

Business For Superheroes Podcast Transcription: Episode One Hundred And Ninety Three: Being Interested In Everything



This is a podcast about one woman's mission to help entrepreneurs and business owners write better business books. Each week, we tackle your writing excuses because they're our excuses too, and help you beat the blank page of doom so that you can write the book that will grow your life and your business. Now here's your host, Vicky Fraser...

Vicky: Hello, and welcome to the "1,000 Authors" show! I'm Vicky Fraser and this is Lieutenant Wharf!

Joe: So it turns out that having overhead lighting in the room means that all you can see is my eyebrow ridges.

Vicky: Joe's convinced he looks like a Klingon. Do your Klingon.

Joe: Qapla! Today is a good day to die.

Vicky: Also, this is also a good time to point out that some lovely person, and I still don't know who sent me this, sent me this delightful um, God, what is it? A coaster.

Joe: Coaster.

Vicky: Sent me this delightful coaster of Lieutenant Woof. I still don't know who sent me this, but it's somebody who knows that I love all animals, I love dogs, and I also love Star Trek.

Joe: One of your many doggie followers.

Vicky: Yeah, and if it was you, please tell me because I really wanted to thank you for it and I did. It came with a note that was unsigned. If you don't want me to know who you are, then that's fine, I guess, but just know that I love it. Thank you, and it sits on my desk. It's my tea coaster or currently my

neer coaster 'cause I am drinking non-alcoholic Heineken. Other non-alcoholic beers are available but they're not as nice. And Joe is drinking?

Joe: Tsingtao.

Vicky: Tsingtao!

Joe:Big bottles.

Vicky: Big bottles because it's currently Saturday night. Cheers. Right then. Yeah, we are trying out new lights as you can see. We've discovered that overhead lights don't work quite so well or at least they give Joe Klingon-like brow ridges and they give me weird curtain shadows. I've been fiddling with my other lights as well. But we're getting there. It's gonna be different every time.

Joe: And if you're just listening to this one as an audio podcast, then sorry about that.

Vicky: Yeah, you need to hop on to YouTube and go, "What the fuck are they talking about?" So yes, we are drinking beer and neer and we are waiting for the world to dry out because currently the village is impassable in at least one direction.

Joe: Yes. Again.

Vicky: Even with my new car. Oh yeah, we've got a new car.

Joe: New car.

Vicky: Yeah, but we'll talk about that later.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: Yeah, so this week we are talking about why you should be interested in everything, but as per usual, we're gonna start with, as per usual since last week. We are going to start with what we are reading at the moment and

then a little bit later we're gonna tell you about where we've been mostly reading it, all because it's been so cool, yeah.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: So Joe, what are you reading?

Joe: Well I'm actually not reading anything, because half an hour ago I finished what I was reading which was N.K. Jemisin's "The Fifth Season".

Vicky: Did you enjoy it?

Joe: I did enjoy it, I did enjoy it. It was very good, very good. I shall read the other two books in the trilogy now. You all right there? For those of you listening in black and white, Vicky just threw non-alcoholic beer all over her face.

Vicky: You know what, I have a real problem with cans, I find it really difficult to drink out of them without pouring whatever I'm drinking down the side of my face, hm...

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: Outtakes!

Joe: Cool, nice. So yeah, really enjoyed it, very good. Very good stuff, good fantasy, well-written, yeah, nice.

Vicky: Interesting social issues.

Joe: Interesting social issues. Yeah, good stuff. I enjoyed it. What do you read?

Vicky: I'm reading Jasper Fforde's "Early Riser". I love Jasper Fforde because he's got such a wildly-bonkers imagination and he's written, you may have heard of "The Eyre Affair" and "The Well Of Lost Plots" in the Thursday Next series of books?

Joe: I've read a Thursday Next or two.

Vicky: Yeah, he's very Marmite. You either love his stuff or you hate his stuff. It is very strange, his stories are very strange. Excuse me.

Joe: You're being very biological, this one.

Vicky: And this particular one is set in an alternate reality of the UK, it's actually set in Wales, it's an alternate reality in which humanity hibernates every winter, and it's about the people who stay up throughout the winter to make sure that everything--

Joe: Do the maintenance.

Vicky: Yeah, it goes smoothly. It's really really good, it's not just interesting in terms of it's just interesting to imagine humanity hibernating, it's also interesting because it's a good thriller. It's a good mystery whodunit, so yeah. Excuse me one second, I feel like I got something crawling on my face, have I?

