

Mary Ellen: [00:07](#) From Managing Editor Magazine, this is Margins. If you've got content in your job description or you're just interested in how we all talk to each other online, we've made this podcast for you. And on this season of Margins we're breaking down the creative process. I'm your host, Mary Ellen Slater, and I'm delighted to introduce my new cohost, Elena Valentine. So welcome Elena. This is um, a kind of an exciting day for us. Like this is gonna be your first appearance as my cohost on this podcast. So I'm really excited to have you here. You're one of my favorite storytellers, you know, when it comes to talking about the future of work and, and how we communicate with each other. And I'm just really excited to have you here.

Elena Valentine: [00:50](#) No, thank you so much. I have big shoes to fill. So this is gonna to be one big audition.

Mary Ellen: [00:56](#) (laughs). Elena, why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about yourself?

Elena Valentine: [00:59](#) Yeah, so I am a self proclaimed workplace film maker, so I sleep, eat and breathe the stories of the workplace. Uh, my colleague Abby and I founded a company called Skill Scout, which specifically works with companies on their workplace communications primarily through the medium of video. So, we started this because we saw that job descriptions don't show what a job is like and that there was a power in storytelling and a power in video and to be able to do that. And so since then we've really kind of broken out into kind of the entire talent space.

Elena Valentine: [01:30](#) So we geek out on capturing the stories of workers every day. So literally from engineers to nurses and doctors. I was just sharing with the team that we were in Connecticut talking to physicians who work at the department of corrections. So I've been in all kinds of environments. And the big thing that I find in stories is that every worker, every role, every company has a very unique story to tell. And it is our role to be able to empower them to celebrate the work that they do.

Mary Ellen: [02:03](#) So in this episode of Margins, we are gonna talk about what it means to get stuck, in your creative work, right? Because I think, you know, sometimes there are these magical moments whenever we get in this flow and everything just comes together. You know, when we feel like we're doing great work and it's not a lot of effort, right? And I think that's often what people think about when they think about the joys of doing creative work. But there's this other side of it, where, especially if you're professional, you know, creative, right? Like so

sometimes you have to produce, even if you're not feeling it. And sometimes it feels like it gets, we get caught up in that at the worst possible moments. So, you know, why do you think this happens Elena? Like why do, why do we get stuck?

- Elena Valentine: [02:40](#) You know, creativity is messy. And I think especially when you make a creative role, your full time job, now you feel like you have to perform all of the time. When so often some of our best ideas and work comes out, you know, as kind of a lightening bolt moment. And we think part of it is the pressure that we feel to have lightning bolt moments all of the time. And it doesn't come easily.
- Mary Ellen: [03:07](#) And so again, we get paid to do this. So like what happens when it doesn't come, come easily? Like what do you do?
- Elena Valentine: [03:13](#) Besides have stress dreams about it (laughing) and hopefully not put too much pressure on the team?
- Mary Ellen: [03:19](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Elena Valentine: [03:20](#) Um, I think there's, there's two ways that I have, you know, found myself being able to get unstuck. You know, one thing my mother always said is I have to take myself out in an artist state. And what that means sometimes is dropping what I'm doing, putting \$10 in my pocket and taking a walk with no goal or you know, end point in mind. So for me that could be walking the dog. It's, it's really a matter of just getting out. And I find that when I am in motion and in transition, my ideas can come to me a lot faster. So my tool will always be at least bringing my phone, uh, to have a voice recorder so that as ideas are quickly coming and I'm walking, I can at least start to put some ideas down, uh, through my voice recorder.
- Mary Ellen: [04:03](#) So how do you personally get unstuck?
- Elena Valentine: [04:05](#) Mm-mm (negative). So I have a couple of paths that I take? One is similar to like what you described. I didn't have such a cool description for it as your mom did, but sometimes I have to just get up and move my body, right. I'll go for a walk. I live near some lakes here near LSU that are really good for that. You know, you can look out on the water, you can see the birds and you can kind of get your head, you know, sometimes you have to go back and get into that fuzzy stage again. The other thing I do when I need to make decisions, right, is I have some rituals that I pursue. One of them is like coffee is really important to me (laughing). So, like I'll get myself my nice cup of coffee and

I'll sit down and I put my headphones in and I like to listen to music that is deeply familiar, right?

