn't give yourself permission to jump and just go hey, Babus this.

Scott James 22:11

I love that, that scene, you're probably right. And in a sense that it's hard for any of us to describe our own process. Yes, that's probably more true. You

Paul Fairweather 22:22

could see job here is an Australian euros. This tagging is just released a book actually. And I'll put that in the show notes as well. Scott, we spoke about this once before when we caught up. Yeah. What makes that a pole? What makes a pole? You know, I think I explained to you I had difficulty reading out tree. And after we spoke last time, I had a bit of a crack that a couple of

Scott James 22:46

Oh, what did you read what I want to know,

Paul Fairweather 22:49

I will I've been reading now. It's in soulja boy fell out at one Nobel Prize. Rushing gaiety of short pants. I had a bit of a crack at times at writing some poems, but just you know, what, what makes that what makes a poem? I think I've asked you this before, but what makes it what makes a poem?

Scott James 23:11

Yeah, I mean, again, the I would say my first answer is, I don't know. But I find, to me poetry is language that moves, you know, moves you. Look, poetry is language that, you know, isn't. It's a language that moves you, I think a poem is sort of a using language in a, in a specific way. And that, so that that's like the the way that I think about it, because the same way you can go, let's say to church, and you sit down, and you know, whoever's speaking in the front is going to speak in a certain way. And it's tailored to create a spiritual container. And if you go to, you know, onboarding, for your job, that HR person is going to speak to you in a certain way. And I think of poetry in the same way. So there's all the way from spoken word to something very simple, like E. Cummings, to like, a haiku to, you know, all

kinds of different things. And to me, the common thread is that that on is attempting to give you like a route into feeling something or experiencing something. Through the language through the approximation, that language provides rules that we're

Chris Meredith 24:48

not. So I'm, I'm thinking everyone would identify with this idea of trying to move the people around us to share feelings to tell stories to to communicate. what it is we want to communicate. And yet fewer of us use poetry around getting some say as, as we mentioned, before we press records. Poetry seems to be a long way down the list of art forms, you know, painting, music, drama, whatever, but not much. And yet, if poetry is language that moves you surely we should all be using poetry, it sounds like should be top of the art thoughts. Well, when?

Paul Fairweather 25:30

Yeah, well,

Scott James 25:31

I think I mean, I love your story about poetry being one of the things that hangs on the wall. But I do think that poetry I think, I think poetry used to have an elevated status, and maybe a different meaning. Because actually, when I look around at the world, I think we are still using poetry everywhere. I think it's just been subsumed into all other disciplines, the way that rhetoric has been, you know, part of it. So, advertising copy is poetry. It's just poetry used to sell you something. You know, pop me all music, which is ubiquitous for us, but was never ubiquitous in, in old time, you know, is, you know, word meetings moved constantly, every commercial, every event is full of people. You know, again, a Taylor Swift sigh is not that different from the Odyssey. Yeah, it was rhyming, and it was musical, and it was evoking things like that. So to me, that's, we probably call it less poetry. And so that's one answer. And then the second part of that answer is, I think, you know, the same way that everybody colors when you're a kid, and then it sort of gets like, beat out of you. I think, as most people are writing, you know, bad, sappy, sad poetry when we're young. And at some point, you get embarrassed, and you stop, and I just did not. So, I think it's, yeah, I think that's, that's another aspect of it, it's, you know, don't be so hard on yourself and let yourself write bad poetry.

Paul Fairweather 27:22

Scott, I just, I want to take a little bit of a diversion to what you're saying back to the discussion bit earlier about imagination and intuition. From what comes up to me, I just started reading a book by an Elder great called the imagination, imagination, something. He was at the intersection of business and creativity, and as creators about unpacking creativity in life and business. Like, you know, that insight that you had, about, you know, being able to go, like, you know, shut everything out and just really channeled the creativity. In this particular art form. Do you have any sort of application for that? Or, you know, what, what insights do you have for either someone who's, you know, busy at work is going to have competing priorities? A lot of noise, whether it's physical noise, or just, you know, general noise? What do you see? You got some insight into, you know, how this can one apply in a, in a business sense? Well,