Joe: Chicken mites.

Vicky: Probably. Did you know we all have tiny little mites living on our faces?

Joe: Yes. Yeah, did you know that, dear listener? It's true. So, my non-fiction book that I'm reading at the moment is "Atomic Habits" by James Clear and I'm really enjoying it, it's right here. Tiny changes, remarkable results, an easy and proven way to build good habits and break bad ones. I've been on James Clear's mailing email list for, oh, must be four or five years now and he is awesome, and I've been making, because I always make notes on the books that I read that are non-fiction books, and so he starts it with a really great story about how he was hit in the face with a baseball bat as a teenager, put him in a coma, but he says he says a couple of really cool things which is, I don't know if you know anything about habits I talk about habits a lot because if you want to write a book then you need good habits to do so, but he says the quality of our lives often depends on the quality of our habits with the same habits you'll end up with the same results but with better habits, anything is possible, and I really like that because we tend to kind of

focus on massive changes and massive steps, and you know, like I say, it's tiny beetle steps. It's really difficult, it's almost impossible to affect massive change really fast. But he talks about tiny changes, it's like me and, you know, you write a book in tiny beetle steps but I really really particularly like the story of Brailsford, who is the British cycling coach, and British Cycling, so there was a time not so long ago only like 10, 15 years ago or so, when certain brands of bicycle wouldn't even sell to the British team in case they got associated with--

Joe: Terrible performers.

Vicky: Yeah with our terrible performers, and so this guy Brailsford turns up and he, instead of trying to effect massive change and do too much too soon, he looked at improving every tiny aspect of what goes into cycling by 1%, because put all of those things together--

Joe: Big change.

Vicky: Massive change, yeah, and that is, it's quite a profound concept I think and it's something that we don't often think about or talk about because we are so focused on hearing the overnight successes, which by the way don't exist.

Joe: The massive changes.

Vicky: The massive changes, the big grand gestures, sometimes it's good to make a grand gesture. I will go and, I'll go away for a week to Lanzarote to write a book or whatever, but--

Joe: But that's not really what gets the book written, is it?

Vicky: That's not really what gets the book written, no. So, I'm a big fan of James Clear, also super excited because I wrote to him to ask if I could include something that he'd written in one of his emails, and he wrote back, really really nicely, wrote back really quickly and said yes, so, hi James!

Joe: Hi James!

Vicky: I'm gonna send him a copy of my book to say thank you. So yeah, so that's what I'm reading at the moment. Thoroughly recommend "Atomic Habits" by James Clear, also because it's a really really well-written book and I like the structure that he's put into it. He sets out the four rules, in fact we can talk about this just a tiny bit, this is part of the reason why I wanted to share what books we were reading... So, there's the introduction, which is his story, he goes through the fundamentals, and then he splits into a load of sections. So first, second, third, and fourth laws split into different chapters, and then he talks about advanced tactics and then he's got like a conclusion, the secret to results that last, and it's just great because he uses storytelling to get his point across and he describes this book as not an academic book because he's not a professor of anything, but as an operating manual, which I think is a really nice way of putting it. So if you're stuck for what book to write, maybe think of how you could write an operating manual for somebody. Anyway, back to this week's topic, which is: why you should be interested in absolutely everything, and the main reason that I think you should be interested in absolutely everything is because it makes life more fun, but practically because, quite often, business owners run out of things to say. One of the most common questions I get when I suggest that people should write regular emails to their lists is, how do you come up with all the stuff that you talk about? How do you have so many things to say? And my answer is simple: I just, I'm interested in everything. I collect stories, I collect information, and another reason is because, quite often, business owners struggle to explain stuff without being boring, so you don't want to just kind of, lay the facts out. It's nice to be able to talk about, you know, analogies and things like-- I can't say that word, ever. Analogies.

Joe: Analogies.

Vicky: Analogies and metaphors and use stories to illustrate your point.

Joe: Stories.

Vicky: Yeah. So, in much the same way as James Clear did in his book "Atomic Habits", he talked about how you can change-- He actually did this calculation, he said in the footnotes, if a plane takes off from LA Airport and it's aiming for New York, if you change the trajectory by just 3.5 degrees,

which equates to I think about eight feet if it's a jumbo jet, so it's an eight foot change of nose direction, yeah? But you'll end up in Washington.