- Elena Valentine: [04:44](#) Like so if it can't be something that I really have to concentrate too, it has to be something that I know really well. But that I also know it's almost like a form of boredom, but I don't dislike it. And for me specifically, that is Fleetwood Mac. So I get on Spotify, I've got this long Fleetwood Mac playlist that just keeps going on a loop. And basically the only way to escape Fleetwood Mac is to make the fucking decisions and escape the project, right? Like if I don't make the decisions-
- Mary Ellen: [05:08](#) Mm-mm (negative).
- Elena Valentine: [05:09](#) ... I will never get to listen to anything other than, you know, Never Break the Chain. Like, it's like when that comes around, like the third time you're like, you know what, I gotta make a call here (laughs).
- Mary Ellen: [05:17](#) Yeah.
- Elena Valentine: [05:17](#) I've been staring at this a long time.
- Mary Ellen: [05:19](#) And you don't do anything else?
- Elena Valentine: [05:20](#) I don't really [crosstalk 00:05:21].
- Mary Ellen: [05:20](#) So literally headphones on.
- Elena Valentine: [05:22](#) Headphones on.
- Mary Ellen: [05:23](#) You're not touching your phone.
- Elena Valentine: [05:24](#) Not touching my phone. And I say, oh, I'm going in, and it's just me and Stevie Nicks and you know, Lindsey Buckingham until I can, till I get it done.
- Mary Ellen: [05:33](#) And how long might that take? Is it-
- Elena Valentine: [05:35](#) Hours-
- Mary Ellen: [05:35](#) ... one song? Is it hours?
- Elena Valentine: [05:36](#) ... hours. Oh no, it's never one song. 'Cause if it's so bad that it requires busting out the Fleetwood Mac, it's not a one song problem, right? I'm usually like at least through rumors twice before I escape.

Mary Ellen: [05:46](#) It's a multi album problem.

Elena Valentine: [05:48](#) Yes. It really is. You know, sometimes I got, it gets out here, the live version, you know when they got back together this brief moment, you know? Yeah. No it's so for me it's like that really does trigger some things that I can get it done so that I can escape (laughs). Well, I hate saying that out loud and now people are like, huh, Fleetwood Mac, (laughs) kind of like what's wrong with my music? But it's really, it's so familiar. I don't hate it. I can't do it. It's not because I hate it, it's just, it's like in comes back around that second time. What are you gonna do?

Mary Ellen: [06:15](#) Yeah.

Elena Valentine: [06:16](#) You got to get out of there. So what's the weirdest thing that you've ever done to get unstuck?

Mary Ellen: [06:19](#) I don't have like a Fleetwood Mac thing.

Elena Valentine: [06:21](#) (laughs) I know. I came... I know. I've confessed this to the world. Like (laughs) it will still work now that everyone knows?

Mary Ellen: [06:28](#) See, I guess for me, I never see this as being a weird thing, but another thing my mother has always reminded me on is to dance. I don't know what it is with her, but she's always telling me to dance. So I literally dance like no one's watching (laughing) because at that point sometimes no one is. And for me, I'm a Chicago girl, so it's always going to go back to house music. So I don't know what it is about dancing to house music that is so tribal and percussive. But uh, I've done many a house music, solo dance parties sometimes to get myself out of my head, an, and I think just to remember that... and this sounds strange, you know, that remember that I have a body, right?

Elena Valentine: [07:15](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mary Ellen: [07:15](#) Remember that I have motion to get back to the present 'cause that's the biggest thing. I think, you know, the reason why we get anxious is because we're thinking about the future. We're thinking about the deadline, we're thinking about the idea that we have to come up with in, in the anxiety that it gets us because we don't have that yet. So when I'm in motion or when I'm dancing, it, it very much brings you to the present moment and it, and it's staying within the present moment. That's really important.