Scott James 28:30



I think one of the easiest things is you take, okay, this, this is my, this is going to follow me on this application. I would say if people ask me, like, how, how do you do that? And there's the jump and justify answer. But actually, the most important thing is get, you know, eight hours of sleep, be hydrated, eat, sort of those really basic and, you know, take a walk, and don't be too crowded. So in my head, the business application that has actually changed the way that I work, and made me way more productive, is that I found that as I got more and more invitations to do more and more poetry at a certain point, it becomes, it's not just oh, it's fun. I'm gonna go do this once or twice. It's, oh, I really, I got to prepare for this. And now I'm a little bit tired of this. I still like it, but it's got all those different aspects. And I found that if I showed up with a crowded head, and tired and I didn't eat, you know, stuff like that, it didn't work. And so I ended up basically structuring my life, like structuring the rhythm of my time, for like 24 hours and then 48 hours before an event so that I would arrive with my head and my physiology He called. And so it gave me, let's say, a catalyst to structure my day in such a way that the thing that I had to do the deepest thinking on, which in the beginning was the poetry is, you know, I wouldn't like do a bunch of email right before that, and then expect like, oh, well, now I can just go read a poem. And so that has carried over into how I do, you know, deep work, like, I really love Cal Newport's books and slow productivity. So what I'm saying is sort of version of you, as far as shownotes Cal Newport stuff. But the insight, or the takeaway that I have is that even if you don't write poetry, the if there is some work that you want your creativity to be present with, or part of, you know, choose it, like, choose that, and allow yourself the grace and wisdom to structure like a couple of hours leading up to that in such a way that you're not thinking about the email, you're not hungry, and you're not these other things. And it really, I don't know, it goes a really, really long way. So that's my big answer. And then within that, I, I try to sit down. And I start longhand, like Allah, Julia Cameron and artists way. And I really like to empty my brain. So I, you're right, I think, Chris, when you said, you know, I do avoid technology, like there's no way I can brainstorm on a computer, yet. I definitely use pen and paper, I don't use a typewriter all the time. But, you know, I'll often stand up. And so those, those are the two big ones, you know, the need for taking care of, like the whole body system. If I want to be creative, I can't just flip it on and off. And in the same way, I'm gonna have to empty myself first. That's a great,

Paul Fairweather 32:13

That is a great insight. Because I think, you know, it's been like that thing of telling people to think that they will think harder, you know, and, yeah, you know, and, you know, and in my previous profession, as an architect, you know, the biggest pressure is on time. And, the best result is spending more time in the design phase. The one that's always sped up, because I want to get out of the ground inside. It's a much broader vision of what you're saying. But like, it really, really resonates. You know, and I suppose it's, you know, even more broadly, it's Robert Fritz. path of least resistance, you know, but basically, the tortured artist who, you know, beat himself up and then self medicates. And now, it's coming from behind the eight ball because they don't have the energy and the clarity, because, well, maybe they do for a brief period of time, because I've grown up there the memories, but I think it's really interesting. I think it's, I think it's a great insight for application for I got utility work. One more for that, if

Scott James 33:28

I may know, yes, please. Paul Graham, Y Combinator, he had this wonderful blog post that I think is from like, 2006, or something like that. And I read it when I was in San Francisco, at that time. And he it's, I think it's just called manager versus maker time. And I've always thought that that was the most

elegant reference point for that idea. And he's, and he was talking about startups. And he said, you know, most startups, they begin with, program, or, you know, there's an idea but then you have to write the code. And he said, there is, you know, somebody who's going to be the manager, the sales guy, whatever. And their day is in 60 minute or 30 minute increments, and you try to get as many as you can back to back because that's productivity. And whereas the coders, if you have one meeting in the morning, you can't be productive from 8am to noon. Like it takes out your whole morning because you can't drop into a flow state. And he said, so if you're running a startup he said, You got to know who's on manager time and who's on maker time. Maker time is essentially artists time where you have something like a morning, the afternoon and maybe the evening, and some people like the middle of the night. And then managers you know, are one one hour and if So how do you blend the two, which in my own life, I've basically left in the morning, you know, 9am 8am to noon is maker time. And then the rest of the day is manager time. Or sometimes it's flipped. But yeah, I've always taken that to heart as well.

Chris Meredith 35:15

It's, it's fast, it could lead incompletely to some of our kind of scientific research on creativity, we've learned this word mind wandering. A bunch of neuroscientists have demonstrated that when the brain is allowed to relax, and to not know, and to be happy in an uncertain world, then it comes up with great ideas. And I think for anyone in the world of business, there's no allowance for or encouragement for the idea of not knowing and to wander and to relax. And to have that freedom. It's all about showing me the proof, knocking stuff out the door. Next, next, next, next, even if you try to be creative, be creative now, great, flown by by a father. And you can't do that, if does not the human brain does not allow you to do that. So I think that's a really good endorsement of that idea of making time to hydrate ie to sleep, and then set your brain off to be creative. And it's a really good point.

