

Defining Creativity S1E4: Tatiana Kolovou transcript

Debbi: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining me for this episode of *Defining Creativity*, a podcast that explores where and how creativity is found. I'm your host, Debbi Ponella, a creativity researcher, cultivator, and devotee. On today's episode, we're joined by...

Tatiana: My name is Tatiana Kolovou.

Debbi: Tatiana's life and expertise transcend a single profession or even culture, so I'll leave it up to her to introduce herself and all the many impressive facets of what she does.

Tatiana: Such a pleasure to be with you, Debbi, and engage with you in your new podcast. My name is Tatiana Kolovou. Debbi and I have known each other for many, many years as our kids were both in the artistic field, and it's wonderful to see that you're still involved in the study of creativity.

I have lived in Bloomington for over 35 years. I moved here as a freshman at Indiana University, and I came here from Athens, Greece. That's my home country. I currently am a faculty member in the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, where I teach business communication. I also am a content creator, I would say, or a thought leader, whatever you may call it, for LinkedIn. I have 16 LinkedIn Learning courses, over close to 9 million learners at this point, and I've been doing this for several years, since 2013, when lynda.com reached out to me to do some online training. I've been in the world of organizational development and training.

I worked before going to the Kelley School for IU Human Resources, and before that, I was in a very different realm of fitness education and fitness management. My first degree is in exercise physiology, and I have figured out a way to sort of blend the two, professional development and personal development, which are in the same continuum.

The last thing about me that I may mention is that I own a local small boutique fitness studio called Ethos Fitness, and a lot of my creativity also is expressed in the ability to use music, put together workouts, inspire and motivate and move people, which is something we need a lot in our sedentary lives. So, those are the pieces that I'll be touching upon, and I hope, Debbi, that's a good intro for you.

Debbi: That's fantastic. Well, Tatiana, I can't thank you enough for being here. I'm really excited. I've been looking forward to this discussion.

[2:40] I know I reached out to you after having read one of your newsletters, actually, and the topic of that particular one was impromptu speaking, which is very obviously directly related to creativity, but I found as I was preparing for our discussion, you just have a huge body of work out there, and with everything that I could read or listen to or watch, I really did find that as I looked at it, I saw creativity at the core of so much of it. You did mention that there's overlap of the creativity and the various business worlds that you live in. So, if you could speak a little bit more to how, from your perspective, you use creativity in that work.

Tatiana: A lot of what I do in the teaching side is very prescriptive and linear and planned, but if you think about it, I meet, either at the MBA level or the undergraduate level, young, aspiring professionals that want to be able to gain trust and credibility and show competence and warmth as they speak. So, they have to find their authentic voice in order to do that, and that's where creativity taps into our own, I would say, space of where our voice comes from. We have to be creative in finding it. We have to be authentic, because otherwise people can read right through it. We can't just copy and paste what we heard an inspiring speaker do in a TED Talk or somewhere on a radio or a podcast. So, the job that I have, in a way, on the academic side, even though it's pretty structured, it allows for a lot of space for students to find their voice. I do the same also with executives and help them find their voice and help them find ways to communicate their messages.

[4:40] I think, again, that's where creativity comes in, and in the work that I do, I base things mostly on the focus of the column, I would say, of communication. Impromptu speaking that you heard was, you know, how do you send a message or how do you quickly find a way to communicate and not be caught blabbering all over yourself when someone says, "How is this project going?" So, for me, creativity comes into deciding how to display, present something. I'll give you an example. The newsletter that you mentioned is called *Stronger*. It was actually named by one of my favorite and close friends, Gemma Leigh Roberts. She's a Ph.D. studying resilience, and we kind of met in the LinkedIn green rooms. She was filming. I was also filming. We were sharing the same, I think, makeup artist. And at the time, she was pregnant, and because I have children, I'm

always quite the mom starting the conversation about how it's going and so on. And since then, we've kept in touch. And when I started thinking about doing a newsletter in 2001, which was a hard year for all of us, I wanted to find a way to communicate some of the tips and thoughts that were in my LinkedIn Learning courses in the newsletter side. So, I call it *Stronger*, and it's a way to communicate ideas and strategies to level up, as I say, your performance at work.