Joe: An eight foot nose direction?

Vicky: Yeah, so, if you've got your plane pointing in the direction of at New York, right? If you're flying to New York--

Joe: I'm taking off in Los Angeles.

Vicky: Taking off in Los Angeles, if you change the doctor trajectory by 3.5 degrees, it will move the nose by about eight feet.

Joe: From the center of mass.

Vicky: From the direction it was pointing in! **Joe:** Where are you measuring that from? **Vicky:** Pointing at New York, and then you move it three and a half degrees, you point it, it moves eight feet. The nose moves eight feet. You know exactly what I'm talking about, and you're just being contrary. My listeners know what I'm talking about. So, eight feet, your nose moves eight feet, but by the time it gets to its destination you're not landed in New York, you've landed in Washington D.C., which is 255 miles away. That's what the point he was making was, was a tiny change at this end can effect a massive change at the other end. Thanks for ruining my point!

Joe: No I like, I was all, I was perfectly well with it until the eight feet thing, it's just a measurement that makes no sense.

Vicky: No it isn't, it does make sense. You take a pencil, right, a giant pencil, that is stuck on the nose of your airplane, and it makes a little mark on the floor.

Joe: So which bit of the airplane stays still when you move it three and a half degrees?

Vicky: The bit with the wheels on it!

Joe: Not the tail, because if you hold the tail still and you move it three and a half degrees it's gonna be like, a bigger distance.

Vicky: Yes!

Joe: But if you--

Vicky: I'm talking about from the point of view of a pilot, which is the only real point of view that matters because they're in charge of the plane.

Joe: What if you moved pilot three and a half degrees, the nose barely moves at all?

Vicky: At this point, I'm just gonna say that on Thursday of this week, it was our 10th wedding anniversary. I don't know how we've lasted this long, because occasionally I want to hit you in the face with a frying pan.

Joe: Well, I want you to get your facts straight.

Vicky: Anyway, shall we go on to the main topic of--

Joe: It's been a lovely 10 years, my darling.

Vicky: It has. Oh, I also have to show you what Joe got me for our 10th wedding anniversary. A stabby dagger, because it's tin, and I've been wanting a letter opener for ages and so Joe got me an owl letter opener. It's beautiful, it's Italian-made and it's gorgeous. Thank you.

Joe: You're very welcome.

Vicky: You gonna tell them what I got you?

Joe: You got me a couple of nights away in a beautiful tree house in Wales.

Vicky: If you wanna follow me on Instagram @treefrogtoe you can see pictures of just how amazing it was.

Joe: Oh man, it was gorgeous. It was like, cozy, there were wood-burning stoves in a tree house. We had a little kitchen, proper beds, it was great.

Vicky: It was great, and an outdoor shower, but you had to chase the shower around because it was really windy.

Joe: Yes it was.

Vicky: But the shower was hot, it was great.

Joe: It was hot, but it was blowy out there.

Vicky: Right then.

Joe: Right, so.

Vicky: So, the problem, running out of things to say, struggling to explain stuff without being boring, being derailed by your husband of 10 years. The solution is be fascinated by everything and collect stories, and Drayton Bird, who is one of my clients--

Joe: Hi Drayton.

Vicky: Hi Drayton! Says in his soon-to-be released autobiography, I've got some sort of a warped mind because I find just about everything interesting; that is, everything that isn't clearly boring. I'm kind of the same, I'm quite annoyingly interested in everything, aren't I? I go off on tangents.

Joe: You are very tangential.

Vicky: Yes, and Drayton also says to be interested in everything because that will make you a better writer and a better marketer, which is true, I agree and I too have a warped mind so in today's episode I'm gonna share a bunch of secrets with you about how to never run out of things to say and how never to run out of stories to tell. Are you ready?

Joe: Yes.

Vicky: Awesome. So, most importantly, read a lot.

Joe: Read.

Vicky: Yeah. Always makes me roll my eyes when I hear writers, and I do hear writers say this, that they don't read or they don't have time to read, and it's like, a chef saying, oh I don't eat,

Joe: Yeah, I just eat beans.