Scott James 36:17

I love this. And here's another that I forgot about. I hope it's okay to just keep going on with this. So I love well. That guy says go. So I was just talking to someone yesterday about idea seeding. And I told him because he said, he said, Oh, I started getting up at five in the morning, and it changed my life. And now I have you know, I get this many things done before my kids get up and, and then I get my work done etc. And I said, Oh, that's great. And we got to talking about what do you what's your wind down? Like? What's your night routine? How do you sort of turn it off. And I was telling him that the I don't, I don't get up that early. But I specifically and I'll but I also don't work past, I don't know, six or 7pm. Or if I do, I know I'm going to pay for it the next day. So what I do is I plant an idea. So if I have whatever I'm going to do the next morning in, you know, the maker time in the morning, I'll read about it for five minutes. And the night before I like nine o'clock. And then if and then I'll either not necessarily have a vivid dream about it. But I'll usually wake up with clarity, or it'll be one of the things that I think about in the morning and my brain to your point, Chris has figured out something that I was that was underneath. And I do that. So that's sort of the consulting version. And then for poetry. I have a practice where if I, I set an intention, or a prayer or whatever you like, if I have an event, let's say tomorrow night, at some point in the morning, or the day before, I will just sit and have a very quiet moment where I'll sort of drop in like and say I'm I'm going to or I'll say like, let's, let's write some fun poems for these people. And I'll picture the room. And it's not long, it's just brief. But I feel like I'm planting the intention in the ether. And it feels like a gesture of spiritual respect. And I think it's paid incredible dividends, just

to sort of remind me of my, like, nervous system or my, you know, deep down, yes, I'm going to be busy for the next 10 hours. But when I got to that room, I already sort of planted the flag of intentionality for that. So

Paul Fairweather 39:10

in the book, rest, can't think of the name the author talks about in there. you know exactly what you're talking about when you say about planning the intention when you go to sleep. But there's a famous psychologist, also a scientist, who described a sort of waking slowly after over a half an hour period and there are in the subconscious or unconscious mind having a conversation. So and and then then they'll get up and write. Oh, cool. And I've tried it a few times. It was quite amazing. And I think it's you know, and I hadn't really thought about it but what you were saying earlier, it story much of that state, you know, so I come down and you know, I've been thinking about something else when I sit down and write you know, I just can't write, but if I do this process, but it's that the typewriter or the computer in just it flows, you know, like and even thinking about it. And it just sort of comes out because I've been writing in my head but having this conversation. So I think it's really interesting. And I look, I think your insight for the credit process, the way you've unpacked it's been incredibly powerful. Yeah. Good. IB did you get to the 1000? I'm assuming you did in the year.

Scott James 40:29

I did, I actually had to throttle myself. So I was at like, 980, by about September. And I plan to so I teamed up because I was doing the improv at the same time. So I teamed up with an improv troupe, and they were like an improv dance troupe. And so I rented out a theater, and I had people come in, and I wrote the last five poems live in front of the stage. And so people just called out words. And then they would get acted out. And so yeah, we did that. I believe it was either on my birthday or something like that at some point in November. So we hit 1000. But once I started going, because at an event, you'll do 50, or I'll do 50 poems. So once I started getting invited to events in the summer, it was, you know, a lot I blew past it, or I could have.

Paul Fairweather 41:25

So I've done a couple of Oh, where do that? Yes. So I will, you could do this.

Chris Meredith 41:37

I'm wondering if, if that helps you think it is once you get to the kind of the flow of drawing, yeah, that helps you compose, to listen in a different way, just as you're able to run a poll here with this background, I was in LA.

Paul Fairweather 41:53

And I talk about that in my talk. And actually, we just sort of unpack it. Because, you know, we had Roger Beatty on. He's a neuroscientist from Princeton. And he talks about it, he discovered it, but he certainly unpacked this thing about three networks. So the old left and right hand side brain, there's three and the default network, the executive control and the salient that is on the moon daydreaming, the executive control is the analytical the left hand side of the brain. And then the solid network is actually a switching mechanism that allows the brain to switch almost simultaneously between the two. And also is the filter. And so I found that, and obviously, when I do these runnings, maths class and

state, other people have the same experience to doodle and draw, whilst you're listening. I'm not really aware of doing either. But I'm doing both very well. So you know, probably talking more than what you say the advisor is actually sitting here not to you nodding. And my mind was going somewhere else. There's a sign their work has done. And that's important. That's important. That's important. And same thing with the drawing. So it's interesting, because I think it's up, you know, I'm more visual, but it's probably the same very similar process to what you're doing about cleansing your hair. Yes, because writing, you know, is that thing of, you know, those two things, the analytical evidence. And so, you know, you're doing mechanical using words, which is, you know, is sort of analytical in a way the mechanics on the, in the sense, so, yes, I think it's always interesting. Very interesting.