Communication is a big part of that, but I've been pretty creative with it. I get to talk about resilience. I get to talk about energy management. I get to talk about, in the next one coming up, health habits in general, anything that makes us stronger. So, really, it's whatever lens you look through that you can find your own creative path. And for me, I wouldn't say it's been artistic in a way, although in the world of fitness, I love and use music and match it to movement in a very effective way for people. But it's not what you would think as being from an artistic background, because that was kind of never my thing. But I hope you kind of see how that comes together in learning. I do feel that learning and professional development requires a lot of creativity and a creative desire and confidence in communicating something in your own way.

Debbi: Absolutely. That was just a ton right there. There's so much to unpack...

Tatiana: I know, you can unpack that.

Debbi: Yeah, absolutely. Let's start, though, with just, you're talking about people finding their own voice. And you actually mentioned our kids were in artistic things together. And I think it does start when you're young. And part of that, finding your voice is understanding the value of your voice as well as the value of other people's voices. It's not always a monologue. You need a dialogue there, right?

Tatiana: Absolutely.

Debbi: And so you have to listen. But as far as that and finding that value in your voice, to have the confidence, part of that is being vulnerable to be able to have that confidence. And how do you instill that, especially in your students? Or for yourself, how do you reckon with that, with that vulnerability that you need to be comfortable with, I guess?

Tatiana: [8:09] You know, yeah, my background was not in the artistic realm. I was always in sport and athletics, and in Greece, where I come from, that's not an easy thing to do. We never had a car. My mom never took me somewhere. She was a single parent. And I had to take the bus and go and figure out a way to show up by myself with my signed release form in hand. And I would say that it depends on what opportunities you've been given. And back to our kids, because I didn't have it, I thought it was important to give context to our children to have a little bit of that pressure to stand in front of a group and perform and be disciplined enough to prepare and practice and be ready and be vulnerable enough to make mistakes and go back and fix it and do better. So, finding the authentic voice is not something that's just going to come to you at night. You have to go out and practice and get feedback and go do it again and get feedback and get to build your self-awareness.

Remember, our kids, when they're younger, they have a limited self-awareness and so much of it, as you know, gets influenced by the outside world. And as they got older, by the social media world, too, which rocks their confidence a little, I would say. But having us as guides next to them to say, you can do this, let's analyze what happened, how can you go back and do better, in a way coaching them. I think that if you have a good coach and if you are put in... safe, but challenging environments, you can find more of what your authentic voice is. And again, it changes with children as they grow. I see now Melina, our daughter that you know, is so much more confident than she was before. And even though she may come across as confident before, she has much better self-awareness now. And I would say she is her authentic self, going into her junior year at college internship where she's just crushing it because she feels confident in herself. And she's not gonna align the way everyone else is around her. She is her own self. She is authentic in this way. So, I think she has found her way.

And college age is about the time when that happens. That's why I see my position when especially I teach fall semester, first semester freshmen, sometimes 8 a. m. first course in college. I take that very seriously because I am there to help them be vulnerable, but trust that the more they work on this it will get better. And I'll tell you some of them drop the class within the first week because it's too much. They've never had experiences where they've had to test themselves in some of these ways and they back away and that's okay. It's probably better they wait a semester or two to do that.

Debbi: Yeah. As you were describing all those qualities, you know you have to practice it, and you have to put yourself out there and there's risk-taking. And in that reference was more to the arts but you could have been

talking about playing basketball or playing any kind of sports. And you're also talking about being in college and studying business and communication. I think that's part of what I'm searching for with this defining creativity or finding it. It crosses all boundaries into all areas of our lives. That's why I think that arts and sports and that ability to play and experiment and fail and learn and in a safe way is so valuable especially young. It all merges. It's all part of us.

Tatiana: Yeah, and sometimes in an unsafe way too. One of the things that our kids with swimmers where you're competing against the clock, but you try to play football. Alexi did that for a little bit thankfully not for too long because I don't understand it. But also, volleyball for Melina. You make a mistake it's public. Just like in theater you slip, you forget, it's public. And, are you resilient enough? Can you bounce back from something like that? Not just saying it's okay, it's nothing. I'll skip it.