Vicky: Just eat beans, yeah. If you want to write well, and it doesn't matter whether you want to be a writer for a living or whether you're a business owner who needs to write, and all business owners need to write well if they want to communicate ideas and sell their stuff. You need to read a lot, and whether that's reading-- I do think it's important to read actual words on paper, but if you're dyslexic or you just really struggle with that audiobooks are great as well. Listen to podcasts, it's kind of the same thing. Read magazines, read articles, read varied stuff in all sorts of genres and particularly read Bertrand Russell's "Brief History of Western Philosophy", or is it "History of Western Philosophy?" Which may sound a bit snooty, but I read it years ago and I'm gonna reread it soon because it teaches you how to think, and I don't think most people are very good at thinking.

Joe: There's a podcast called Philosophize This! which is a beautiful thing, it's absolutely splendid. It's free, it's just great if you want to learn a bit about philosophy, do that while you're trying to drive into work.

Vicky: Yeah. Also, Sophie's World is a really good introduction to philosophy as well, which I read when I was a teenager and loved and I need to be read that again, but Bertrand Russell's book is actually very accessible, it's a massive, thick book, it looks terrifying, but it's actually really, relatively easy to read. It's not what you would expect of it and I'm not the only one telling you to do this, Drayton also advises that everybody reads it. I read it, by the way, before I knew that he advised it, so I feel a bit smug about that. So yeah, read a lot. If you read what everybody else is reading, you will write like everybody else writes, so that's a good reason to read lots of different stuff and encounter new ideas, and especially ones that you don't agree with. Trying to see things from other people's point of view.

Joe: I think it's it's easy, I certainly do this, I get sort of-- I find something I like and then I read loads of it, and I think it's more productive to actually go and find other things. Get out of your bubble a little bit, you know?

Vicky: That's why I really enjoyed my reading spa. I'm reading a pile of books now that I would never have picked up, you've just read a book that you probably would never have read, so, yes, it's really cool. Right then, idea number two.

Joe: Start a collection of something.

Vicky: Yeah! Joe's looking quizzical because I've just landed this on him and he doesn't really know what I'm talking about. Did you know that I used to collect stamps?

Joe: Yes.

Vicky: Did you?

Joe: Yes.

Vicky: Did you know that before you read it there?

Joe: Yes.

Vicky: Oh, okay. So I used to collect stamps when I was a kid--

Joe: Where are your stamps?

Vicky: I don't know. I'm sure I had a couple of Penny Reds, you know, and that I didn't have a Penny Black, they're very rare and incredibly valuable, but I had a couple of Penny Reds. But the reason that I found stamp-collecting fascinating is because I also learned a lot about the history of countries and sociopolitical and geographical-- You know, interesting economical stuff as well, and so I remember having a whole load of stamps from Rhodesia in my collection, which does not exist anymore, and I was really interested in that because I was like, oh, Rhodesia, what's Rhodesia? Because it didn't exist

when I was kid either, because I'm not that old. And so that led to me diving into the fairly horrifying history of Africa and sub-Saharan Africa and, you know, all of the horrors that were perpetrated there. So, you will learn interesting words as well. Like, babe, do you know stamp-collecting is?

Joe: Philately.

Vicky: Philately! Which is a great word to say out loud, philately.

Joe: Probably don't want to make that face on YouTube.

Vicky: That's mean. Klingon-face. So yeah, you will learn new words as well, so start a collection of something, because it will teach you new and interesting things that you can tell stories about. Don't overlook the ordinary or mundane because there is a story in absolutely everything, and almost everything has a fascinating history, like post-it notes.

Joe: Post-it notes?

Vicky: You know how they were invented?

Joe: I don't know how they were invented.

Vicky: So they were invented at 3M--

Joe: Oh, it's a failed glue.

Vicky: It's failed glue. They were trying to find a super sticky glue and the guy who was working on this problem had this failed glue, and he discovered that it-- well, it does what a post-it note does, it sticks and then it un-sticks and it doesn't leave any nasty tackiness and it's just great and so they were like huh, this is interesting, and it became probably one of their most profitable products.

Joe: Well, it can't cost much to make, can it?

Vicky: No.

Joe: Did you know-- You know how post-it notes always roll up, always curl up?

Vicky: Yes.

Joe: Did you know that, rather than peeling them off the way you've always peeled them off, you should rotate the thing 90 degrees and peel them off that way and then they don't roll up?

Vicky: I did know that.

Joe: Top tip.

Vicky: But that is a good tip, I bet not everybody listening knew that. Top tip. So, next suggestion, have a weird or nerdy hobby.

- [Joe] Weird or nerdy hoddy-- Hobby.

Vicky: Hoddy?