Elena Valentine: [07:51](#) Our first guest today is the comedian Jessica Holmes. But we're not going to just talk about funny stuff because sometimes getting stuck can be a sign of something much more serious. Jessica is the author of the book, *Depression the Comedy*, which details her life struggling with depression while also balancing working as a comedian and being a mother. Now Jessica is advocating to de-stigmatize conversations around mental health.

Elena Valentine: [08:16](#) We started off by talking about what it's like to be a professional creative when you can barely get yourself up off the couch.

Elena Valentine: [08:23](#) Well, so, so I guess one thing that you're saying like this was like a long term thing in terms of your depression and yet you were still a very creative, like functional professional during that time. Like how did, how did you, how did that look like day to day? What did your days look like whenever you were trying to do it and you weren't well.

Jessica Holmes: [08:39](#) Yeah, from the outside it would've looked to people like, oh, she's getting up there and she's doing her thing. Looks like she's doing great. Um, but I was able to fake it for one hour. I could fake it for one hour a day. The trouble is I would then pay for that one hour, by being on the sofa for two days and just barely being able to handle anything. I had a giant temper. I had, um, just endless tears and then I would just make sure I felt okay enough to get up and do another hour set. I think if I had had a full time job, there's no way I could have kept the rules going. But my problem was I also didn't know that it was depression. It happened so gradually that I just thought it's really hard to be in this job.

Jessica Holmes: [09:23](#) I should really switch careers. But I couldn't bring myself to do it because there was money, there was few hours. And also when you're depressed, you're just really not motivated. You're not looking (laughs) to start a new career path. So, I just kind of hung on for dear life and I was always, um, a tear or two away or you know, a temper tantrum away. Uh, to the point where my kids made a busted chart. They made a chart on the fridge where they, it would tick off anytime I would lose my temper. It was never directed to them. It was just me like screaming, "Where are the damn car keys." And they'd be like, "Oh mom needs a check mark."

Elena Valentine: [09:59](#) Wait, that's not just motherhood (laughing).

Jessica Holmes: [10:00](#) It's a, you know what, when it happens every two minutes, I don't think it's motherhood. I think within an hour is motherhood.

Elena Valentine: [10:08](#) Okay. And then you talked about changing, so like little things in your day. That's also one of things that you, you've written about that I, I found, I've actually found fair inspirational, like [inaudible 00:10:16] about my own wellbeing. Like, so walk us through that. Like how, what did you do to change your days to make yourself-

Jessica Holmes: [10:22](#) Right. So it took about six months from the point where I was diagnosed and started working on myself. Took about six months for the things I was doing daily to take effect. So it started off with the psychiatrist saying, "What's gonna get you off the sofa?" And I said, "Nothing," and she said, "Well, would a dog get you off the sofa?" And I was like, "Well, if it's a really sad looking dog," and she wrote a prescription for a sad looking dog and she handed me the paper 'cause I said, "My husband's not gonna let me get one. He says they smell funny when they're wet." And uh, so she wrote the prescription out, gave it to me, I gave it to my husband and I was like, "Look, either I'm depressed or we get this dog apparently." So, we...

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Jessica Holmes: [11:03](#) I was like, "Look. Either I'm depressed or we get this dog, apparently." So, we got the dog, and I did start taking her around the block a couple of times a day. I started working on eating a little better. I tried to stay off social media a bit more and rethought how I look at my career instead of looking at it as, "Am I successful yet? Am I successful yet? Am I successful as my peers? Am I doing better today than I was yesterday?" Instead of looking at that, I changed it to have the overall goal of, "I want my life to be about making other people laugh and inspiring other people. I'm going to do what I can, and I'm going to let the universe take care of the rest," so that took some pressure off me.

Jessica Holmes: [11:39](#) Then, I got more involved in community, things that would just force me to kind of go out and live, so joined a soccer team, joined a basketball team, starting going to my local church more. None of these things are reinventing the wheel and, like I said, nothing made a difference until about six months after I'd started doing all those things, and then I just kind of started to feel less angry. My husband was like, "You're not yelling. I barely recognize you." I was like, "I'm not yelling, am I? I don't feel

furious. I don't feel like life has ripped me off! What's going on?" Then, it has just been, you know, it's beautiful.