That to me is not taking responsibility. Really learning from an experience that you fail or you fall and you bounce not back, you bounce forward. You bounce in a way that helps you become better. We do need, I really believe, to foster creativity, we need to be a little disciplined and a little bit tough on our younger population to push them, to push themselves. Not coddle them too much. It has to get a little uncomfortable before you... you grow stronger and you find your voice.

Debbi: [12:59] Yeah you have to be able to sit in that vulnerability and that uncomfortable and that's part of it is learning to become okay with being there and that's that risk-taking. And I guess part of what I'm saying about a safe environment for them to explore so young is it's not life or death at that point or it's not my job or not. It's okay yeah this is important in learning that intrinsic motivation I guess you know to want to get better and everything.

I do want to go back to you were talking about the communication with it and I pulled that little part out but with communication I think there's a lot of, and we can go back to these this connecting to arts and sports and everything, but reading the room right? If you're dribbling down the court and you need to know or you're in a hockey rink you know you need to see what else is going on or on stage or... but I think communication is being able to read and understand.

Tatiana: We call this being attuned so reading the room is not just listening with your ears to the sounds and the words but watching how people are acting. I always tell people when we travel... I'm about to take a group of 28 professional adults our MBAs that are in our online program are anywhere from the age of 28 to 38. And, some of them have not traveled and worked outside of the country. My job is to have them walk into a workplace and figure out who's the boss. How do you interact? Do you call them by their last name? We just had this discussion yesterday. How do they know how to do this if someone doesn't point things out to them? But some people also are attuned at a higher level because of their upbringing, because they've lived that, because they have been brought up in this way, or maybe they have a diverse background in their upbringing.

Maybe they lived in a town like Bloomington where there were people around them from many different parts of the world and they were exposed to things. So, reading the room is really being attuned. It's really processing what you hear and what you see and what you feel and how then you apply that in the context, and doing that in nanoseconds, so you respond in a way that is culturally appropriate and respectful for the space that you are in. And again, this could change constantly.

You don't even have to leave the continent in your state in order to see differences in cultures. But being attuned, I would say, is the biggest, biggest skill that we can build in others and the way to do it is exposure. Unless you have the interactions, you don't even know what you're looking for. I tell many of my students: watch a movie in a different language without subtitles, anything. Can you figure out the plot? Can you figure out what's going on?

Listen to the intonation you know, listen to the pacing of the words, or even turn the sound off and see if you can figure it out. It's hard and in today's world, what we're used to, having everything pretty much given to us in three to seven nanoseconds, with music and words, and the words are spoken and the words are on the script, which I find so incredibly explicit as far as the messages are concerned, like, could it be even more spelled out in this way? But, learn how to read the room, I would say, in a way that does not involve all of that, and get good at that and have someone by your side to help be your translator.

Debbi: Absolutely, and that nonverbal communication, I mean you just can't put a value on that. How do you feel about different languages? Like going into a place you know, how do you navigate that creatively? Do you try and learn some of the language to communicate? Does that show respect? My own experience. I lived in the

Netherlands to study a couple of times. I was young the first time. I was 17.. I was living with my cello teacher's family, who actually was... They were from Israel, so in the house they spoke Hebrew, outside we had Dutch. I had my two years of German in high school, that was not good, and actually I was born in New Mexico and even went to a bilingual like preschool and everything with, you know, Spanish, and so I had all this and I was so excited and I have to be honest, everybody just wanted to practice their English on me. So, about that, navigating that, other languages and cultures.

Tatiana: [17:46] Languages and cultures and creativity... It depends on the person and it depends on where you are in your life. I think all of us are a little bit more adventurous when we're younger and we don't have many things holding us back or responsibilities. We may lose that a bit as we get into the rut of having to follow certain structures and schedules and so on, but we all have a creative outlet. For some people it is languages. They love them and they like the opportunity to try and communicate. But from the receiver standpoint, I would argue that you still learned a lot about being in a different culture. You were in a very intense, I would... I could imagine Israelis that are living in the Netherlands have learned to assimilate and adapt, but in their home, in their own smaller bubble of their in-group, they have a different way of behaving, which you observed, versus when they go out in a more formal and informal, in a way, or distant but informal way that the Dutch may be, and you observed that as well. So, what a rich experience that you had and an opportunity for you. But then you, you shared the same language of music, which is another layer there that makes it really interesting.