Joe: Hoddy.

Vicky: How much beer have you had?

Joe: Just a bit.

Vicky: I don't know if we've talked about this on the podcast before but I think now is the time for me to make a confession.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: I play Dungeons & Dragons.

Joe: That's pretty nerdy.

Vicky: It's pretty nerdy, but you can't mock me because when we were out to dinner the other night you asked me to tell you all about it and you made yourself an elf on the spot.

Joe: I did.

Vicky: So yeah. I play Dungeons & Dragons and the reason that I think that that or a hobby like that, or a board game, or just something weird and nerdy is because it's really good for creativity, because to play Dungeons & Dragons if you're being a dungeon master you have to come up with this amazing kind of quest and world and backstory and all the rest of it, but even just to play you have to create a character with an interesting backstory, and you know when you're talking, when you're involved in the quest, you have to think up things like for example we were presented with a dragon that I'm pretty sure Ed meant for us to kill and I was like we are not killing the dragon, we are going to tame the dragon, and now we have a tame dragon, and it was cool, so yeah. Have a weird or nerdy hobby.

Joe: Do you think there are a category of hobbies that would would do, because not everybody's gonna be like let's go and play Dungeons & Dragons.

Vicky: No, but just something weird that you wouldn't necessarily think of to do because you're thinking of coming to play Dungeons & Dragons and you probably wouldn't have done that if I hadn't suggested it.

Joe: I guess--

Vicky: Maybe just something that's out of your--

Joe: Yeah I was gonna say, in a broader sense, maybe it's just, go and do something you wouldn't normally do.

Vicky: Yeah, and if it could be something that encourages creativity, that's about it. Like, go and play.

Joe: Go find some people you wouldn't normally have met and do something interesting.

Vicky: Learn to fold paper, like when we were in the tree house we went and we went to-- Not a shop in the tree house but we went to a shop, and I

bought a little origami set. So I was making little origami figures of animals and I don't really-- I used to make cranes out of bus tickets.

Joe: Bus tickets were a thing, I used to make turtles out of bus tickets.

Vicky: Yeah. Is that fireworks?

Joe: Yes.

Vicky: There are fireworks going on outside, if you can hear some popping.

Joe: So, do things you wouldn't normally do.

Vicky: Yeah. Next thing...

Joe: Travel alone.

Vicky: Travel alone.

Joe: Travel alone, the problem with traveling with people is nobody talks to you.

Vicky: Or you don't talk to anybody.

Joe: Or you don't talk to anybody. People don't approach you because you've got company.

Vicky: But if you are on your own, people will talk to you, especially if you are-- I remember when I traveled around Egypt before it all went wrong in Egypt, and I was with a couple of other girls and we met some amazing people because, you know, we were particularly in parts of Egypt where it wasn't that touristy and so I was blond, fair-skinned, and quite unusual looking, and because we were girls on our own we had loads of Egyptian women coming up to talk to us which would never, ever have happened if I'd been there with a man because Egyptian women simply wouldn't have come up to talk to, you know, strange Western men, but we just met the most amazing women while we were out there and that would never have happened if we've been traveling differently. When I went to Turkey, I met

some fantastic people, I was out on my own and it was just really really cool. Traveling alone is brave but it's fun. You will see things that you would not see if you were with somebody else and you'll have stories to tell.

Joe: I like it.

Vicky: Yeah. My next tip is: learn something new. I think people forget that you don't have to be at school or university to learn new stuff. Never stop learning, ever. To me, that's what life is all about you know? Learning new stuff, and bettering yourself, and just for random reasons. So at the moment, I'm learning to play the guitar, and I'm learning to speak Spanish, and I had started to learn Japanese and then I got scared.

Joe: It's pretty scary.

Vicky: So I've learned a few syllables, and then I put some syllables together and I was like, sushi, I know sushi, and yasai I think is vegetables, I was like, ah, yasai is vegetables, I probably said that totally wrong and I apologize to every Japanese person listening. Yeah, learn something new, 'cause you'll have loads of stories to tell and you'll be able to relate to-- You know, helping people to learn things.

Joe: And it stops you going stale, doesn't it? It stops you kind of just being in a little rut where you're talking to the same people, doing the same things, behaving the same way. This is all about getting out of your box, isn't it?