- Jessica Holmes: [12:14](#) I feel like those things, they started out as a burden to me. I felt like, "Well, why do I have to go walk in nature for half an hour every day. Nobody else has to. Why do I have to go to bed by 10 pm. Nobody else has to do this. They felt like such a burden, but now I feel like those are all the pieces that have given me, it's my dream life. I have a good life. I, I wake up every morning excited about the day, so I'll just be doing those things for the rest of my life.
- Mary Ellen: [12:38](#) That just sounds terrible (laughs) and to go for walks.
- Jessica Holmes: [12:42](#) I, I've worked on living the dream life of the senior citizen.
- Mary Ellen: [12:45](#) Well, you know, and it's funny because we act like we're, we have to retire to get that, right? And like what makes us feel like we can deserve that? Like why don't you deserve to take a walk? Why don't you deserve to get enough sleep every night? I mean, I also struggle with this, so I get it. What on earth told you that weren't successful in your career, right? Like that's bananas.
- Jessica Holmes: [13:02](#) It just was a horrible feeling, and I remember asking a friend of mine when I was in the thick of the depression, I said, "Do you think everyone's laughing at me, like do you think everyone thinks I'm a loser and that I failed?" because I used to have quite a television career and the, when the depression set in and, quite frankly, when I had kids and just didn't have that same drive that I used to have, fewer opportunities came my way and, uh, my friend was like, "No, I don't think anyone's thinking about you at all, let alone laughing at you or thinking you're a failure," but I clearly had this shadow belief.
- Jessica Holmes: [13:37](#) I think because, when I first started in my 20s, us creative types, we kind of think like, "Okay, the world is my oyster, and I'm going to accomplish this, this, this, this, and my values have changed as my life has, has grown, but that belief and that drive stayed back at my 20-year-old self so, even though I have better dreams and better goals, I was stuck thinking, "Well, I failed at my original plan," and I don't want to, I don't want people going through life thinking they're failures. I sure don't want to feel like a failure anymore, so I just had to revamp my goals and values that I wasn't spending every day wondering whether I measured up.

- Mary Ellen: [14:12](#) So, what would you say is the difference between how, if there is one, between how you approach your creative work, right? Like as a comedian, as a writer, as a speaker, and how you, when you were depressed versus how it feels now? Like where do you get your creative energy? Do you feel like there's a difference between like how it works for you or is it the same?
- Jessica Holmes: [14:30](#) First of all, in my 20s, ige-, ideas just came to me (laughs), like when you'd, it's kind of you'd wake up and you'd have 20 good ideas, and I'd jot 'em down and poof, they would magically make it onto television and everything was great, and then I kind of got a life. I, I had other things that interested me and, when the depression hit, I had no ideas whatsoever, and I remember panicking before one show because I was like, "Oh, my gosh! These news jokes are two years old! I haven't written a new in two years, and I'm supposed to be onstage joking about current events! Ah, this is horrible!"
- Jessica Holmes: [15:03](#) I had this panicky feeling, like I'm such a hack, and, uh, but I, I couldn't, and my sleep was so terrible, and I couldn't focus, and this is one of the symptoms of depression is having trouble making decisions, having trouble having decisive thoughts, and so that was just a wash. I was just doing old, recycled material, and then when I came out of the depression, I now the things that give me a sense of creative flow.
- Jessica Holmes: [15:25](#) When I go for a long walk, I will hit a point where ideas start to come to me, and what I'll do is, I'll listen to like a podcast or something on a very low volume so that my mind is half listening to that, but half free to just wander around and, while I'm in the woods, I'll have my dog, I'll be running, and I'll just stop every, I don't know, every kilometer, every half-mile, as you would say, and, uh, I'll type out some ideas so that, on my phone, and when I get home, I just compile it all together and that becomes my daily writing, so when I'm walking in the woods now, I count that as work time.
- Jessica Holmes: [16:01](#) I don't think of that as free time. I think of that as like productive work time, and that's why I say to people, "It doesn't have to be a giant overhaul. Next time you meet a friend for coffee, meet your friend for a walk instead. Next time you are meeting in a boardroom, meet in a park instead.
- Jessica Holmes: [16:18](#) I don't understand why we're always inside, why it's always food-related (laughs) when people get together, when wellness is so much literally just on the other side of the door, getting some fresh air, so I've, I've just rescheduled how I do things. I don't work any more than I worked before, but I'm so much