I do think that I see this in my students based on backgrounds and based on exposure. People have a love and an interest in learning many other languages or they've been inundated with it, and they don't want to make an effort to learn more of that. Regardless though, using some key phrases and words in the business world, saying good morning in the local language, walking into a place and saying hello in the appropriate plural, which is more formal, and local language goes such a long way, as immediately, versus just one walking in and saying good morning in English. That makes an assumption that you assume the person will speak your language.

[19:54] In the business world, taking some of your written materials or your visual slides and changing some of the words, using some of the colloquialisms in your messaging, it just always allows you to connect with your audience. I would argue that creative people are quicker at being attuned and reading their audience and when it comes to communication, it's all about being able to connect with your audience and finding ways that you can do it in building trust and starting a relationship and sometimes it's not even that first meeting, it's knowing to be formal enough.

So for example, if I wanted to get to know you and I didn't know you, I would probably send a formal message before a meeting and saying I look forward to our connection. I've prepared. I have some questions... so that I can put my best foot forward and show that I want to create that relationship. One can say that's not a very creative way of reaching out but maybe I can do it, I know where you know where your workplace is and maybe I bump into you in the lobby or I find a way to connect with you and have more points of contact in that communication chain and I've been creative about the way that I've done it if I want our meeting to go well. Does that connect the dots for you?

Debbi: [21:22] Absolutely and it is all about connections isn't it? Creativity and everything else is about connecting those things.

Debbi: Out of curiosity, I do want to ask you about... so you're from Greece and you still spent a lot of time there from what I know, so as far as the Greek culture versus the American culture, although there's so many different American cultures, how do the different cultures uniquely foster creativity within them?

Tatiana: [21:58] You know art, music and theater, I don't want to be too boastful and say the Greek civilization had a lot to do with it.

Debbi: Absolutely.

Tatiana: But many thousands of years BC... We just went to took students to the Museum of Ancient Greek Technology, if you ever can go you should, where they show some of the first musical instruments that they used and the creativity of how they built them from tortoiseshells and intestines and you know deer hides and all this, just to create and make sound so very interesting. So, I think sometimes it's in the DNA of a culture but it's also around it you can see how broad and wide the spectrum of music is. In Greece there's a lot of Greek music and at many different levels, anywhere from very traditional to pop and so on, but you can see that that

creativity is a big part of that. We in Europe in general have the Eurovision musical contest every May where every country puts out their best song. That doesn't happen in the U. S. as much. I think we're more focused on doing versus being and when you're focused on doing, you don't pause enough to stop and see what feeds you, what you need. The pace in Greece is a little bit more laid back in general. I don't want to say that Greeks don't work like maniacs and especially now with things having turned around with the economy, they work a lot and the creativity is sapped a little out of them because they've got stuff to do.

But if you just take time to *be* versus do- do- do- do, you can find that or you can search around for it. And again, the inspiration comes from so many different places. I also think you can find the inspiration for creativity being in nature. And we have beautiful places in both countries or in every country. There's a place you can find a way to tap into nature and connect. I do that quite a lot. I love being outside or being in different spaces that allows me just to let my mind drift and think. And that's where creativity comes. That's where people say, I get my best ideas in the shower. Think about it. You're in water. You're doing something completely different. From a sensory standpoint, you're having different stimuli. If we can put ourselves in different contexts than our usual ones, I think we can be more creative. I get my best ideas swimming in the water or riding my bike where I only see bunnies and deer or running and being outside. If you break the mold of sitting at your computer and you're thinking, I have to write my next newsletter. I just finished doing that. I do it much better with pen and paper sitting on my back porch, never sitting down at the laptop. I just can't.

Debbi: I write everything out by hand. I will be honest.