Vicky: It is, and also I think it's about living longer, and not just existing longer but living longer, and I'm gonna go back to Drayton again 'cause Drayton is 83 years old. He's still working, and he still travels to talk and give speaking gigs at an age when I would say most people of his age are just quietly declining in a chair.

Joe: He's not working because he's, you know, run out of money or has to or because he's obliged to, he's still working because he's interested and he wants to.

Vicky: Yeah, and he's still learning new stuff and meeting new people, and he is fascinated by people, and like I said earlier he's fascinated by everything

and I don't think he would still be as active and as healthy and as, you know, all the things that he is if he had just retired at age 60 like people seem to want to do.

Joe: Played a bit of golf and sat down a lot.

Vicky: Yeah, and not carried on being fascinated by the world, yeah. I think you'll find that all of the old people that you know who are amazing are people who never stopped learning things. So, which leads me on to: Talk to people, or probably to be more precise, listen to them. Ask people about their lives. I wish I had talked to my nana and granddad more because they had really great stories, like my nanny used to tell us about how she would have to walk, I think she said it was like seven miles across fields to school every day, there and back, which is astonishing to us because kids get driven bloody everywhere these days, really annoyingly, roads get clogged up, and it's like, just let your kids walk somewhere. You know, my nana used to do that as a child. Okay, probably there are arguments for not having kids cross the road on their own but whatever. But I loved talking to my grandma about what life was like when she was young, they used to go dancing every Saturday night. There were no cars, really, there was just horses and carts still.

Joe: What?

Vicky: Well, there were cars, but when she was a really little girl there were cars but nothing like as many, so there were still horses and carts around. It was like a mix of the two. So, just how different life was, talk to older people, find out what life was like before and hear their stories. People's stories are awesome. What else? Yeah, collect stories! Speaking of stories, carry a notebook everywhere, and a camera. Photograph interesting posters and pictures and graffiti and pages of books and advertising. Scribble notes about people's interesting overheard conversations, I love eavesdropping on people's conversations,

Joe: Shouting into phones on trains, one of the favorite things.

Vicky: Shouting into phones on trains, I've just pre-ordered a book called "I Am Not The Jackass Whisperer". I think it's called "I'm Not The Jackass

Whisperer", or "You Are Not The Jackass Whisperer", by Scott Stratten from UnMarketing. This is a book about how to deal with people who have really shouty conversations on trains or insist on watching a film or something with the sound on. And he has two strategies for dealing with it, one is to be a jackass back, and he says like oh my God, in The Red Wedding everybody dies, spoiler alert! That kind of thing that you could do to people, or you could just wear noise-canceling headphones. So yeah, my point is, eavesdrop on people's conversations because people have interesting conversations.

Joe: Some people have interesting conversations.

Vicky: Some people do, yeah, other people don't, but listen, my point is listen. Instead of having your ears always plugged in and this is something that I've particularly noticed with younger people, they always have their ears plugged in, take your ear plugs out and listen to what's going on around you, you know?

Joe: Engage with things. It's weird actually, next time you're in a supermarket, while you are doing your shopping, have a look at the people who are just shuffling around doing things like they've always done them and spot the people who are paying attention and have got their eyes, like, on, and they're doing stuff. There's a real difference, you can spot people who are like, switched on, and engaged versus the people who are just like--

Vicky: Sleepwalking. Yeah, that's a really good point actually.

Joe: Try and make sure you're one of the people who's engaged.

Vicky: Yeah, don't sleepwalk through life because that's a life half-lived. I mean, I think an awful lot more people than you might think are just sleepwalking through life. I find that really sad. 'Cause yeah, there is richness in everything, even in the smallest things like Joe said, there is joy in watching people. I love watching people, some people hate airports, I love airports! I love them because you can sit and watch people and listen to what they're talking about and if you don't want to do that you can sit and read a book and kind of people watch at the same time. Watch people and engage and listen and collect stories and write down and if you can record conversations--

Legally, probably not a good idea, but actually I think-- I am not a lawyer, big flashing disclaimer, I am not a lawyer!

Joe: You are not a lawyer.

Vicky: But I think a conversation in a public place is in the public domain. Yeah, if you want to listen to it and take notes and use it, I think you can. Do not assume that I know what I am talking about here, Massive flashing disclaimer, talk to your lawyer, get legal advice. If you're listening in on somebody's phone conversation or you're hiding outside their front window, with a cup to their window, that's bad, you should not do that, and probably should seek psychological help.

Joe: But there's a step between-- there's levels on that, engage.