more productive, you could, because I combine it with being outdoors, being with people in a productive setting, not just like a loud bar or a loud coffee shop.

- Mary Ellen: [16:46](#) And finally, we closed our conversation with an important reminder. No matter what you're dealing with, you're not alone, and that's something we all need to hear every once in a while.
- Jessica Holmes: [16:57](#) I think that, if you're an entrepreneur or an artist and you have those strange hours where, first of all, you're the product you're selling and, also, you kind of lack structure in your days, what I found really helpful was to be reminded that I'm not alone so, for example, we belong to an online Facebook group that's private where we can just kind of vent to each other and be reminded what life is like on the road as a speaker.
- Jessica Holmes: [17:24](#) That made a huge difference for me and, also, just opening up and being real with my peers and saying, "Do you go through what I go through? Do you find it really weird to have like tumbleweeds flying from your summer, but then the phone's ringing off the hook in the fall, like how do you reconcile your ego with that? How do you reconcile your schedule and your finances, all of those things?"
- Jessica Holmes: [17:47](#) So, now I'm just, I'm more open and knowing that I'm one of thousands who go through this kind of thing and that we should use each other as a resource, so reaching out and connecting to like-minded individuals, I think, goes such a long way because then you don't feel hopeless or desperate, and you understand that this is simply a cyclical part of the job.
- Mary Ellen: [18:19](#) John Jantsch is the author of Duct Tape Marketing, which is a seminal book for small business leaders. He's just released his sixth book, The Self-Reliant Entrepreneur, and it's a huge change of pace for him. This one draws from America's transcendentalist thinkers to help entrepreneurs better focus their energies but, before we talked about the book, I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to ask John just how he has sustained his creative career for the long haul. You have had such a resilient career as an entrepreneur, right?
- Mary Ellen: [18:50](#) Like as a fellow business owner, like this is something that I have personally struggled with, like how have you kept your creative flow? Like how have you, how have you been able to maintain this (laughs) like for so long?

- John Jantsch: [19:03](#) Um, you know, it, it, is it resilient or consistent? I don't know which one it is. (laughs) Um, I, you know, I think it's just showing up but, again, that, that really oversimplifies it. I enjoy what I do immensely. I'm very curious about what's next. I am very driven by helping small business owners that I, I think it's one of the most freeing opportunities that we all have available to us is to own our own business and build our own business, and yet I, you know, I every single day see business owners that are getting the life sucked out of them, and so I really... That does truly drive me, but I guess I've always... I credit my parents with this, particularly my mother.
- John Jantsch: [19:46](#) I have seven, uh, brothers and two sisters so, you know, there was a lot of times they had no idea how (laughs) things were going to work out or what was going to happen the next day, but she was always so, "You know that? There'll be a solution." You know, "Don't worry about it. It'll always work out," and I think that that's kind of driven me over the years, um, and then just really a curiosity about, you know, a lot of what my career's been built on is, you know, I started it before we had the internet.
- John Jantsch: [20:10](#) I started it before we had any of these digital tools that we use today, but I, I sort of transitioned into, you know, really being able to translate how to use those tools for business owners, as well, and I think that a lot of that is, is because I just, I just really enjoy it. I really do a lot of, I mean, I don't ever sit down and say, "Hey, I'm going to create this thing." I do a lot of, I'm, I, I pay attention to a lot of stuff. I'm really curious about stuff. I look for ideas in odd places.
- John Jantsch: [20:38](#) I read books on architecture and on calculus and on other kind of random things that have nothing to do with marketing because, if I look at them and read through them, particularly with, in the context of, say, trying to develop a marketing system or something, it's amazing how many, uh, things you can borrow from those other places, and so I do a lot of that, and I do a lot of starting and putting it away and procrastinating and starting (laughs) and putting it away and procrastinating and, and I've always been a firm believer, too, in, you know, take a seed of an idea out to the market or out to somebody that you think needs it and let them help you develop it and finish it off and, and create it in a way that makes sense for them.
- Mary Ellen: [21:17](#) My friend, Hung Li, calls that letting other people finish your thoughts, and he loves that. (laughs)