Tatiana: By hand. Yeah, absolutely. So, your question was, "Do we foster creativity differently in the different cultures, Greece and in the U. S. for me?" And I'd say, no, it depends on what exposure you have. And if you want to be more creative, I would say, put yourself in different contexts. Go for a hike. Go watch the sunset. Stay up to watch the sunrise. Put yourself in different places and you will get those creative juices going.

Debbi: When you're putting together your newsletter or other creative output, do you have a specific creative process that you fall into?

Tatiana: [26:14] I try to come up with ideas that are inspired by my environment experiences, things that happen, things that I see, interactions that I observe. And I also, because I have enough LinkedIn Learning courses with learners that are kind enough to make comments or ask questions, I look to them to be inspired or come up with an idea.

I also, you know, the flip side of being creative all the time is you just have all these ideas stirring and you get nothing done. So, I do have a spreadsheet for the year. I know what contexts or my colleague who works with me and tries to help me with this, she'll say, "You've got a lot of hits on this class. Let's tackle this topic." And that kind of puts some guardrails to me and just staying in that lane to be in this topic. And I prefer that, because otherwise I'm all over the place and I'll come up with ideas that may not fit.

I can parking lot them somewhere and put them and write them down so I don't lose them, but I want to make sure to also be productive at some point because I think you can paralyze yourself of coming up with so many ideas and being all over the place that there needs to be some kind of system so that you can produce an outcome, in my case, say the newsletter. But I have kind of a rhythm of thinking, okay, next month... I've started doing this to being more strategic. I write a newsletter that connects to a LinkedIn Live, so there's sort of a theme around things that it doesn't seem like we're scattered all over the place. Because I've chosen to do one LinkedIn Live, one office hours a month and one newsletter a month. That's I figured that's my capacity right now. So, I might as well theme them together. And if I'm going to do that, I need to have a 12-month plan in order to do that.

It's the same, I would say, you know, running the business, the boutique fitness studio, I do a lot of planning of our social media. There has to be some kind of a plan, otherwise, you don't know what to post or when to post, you have to have a system in place. And you can come across having a pretty feed on Instagram, or a... I wouldn't say pretty, I would say functional or attractive or a feed that matches your brand. So, guardrails work for me better. Otherwise, I could be all over the place and maybe I'll do that when I retire, but for now I gotta get stuff done, so I need some of those systems.

Debbi: Mm-hmm, there's definitely that possibility paralysis thing- that's very real. It's the same thing that a writer gets when you have a blank page. Sometimes it's overwhelming, you know. Or a composer with

manuscript paper with nothing on it. And I think those guardrails are those rules. And we're back to music, with jazz, improvisation or just acting, improv. Being creative on the tennis court, there are certain rules you have to be within right.

Tatiana: Mmm-hmmm.

Debbi: I think that does help.

Tatiana: [29:02] But you know, staring at a blank page or a screen, I quite often use music that kind of gets me into a groove, into a thinking. I put my phone on, do not disturb, or I may use that music and just go on a walk, or I may read something to inspire me, or I may walk completely away and watch a movie with my family that dissociates me, to allow me to build up back my, my gas tank if it's empty. I need to do things that will allow me to have the energy to be more creative, because when you're tired and burned out and exhausted, there is no creativity.

You have to be well to be high performing in anything. You have to be well mentally and physically. So, creativity goes hand in hand with that. I think it's very difficult to... to be inspired when you're not feeling your best self, so the two are connected. If you feel like you're blocking on creativity, put it away and take a timeout and do something else and don't over strain yourself or have expectations that I'm going to write for three hours a day, you know. Maybe, if you're really focused and zoned in and you write for 30 minutes, that's okay too.

Debbi: I think that getting in that flow and allowing for that incubation period, it's, it's part of the process and so important.

Debbi: [30:32] With creativity, environment can be so important, and I'm not just talking about out in nature or whatever. I'm talking about that nurturing environment. Are there things in an environment, any specific things that you find that stifle your creativity?