Scott James 43:37

Nice. That reminds me of a book, Doodle revolution, by Sonny Brown. And it sure her that's it's all about that idea. How visual thinking and how doodling is a way of thinking but that it is, is thinking it like it is it's while you're talking about like it's

Chris Meredith 44:01

Yeah, yeah, a different way.

Scott James 44:02

But part and parcel of Yeah, it's you're listening. And she does these really cool things where she'll show like, how different people doodle, you know, and what is that there's like, almost a personality to how you do it. And it's quite fascinating, but then just that it's a tool that you can use on purpose. And unfortunately, you know,

Paul Fairweather 44:23

we will for about, you know, pivoting we, you know, let go of creativity that, you know, especially in primary school or at school at any time, if you're doodling Yeah, hidden, listening, you know? Yeah, it's, you know, it's just so wrong. Yeah. And then, and I talked to, you know, again, groups, and I had a group of lawyers last week, I said, who did doodles and I tell them a story about me that I used to do live meetings. They say, Oh, no, I couldn't do that people will think I'm not listening in. So it's a real disconnect, because this whole thing of drawing in three dates. Observe All, in written language, you know, singing about poetry, you know, poetry is, you know, yeah, yeah. But you know, so this additional thing of visual thinking. And, you know, again, from the research that we've done in a podcast, over 50% of the brain is taken over to visual cognition. Yeah. Yeah. Ryan, whilst as a language session session doesn't actually have a word section, and it treats every letter like little picture. Yeah. So, you know, in normal amount of, you know, computation that we were we learned. So these are the thing of, you know, a picture's worth 1000 words. Which is one pitchers hasn't lessened. Yeah. There you go. Yeah. Scott, look, it's been absolutely fantastic. And that the adoring public doesn't know we had terrible technology problems. Yeah. My God, if we if we've done it by operator, we you said there's something to be said it could have taken months to put together. But look at it has. You look, we didn't get to talk about it. But you also are a book coach. And we will put your details in the URL. Great. Yeah. Show Notes. But yeah, look, I just think your, your approach and I what you do, but also how you understand that and how you've unpacked that, for us has been absolutely insightful and fantastic. I

Chris Meredith 46:26

completely agree. Scott, thank you so much.

Scott James 46:29

Thank you both. It's been a pleasure.

Paul Fairweather 46:32

He was, that was fantastic. I gotta say, we did try to pull up for about 30 minutes, but then we kept on chatting. And I think we got the best stuff out right at the end there. So really fantastic insights. And I particularly enjoyed this intersection between the drawing and the writing, and how that all came together.

Chris Meredith 46:59

Yeah, that it almost you're distracting yourself in order to access a different part of the brain for Scott, it might be tapping on the typewriter For you it might be doodling. But those physical actions allow us to allow the brain to get into a different space. And it's so important to let it express itself. And so I agree with you, I think that was a really powerful part of the conversation. But Arthur, there's just huge learning. There's a man who lives and dies by creativity in his lessons on sleeping well, eating well, there's lessons on taking the unthinking jump this the confidence that poetry is everywhere, all of those things just gold, us love chatter.

Paul Fairweather 47:41

Yeah, and not only just that, you know, sleeping well and eating, eating well and being hydrated with the fact that he realizes that, you know, in order to show up, he has to spend, you know, a day and a half or two days preparing, you know, any top, you know, racing rush off an email, just before he sits down to type of poultry, you clear his mind. Like it's almost like a zen-like discipline that you might expect, you know, the world's best basketball player. But, you know, it's an you know, whilst he's not having to do something strenuous. It really is that focus and in a world that's, you know, so distracted by his thing of using the typewriter warming up by using your hand, you know, not stops brainstorming, as he says on the computer will also do fantastic stuff. So I hope you enjoyed the episode as much as Chris and I did. We

Chris Meredith 48:41

do let us know what you think. Please share your feedback for the comment in the comment section. We'd love it. If you could give us a rating we'd love it's five star rating if you're feeling generous. But most of all tell your mate to spread the news about the common creative. It's great for other people to understand creativity more debt for this great for our show, if you don't mind, spreading the word about The Common Creative.

Paul Fairweather 49:05

And hope you can tune in for our next episode.

Chris Meredith 49:08

All right, see you soon.





Scott Andrew James (Special Guest)



The episode with the Neuroscientist who studies intuition

The episodes on Mindwandering and Mindwondering

And Roger Beatty on the 3 networks

Sunni Brown's TED Talk



Paul Fairweather - Co-host



Chris Meredith - Co-host



Two Common Creatives