John Jantsch: [21:22](#) We-, well, and there's... Nobody, nobody comments on blogs anymore, but that was really a great... You know, my first book, um, Duct Tape Marketing, I would say maybe 40% of it or so, uh, I had written as pretty close to a blog post but, you know, before it was ever assembled into a book, and a lot of the thinking in that got refined by the fact that 30 or 40 people would comment on it, and they'd tell you if they liked it, if they didn't like it, if they agreed, they didn't agree, how to make it better, and I miss kind of that, that input now because it, that trend, so to speak, has gone away.

Mary Ellen: [21:55](#) Yeah, that's true. I mean, I guess we can get social feedback, but even that's a bit throttled, like it is a little lonely on the internet, despite being connected to all these peop-...

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Mary Ellen: [22:03](#) Like it is a little lonely on the Internet despite being connected to all these people.

John Jantsch: [22:04](#) Well, I, I used to tell people all the time, when, when Twitter, I don't know how many people were on it at the time, but enough, a small enough amount that you could actually pay attention to, you know, some of the people you followed, and I remember I'd be going to a city and I'd post, "Hey, I'm going to Phoenix. What are the best places to eat," and I would get 10 responses, you know. It was a way to reach out. I could put that on there now today, and I might get one like or one retweet or something like that, you know. It's just really not the same.

Mary Ellen: [22:28](#) Some restaurant in Phoenix would respond to you and tell you what to eat there. That's what would happen.

John Jantsch: [22:32](#) Maybe. Maybe.

Mary Ellen: [22:32](#) Because marketers rule everything.

John Jantsch: [22:35](#) That's right. Exactly.

Mary Ellen: [22:36](#) And, finally, we got to talking about his new book and what exactly it means to be a self-reliant entrepreneur. So have you gone out to Walden Pond?

John Jantsch: [22:47](#) I have, I have not. Um, but I know, I know, you know, there's, there's a memorial there or a shrine there or something there that hundreds of thousands of people go to every year. I mean, the book itself, I think Walden was such a, it became one of

those books that every, you know, everybody had to read or was assigned at some point in high school or college. And it really became kind of the, kind of the symbol, I suppose, of the environmental movement and of, you know, solitude and of journaling an of, of thinking and doing for yourself. Um, so there was a lot of themes in that, in that book that so accurately, I think, parallel the life of an entrepreneur.

John Jantsch: [23:21](#) This may end up being a stretch for people, but, but here's what I propose: I described where we were, uh, at the time of the Civil War and there's lots of, uh, historians and researchers that suggest that times and culture kind of repeat itself about every fourth generation. And, uh, I believe that we are very much, you know, as, at least I'll speak for the United States, very much in a very politically divided time, uh, culturally, politically. I think that there is a, uh, certainly a new fire under a women's movement right now. Um, I, you know, and I, and I, my belief is that, what many of these writers were calling for was that, you know, you don't have to listen to others.

John Jantsch: [24:01](#) You, you need to listen to yourself, follow your own path, you need to have empathy for other people's, you know, views and opinions, um, and I believe that, that the self-reliant entrepreneur is going to save the world.

Mary Ellen: [24:15](#) What a. Yeah, no. That's.