Tatiana: Mmm... A busy, distracted schedule of having to be at ten places at once. I'm just on just survival mode at the time. A lot of problems to solve all the time. It doesn't allow you to be creative versus... and again it goes back to not having the energy. If you do a lot of that, it's hard to be creative. Negativity stifles my creativity personally.

Debbi: Mmm-hmm...

Tatiana: Thinking, how can we think of this... and this another way... and the person that says, "Well, we can't do that," "Well, we tried that," "What we can't be..." Just a lot of that. That to me, is a creativity suck. And I would say just overall... So, I talked about a busy schedule that's going in many different directions but for me not feeling well fueled and I talk about... I say this again- physically and emotionally. If my tank is low, emotionally and physically, I can't be... I cannot be creative. So, I hope that answers your question.

Debbi: Absolutely.

Tatiana: So, it goes from environment and from... and also environment uncomfortable. So even though you know the way you're sitting at your desk or where you decide to you write in your notepad somewhere. It has to be a space that it feels... I don't want to call it even cozy. Creativity can come from a different place, but we all kind of find our ways that work for us: lighting, outdoor light, enough air... Knowing when your energy is higher during the day. This is a high energy time for me. That's why I wanted and we rescheduled from later afternoon to this.

But knowing that about yourself and not putting things on your plate that are demanding or you want to be creative and, end of the day, when that that's not where you are. In some people that's when they do their best work. So knowing all of this, and I think having lived through life and getting it wrong enough times, teaches you which one is right and you just try to manage it or avoid it. And there's times we can't. I mean, during the semester, I don't do much of my LinkedIn course creation or other things. It's just survival mode with all the students and managing some of those hundreds of emails. So, again, but that's okay, I'm not gonna throw a pity party. It's the way that it is and it's okay.

Debbi: And obviously we're sort of still coming out of, but we've just been through, globally you know, with the pandemic, such a hard time. You're talking about health and emotional, mental, physical. How do you see

creativity or have you seen already as helping or being a part of our healing to get past this and just reconnecting and being...becoming healthy again?

Tatiana: [33:38] You know, I personally think that COVID was a complete spark plug for creativity. If you consider creativity a way of doing things differently, thinking and doing and operating out of the box. LinkedIn ships boxes to your house, you unpack them, and they film remotely from their studios in California. If you mentioned this to them six years ago, they'd be like, oh, no, we can't do that. But COVID came and they have crushed it with this. I mean, they are so good at doing this. I consider that creativity in a way that produces results that are incredible, and they're keeping some of this. That's just one little example. We've learned how to do courses and engage people. I'm not just talking about me speaking, a talking head. I'm talking about having 1,500 people in a webinar and having them work in groups and do things and questions and all this stuff. You couldn't do this in person. So COVID really nudged us in a very big way in thinking out of the box for all of us.

[34:48] I remember... You'd be interested in this. I was part of a sprint, which is a entrepreneurial idea generation of do something to help during COVID. My team that I was on thought about selling the benefit of having live music and having people sing to you, of doing this, finding people that needed the connection, were stuck in their homes, and pretty much dialing in a person to sing them a beautiful song. It's to you. It's not just prerecorded. It's live or a live concert or an opportunity to... I think we focused on the music, the vocalists that were out of work across the world, and the elderly that were stuck in their homes, needing that connection, and finding the creativity and energy that comes from music. What an incredible idea that we never would have thought of unless we were in that three-day push of having to think of the business model to offer something like that.

So, to answer your question, we may feel a little tired coming out of COVID and having to rethink the way that we find our energy and how we regroup. For people that get their energy from the inside, more the introverted thinkers and operators, it probably, I would say, it was better because they didn't have to have all of these transactions face-to-face, and they were more productive. But others that get energy from the outside, suffered quite a lot. I know I did. I needed to see people, and we weren't doing that. So that ends up with too much time on the screen. So, coming out of COVID, I would say we all should recognize and honor what COVID did for us in our industry, and in many ways, it made us better. So even though, again, what doesn't kill you, it just shows you that if you go through some of the tough stuff, you may end up coming out from the other side stronger and better equipped.