Vicky: If you're in a cafe or on a train or something, then listen to people, it's fun. Ask hypothetical questions, what would happen if? This is good for fiction and nonfiction and it's another way to play with your creativity, and you can do that if you're writing a book about your businesses, just ask what would happen if? What would happen if, suddenly, the internet went away? Which might happen, electromagnetic pulses and zombie apocalypses.

Joe: I was working with a chap last week whose daughter did not believe him when he said while he was growing up there was no internet. Apparently she was just like, yeah but no. There must have been, you're lying.

Vicky: What did she, what?

Joe: She thought the internet was just like, a thing. Everybody had internet, just, all time. Imagine!

Vicky: Oh, do you know what? I would love to do a social experiment in which we just turn off the internet. I am now aware that I'm putting that out on like public broadcasting and if something happens to the internet infrastructure--

Joe: Everyone will blame you.

Vicky: Everyone's gonna blame me, yeah, 'cause I'm such a technological genius.

Joe: You have that much power, just turn off the internet. Be interesting though, wouldn't it? A lot of people would fall over.

Vicky: Maybe that's the red button in my car. There's a mysterious red button in my new car and we don't know what it does yet. I'm waiting until I have a passenger that annoys me and then I'm gonna press it see if it ejects them. Why do you think everybody would fall over if the internet turned off?

Joe: Well there would be a lot of people who would just-- whole industries would just stop functioning.

Vicky: Oh, you mean metaphorically fall over. I thought you meant physically, I had this image of most people just falling over.

Joe: No, most people are not being remote-controlled by the internet. Or, kind of, maybe they are?

Vicky: Oh, there's a whole other podcast, are you being remotely-controlled by the internet? Okay, go undercover in your industry, find out what it's like from the customer perspective, as a customer, something that everybody should bloody do anyway but almost nobody does.

Joe: Secret shopper signing.

Vicky: Secret shopper signing, be endlessly curious, especially about weird things. What? Okay so, the history and origins of words are great. It's really really great finding out where words come from. I'm currently learning about Titivillius, because it's a hilarious concept.

Joe: Who is Titivillius?

Vicky: Titivillius is the typo demon who sprung up in, I think it was the 12th or 13th century, as the bloke who got blamed for scribal errors and typos.

Joe: Nice.

Vicky: I know right? And I got that from a really cool podcast called The Illusionist-- Allusionist. Not the illusionist, the allusionist, and they were talking about Titivillius, the typo demon, which is just really-- I loved it, so I'm gonna go find out more about it and we'll probably do a podcast on Titivillius at some point.

Joe: Titivillius, Titivillus.

Vicky: Oh, it might be Titivillus. I think it might be Titivillus. I will find out how to pronounce it correctly before that podcast. Oh, and my favorite one of all, do absolutely nothing at all for a couple of days. Let your brain switch off and let your mind do what it wants to do and just stop stop thinking about work and your book and your business--

Joe: Your bills, your list of things that you should be doing.

Vicky: Yeah, just switch off, do nothing.

Joe: Disengage.

Vicky: Yeah, 'cause being idle is not a waste of time, being idle is vital.

Joe: It's difficult for people to do these days, isn't it, I think.

Vicky: When I say switch off, properly switch off. In our tree house, there was no Wi-Fi, there was no phone signal, there was no electricity apart from the fairy lights.

Joe: Some fairy lights running off solar panels.

Vicky: Off solar panels, but no plugs. Can't plug anything in, and so we had to switch off and it was fantastic not having to fight your phone for your attention, and it was fantastic for you, probably, not having to fight my phone for my attention. But yeah, switch off. Disconnect yourself from the internet and from social media and from the endless soul-destroying confidence-sapping merry-go-round of other people's perfect lives, because it is kind of depressing. Get back to nature, have a shower in the forest.

Joe: Have a shower in the forest.

Vicky: Wave your butt in the forest where everybody could see if there were people to see, but there aren't, there's just squirrels.

Joe: Squirrels?

Vicky: Yeah. So, what's the take-away this week, Joe?

Joe: Read, watch films, watch TV shows, listen in on people's conversations, use them in your book. Do stuff, engage.

Vicky: Do stuff and engage, and encourage your creativity. This is how we never run out of things to talk about or write about, that's a question that I'm often asked, how do you have so many things to say? Because I'm interested in absolutely bloody everything. That's why, and it just makes life more interesting is all.