John Jantsch: [24:16](#) So people can challenge me, challenge me on that, that's the side sort of thread that I'm going with. This is my, and it's not a political statement. It is a we are all connected, we all need each other statement and, uh, you know, I think that, uh, a lot of, uh, you know, whether it's self-reliant entrepreneur, self-reliant person, self-reliant man, self-reliant woman, you know, I think the thoughts and the ideas that come out of a lot of this, uh, original writing, you know, really do apply to, uh, how I think we're going to get back reunited.

Mary Ellen: [24:46](#) So, I guess it's interesting because you're talking about self reliance and then you're talking about connection, but like to me what you're really talking about is being self reliant so you can have the ability to form healthy connections, right? That's not dependence. That's not ... is that what you mean?

John Jantsch: [24:59](#) Yes, absolutely. So there's, there's, you know, some, if you Google the term "self reliance," you're going to find some people that tell you how to build your own house and render pigs and, you know, live by yourself and.

- Mary Ellen: [25:09](#) My grandparents, basically.
- John Jantsch: [25:11](#) Not have to depend on anyone or anything. Um, and I suppose there, there could be that element to it, but it's really more about, I think it's really more about control. You, you trust yourself so thoroughly, that the idea, that first off, you allow yourself to explore ideas that other people are saying are crazy. And you also allow yourself to let go of the control that maybe you have over, uh, or how you believe something ought, ought to come out and ought to turn out. And because those two things are robbing us all of our joy. Um, they, you know, the fact that we are, are controlled by others and we try to control what's going to happen tomorrow, what happened yesterday, um, and we're not, you know, we're not living in the moment. I'm certainly not the first person to suggest that idea.
- John Jantsch: [25:55](#) Um, but I think it's such an important idea that, in fact I contend that people talk about finding your purpose and your passion in your business, I contend that it's very difficult to do that, uh, unless you trust yourself thoroughly and make your own decision and follow your own truth. And until you do that, I don't think you're going to achieve a level of success mainly because you're going to let other people define what success is.
- Mary Ellen: [26:17](#) Why do you think that's so hard for people?
- John Jantsch: [26:21](#) Because, um, you know, there's lot of people that want to tell us, you know, that we're good or bad or not whatever and unfortunately, you know, we've got, we've got that subconscious brain that, you know, that's feeding on that and that's telling us lots of things as well. That's why these practices, you know, these morning practices of giving yourself some positive juice of reflecting, of journaling, of trying to get kind of centered for how I'm going to go out there and live my day, um, at least gives you a little guard when, when, you know, the first thing that happens is you get an email from an angry client and, you know, you're, you're wrecked. You know, unless you're able to stop in that moment and, and instead of saying, "The world is coming to an end, I'm sure of it." It's, "What is this here to teach me?"
- Mary Ellen: [27:05](#) That's really hard. Now do you do that? Do you actually manage to do that like every day?
- John Jantsch: [27:10](#) You bet. But it's only taken me 20 years. Um, and, you know, that's another thing about this format, you don't read this book and go, "Ah, I've got it now. I'm self reliant. I will be able every day." Um, it's a practice. You know, it is a thing at a time. It is a

circumstance at a time. It is a, "Hey, I noticed that I actually got uptight in this meeting when somebody mentioned XYZ, I need to think about if that was the right reaction for me or not." Because you know, unfortunately, without that kind of thinking, without that kind of witnessing our thoughts, I mean we're just bundles of these, you know, reactions and that, that certainly doesn't serve us.