Debbi: I think that connection, especially, of course, I come from the music world, so that type of connection with music and everything is just... There's no replacing it. But it is that personal connection and being with people and that shared experience. And I think back again to sports and music and everything else, we can sit in a game, we can sit in a theater and watch a show or a performance, and it doesn't matter who around you is a Republican or a Democrat or from this place or that. It's shared experiences. And I mean, how do we tap into that? How do we get people to appreciate that and appreciate each other? I don't know.

Tatiana: [37:45] You know, a good friend of mine from the Kelley School of Business, you should look up his talk. His name is Tim Fort, F- O- R- T, he's in Bloomington, and he has a whole TED Talk of getting along. How can we all get along by sharing these common artifacts? And he goes with music and sport and other experiences that are commonly shared. In fact, he filmed his TED Talk at a dog park, because he starts with the analogy of the dogs come from all different backgrounds, breeds, homes, and environments. They go to the dog park, they forget everything, and they just play. And they just, some of them don't get along as well, but some of them just forget about their size and their breed, and they just make it happen. And he uses that and continues to talk about us being able to find common ground.

And, sports, theater, the arts are that common ground because I think with that incredible tap into the creative spirit and the common love for what it is that we share. You should ask him for an interview because he's fascinating. He's a business law and ethics professor, but he is incredibly creative in his approach to it. And he sings to his class. He has them analyze sonatas in the name of ethics. So, he inspires me and he's wonderful.

Debbi: And I love it when we take and we cross... I mean, I have always all my life been obsessed with the Olympics, right? And one of my favorite things that just popped into my mind is when we were watching and Ryan Lochte? There was like an interview, and first of all, he was sitting there with his dog, but he was, he's playing drums and they were talking about, he was talking about how that helps him, you know, in the connection with sports. And he even played, this is the rhythm of when I'm starting and this is when I know I'm in this lap and all this stuff, but I love that. And you're talking about in your exercise.

Tatiana: So he builds rhythm into how he... Yes. Fantastic.

Debbi: Isn't that brilliant? I just love that. Everything's just so connected and it's, I think for me, and that's what I'm exploring is where that creativity is because I think we all as humans are creative and that gives us that commonality and we just express it in all totally different ways. And in that, my final question to you, how do you define creativity?

Tatiana: [40:15] I would say, I gave this some thought and thanks for sharing that question before, because it's not an impromptu type of expression. I would say it's the free-flowing expression of our own human experience. It's influenced by our backgrounds, our upbringing, our values, our beliefs, our exposures, but it has to be our own expression of our experience. It has to be authentic, raw, organic, not influenced by any trends. It's really how we show up. And finding that at times can be difficult. You have to not be too distracted in order to tap into it, but once you know it, it's a superpower.

Debbi: I love that. It is a superpower indeed. All right, well, Tatiana, I have to say thank you for doing this. I really appreciate... It was fantastic, fabulous discussion. That's just inspiring. And before we go, do let people know, how can they find you?

Tatiana: Sure. My handle on LinkedIn is under my name, Tatiana Kolovou, and the newsletter that I was mentioning, trying to put together every month and connecting to live office hours is called *Stronger*. And the focus is finding ways to show up and level up in performing in the work world, because that LinkedIn is a professional platform, but I put a lot of time and energy into that, and I appreciate anyone who will subscribe to it. It comes out every month, and you can bet that the stories are interesting, engaging, and you'll always get tips out of it that will help you level up your performance.

Debbi: And I would encourage everyone to join me as a subscriber to *Stronger* and connect with Tatiana in any way that you can. Thank you again for this just thoughtful conversation.

Tatiana: Thank you, Debbi. It's been a pleasure.

Debbi: [42:24] That's a wrap for episode four, my discussion with business communication educator, content creator, thought leader, trainer, fitness educator, exercise physiologist, small business owner, cross-culture communication specialist, native of Greece, and incredible inspiration to all who get to interact with her, Tatiana Kolovou. I'm so grateful for Tatiana and for you, the audience, for tuning in. Additional thanks to August Fackler for composing and recording the music. Join me next time as I talk creativity with chaplain John Holtzutter.

Meanwhile, be open to possibilities, make connections, and embrace your creativity, however it manifests itself in you.