Joe: I mean, it's somewhat chaotic but it is more interesting.

Vicky: Am I chaotic?

Joe: You're pretty chaotic.

Vicky: Is that really--

Joe: Yeah, yeah.

Vicky: So, coming up next week, we are gonna be talking about why you should do something difficult.

Joe: Ooh, you definitely should.

Vicky: Definitely should, yeah. Like learning Japanese, which is really difficult, although I've only had two lessons so far, so I should probably persevere a little bit. Do you know what I think part of the problem with my Japanese is? That I'm not actually writing down any of the symbols, so they're

like, match up these symbols with these sounds, and I'm like, well, that one kind of looks like a sideways E and I remember the noise that that made, the others I'm like meh, they kind of look vaguely similar to each other or I don't know which is which. So I'm gonna start-- I'm gonna go back to the beginning and I'm gonna write down the symbols and then sound them out, and I'm gonna see if I can learn Japanese.

Joe: It's gonna be difficult, you're gonna need some Japanese people to talk to.

Vicky: Well, I know both Rob and Julian who are not Japanese, but Rob lives in Japan teaching English as a foreign language.

Joe: Hi Rob.

Vicky: Hi Rob! And Julian is married to a Japanese lady and they now live in Ireland, so--

Joe: Hi Julian! Hi Japanese lady!

Vicky: Hi Julian! Julian wrote one of the books on my shelf, which is called doing English-- or, "Master English Fast". I don't know if you can see that on the shelf. Julian did that after doing my book course and I've interviewed him on the podcast before so you've probably heard him talking. So, I'm gonna completely destroy Japanese next time I talk to him and he's just gonna, oh my God, shut up.

Joe: You're gonna be like, I am English. My tree has no nose.

Vicky: Which may happen, because, what did I say to you the other day? The word yes also means, what did I say, ashes?

Joe: Yes or ashes, depending on context.

Vicky: Oh, and, here's why you should pay attention to what's going on in the world around you, we're watching *Queer Eye* in Japan at the moment, and one of the things that made me want to learn Japanese was a conversation that they were having with a lady, and they were talking Japanese, and they

obviously had subtitles as well, but they're like, Japanese, Japanese, Japanese, confidence, Japanese Japanese. And I was like, that's so interesting that Japanese, as far as I can tell from that conversation, doesn't have a word for confidence.

Joe: That seems crazy.

Vicky: That's fascinating! So I need to-- I don't know if that's true or not and I want to do a little bit more research into it

Joe: Using Queer Eye as a cultural ruler is--

Vicky: No, but it was a Japanese person who was talking, who was speaking Japanese, and then just slipped the word confidence in.

Joe: It's like when the French go, bluh bluh bluh bluh bluh, the weekend, bluh bluh.

Vicky: Yeah, and so that just-- But the implications of that are profound from a cultural perspective, so that made me want to go and learn more about that.

Joe: You should read something James Clavell.

Vicky: Okay. Put a book in front of me and I will add it to my pile, and I will read it. Right, anyway, we've gone over a little bit, so, yeah, my book is at the printer's still. Billy, if you're listening to this, lemme me know when it's gonna arrive, dude. Then I can send it to people, if you've already pre-ordered it, thank you so much. If you haven't pre-ordered it yet, you can go to Amazon and pre-order it now or you can go to my website--

Joe: Do you have to preorder on Amazon? Or can you just order it?

Vicky: Oh, by the time this goes out, actually, you'll just be able to order it.

Joe: Order it on Amazon. And it will arrive because it's print-on-demand. That's quite exciting. And you can go moxiebooks.co.uk/buythebook and you can just buy it there, and if you've listened to every episode of this podcast

please email me and let me know and I will send you a little something silly to say thank you. If you've enjoyed this podcast and this episode, please go to iTunes and rate us five stars and leave us a review because Joe loves reviews.

Joe: I do like reviews.

Vicky: And subscribe, subscribe to this podcast or share, and you can also subscribe on YouTube if you're watching this, and--

Joe: Did you just do that thing that people who know what they're doing on YouTube do when they've got the links in places?

Vicky: Yeah! I don't know if I'm pointing at the right corner, though so.

Joe: It's there somewhere. Just look for it.

Vicky: And we'll be back same time next week, so thanks very much for watching, guys, keep writing your book.

Joe: Bye.

Vicky: Bye!

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