- Mary Ellen: [27:46](#) See, that's funny you say that because I have become so much more focused in the last few years as our team has grown on paying attention to my feelings about things. It's not about acquiring the technical ability to edit. Like, yeah, I'm a good editor. Yeah, I'm a good writer. Or my, what separates me between me and the goals that I have for the next 10 years actually have nothing to do with my writing skills and have everything to do with my ability to manage my own my emotional well-being. So I'm looking forward to this book.
- John Jantsch: [28:12](#) Well, you know what we could do, um, just to give people a true sample because it's so easy to do, it's a daily, uh, it's about two minutes. Why don't I read one?
- Mary Ellen: [28:21](#) Go for it.
- John Jantsch: [28:22](#) So, I just picked up, uh, um, every day starts with a title, then a reading, then some words from me, then a challenge question. So I just grabbed one at random. I don't know when people will be listening to this. Uh, but, you know, theoretically would be, this would be one day's entry.
- John Jantsch: [28:38](#) Entirely happy. I was something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins. And I did not want to be anything more. I was entirely happy. Perhaps we feel like that when we die and become a part of something entire, whether it is sun an air or goodness and knowledge. At any rate, that is happiness, to be dissolved into something complete and great. When it comes to one, it comes as naturally as sleep. So that's actually [inaudible 00:29:03]. And that's from [inaudible 00:29:05]. 1918.
- Mary Ellen: [29:07](#) Wow. That's a good reason.
- John Jantsch: [29:08](#) Yeah, well so that's how it starts and then I'm going to say a few words about what I just read.
- John Jantsch: [29:13](#) Happiness, that's what we all want, isn't it? But to have a goal, any goal, to achieve a goal much less such an ambitious one like achieving happiness, you must first possess the ability to

describe what a win looks like. Or is the search for happiness such an elusive one because we have no final destination in mind. We remain hopelessly lost in our journey, but at least we're making good time.

- John Jantsch: [29:35](#) Let's borrow [inaudible 00:29:36]'s description as a great starting point. At any rate, that is happiness. To be dissolved into something complete and great. There's nothing scientific or even terribly philosophical about [inaudible 00:29:47]'s description. It is at once melodic, perpetual and filled with life. It's fitting that this is the quote inscribed on [inaudible 00:29:54] gravestone. Could you live with that? Would that be enough? So your challenge question for today: What do you think happiness feels like? Describe it.
- Mary Ellen: [30:01](#) Wow. I feel like I just went to church. But I'm Unitarian, so like this is kind of fitting.
- John Jantsch: [30:09](#) Well, it's, it's actually very fitting. A lot of the folks from that period actually started the Unitarian Church.
- Mary Ellen: [30:15](#) Yeah they did. I was like, I really had this moment, I'm like, "I'm in church. Okay." I had put my head down.
- John Jantsch: [30:22](#) So, not every, uh, not every entry is, is heavy or churchlike, but I will be the first to admit there's a spiritual component to this book, but I think that, you know, you actually mentioned that, you know, you know you're a good writer. Um, you know you are, what else did you say?
- Mary Ellen: [30:38](#) A good editor.
- John Jantsch: [30:39](#) A good editor, thank you.
- Mary Ellen: [30:40](#) Yeah.
- John Jantsch: [30:40](#) A good editor, but it's your mind in some ways that is holding you back, so this connection between the mind, body and spirit was one that the writers of this period, you know, were the first to kind of prescribe, at least in American, I mean can you imagine the, the Ralph Waldo Emerson was a preacher, you know, telling people that you don't need to listen to, you know, to, uh, to what the churches are telling you. You need to, you know, you've got everything that you need in you right now to be your unique best self. Um, you just need to get those things, uh, together and, you know, and stop being your own worst enemy.

Elena Valentine: [31:18](#) So that's it for this episode of Margins by Managing Editor. You can find us on Itunes, Stitcher or wherever you listen to podcasts. Subscribe to hear more about our deep dive into the creative process. And if you like what you hear, share us with your friends and rate us on your favorite podcast platform.

Mary Ellen: [31:33](#) If you want to hear more from the Managing Editor team, there's an easy way to do that. We send out an email every Friday morning and you can join the club at managingeditor.com/subscribe.

Elena Valentine: [31:44](#) And thanks to the team that helped make this episode. Producer Rex New and audio editor Marty McPadden AKA The Fair-Minded Scientist.

Mary Ellen: [31:52](#) We'll see you next time.

Elena Valentine: [31:59](#) We got enough, right Rex?

Rex: [32:00](#) Yeah, I'm a little offended that I wasn't asked what I do-

Mary Ellen: [32:03](#) Then tell us, tell us how you get unstuck. Tell me, tell me how you get unstuck Rex.

Rex: [32:07](#) I mean, I listen to Fleetwood Mac.

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [00:32:09]