

Defining Creativity S1E9: Michael Menapace 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...

Michael: Michael Menapace. I am a lawyer. If we want to get more specific, I am an insurance lawyer, and we can go more into depth if you want to get even more granular than that.

Debbi: Michael, I cannot thank you enough for taking the time to talk to me today. As many people as I've discussed creativity with and interviewed, I think this is the first time that it is someone whose profession is an insurance lawyer. So, I really look forward to broadening my understanding and learning more about creativity from your point of view. To get started, how about we just jump right in and you speak a little bit about how you use creativity in what you do.

Michael: That's an interesting question because I don't think that... So, I'm a former musician. I guess I'm still a musician, but really, I was trained as a musician. And when we talk about creativity now, I don't think musicians are real good about using the right words. I think we take it for granted that everyone thinks this way. And that became apparent to me once I got to law school, both in the way that we think about problem solving—there's a direct correlation between how we're trained as musicians and how I operate now to solve problems—and then the creativity. But I don't think we talk about it in a real articulate way. I think we just take it for granted. So, the way that I think about creativity as a lawyer, similar to how I used to describe to my daughters what I did for a living. When my daughters were little, they would ask me, what do you do as a lawyer? And my simple answer when they were little was, I help people solve problems.

And then as they got older, we put more context around that. But really, at the very basic level, I help my clients, my corporate clients solve problems. And my clients come to me often with problems, questions, issues, brainstorm of things that don't already have answers. They don't come to me for a lot of commoditized work that we do the same thing over and over. They come to me because they have a specific issue. And they are really looking to me to find the path to solve the problem.

And to me, the creativity really is there, which is there's no roadmap. We know where we want to go. Let's think of all the possibilities and the ways to get there. And what are the pros and cons for each of them? So, for me, the creativity is a problem solving exercise in trying to achieve a goal, which is a little bit different in some ways from when I was a musician, but not really. Because as a musician, we would still have a goal as well, right? To express ourselves effectively to an audience. And that's not unlike what I try to do now with

solving a problem, that I have to get to an effective, efficient, and satisfying answer for the client.

Debbi: As a musician, I think part of it is when you're collaborating, and you're working in ensemble, right? And you're communicating and listening. And some of those skills, I can imagine translate as well.

Michael: [3:45] The things you mentioned, plus compromising, or being enlightened, being educated by other people's views, and maybe it shouldn't be quite that way, or let's try it this way. As you know, Debbi, musicians tend to have strong opinions. And marrying those opinions, or coexisting with those opinions, those points of view, musically, is really valuable. In working with a team now, because for me, when I talk about serving my clients, I rarely do it alone. I have a team around me.

And understanding your role within that team, from the most junior lawyer, to the most senior lawyer, to everyone involved, to the non-lawyer staff that are involved, everyone has a role. Understanding what your role is, or at my point now, where I'm more of leading the team, understanding that.

Again, I'll come back to, this is all ingrained in us as musicians from a real early age that we take it for granted. Most musicians that I've talked to that are looking to transition to something else don't really know how to talk about the things they take for granted, whether it's the problem-solving or the creativity, in concrete ways that others can understand well.

Debbi: And if you're working in teams and you're part of leadership, a lot is writing on having an environment that fosters creativity. So what are some of those elements? What are characteristics of a creative environment that you strive to have?

Michael: [5:26] The first thing that comes to mind you know as a number of years ago, at really the beginning of the diversity initiatives- back then we just called them diversity initiatives, we didn't call them DEI or anything- it was all about diversity, and and people were having to be convinced of the business argument for diversity. And this is one of the times in my business career where I've kind of stood back and didn't even really understand what the question was, because I took it for granted.

Because, coming up as a musician, there's a collective creativity. You know this soup that we have, whether it's a small chamber music group or in a larger group or performing, you know, performing with others. There is this collective creativity that is really exciting and produces a result that none of us individually could have done, and so when people were trying to make the business case for diversity, it seemed just logical, perhaps is logical, but people didn't think about it the same way we think about it as musicians, which is the more diverse people and views and backgrounds that you have make the team better. There's the collective creativity on the teams that I create, that I want. You know, I don't want everyone that has the same background and thinks just like me. I don't need that. I already have that, you know. I want people who are gonna, who are gonna complement that or challenge that.

So, at a very basic level, I think of this: more people of differing viewpoints being in the room at the same time really is the first step in fostering that creativity. And then the second piece is empowering people, you know, making sure that their voices are heard—even a junior member of the team has something to contribute, and making sure they're comfortable enough that they know they can speak up. They know they can question me, and sometimes it's a learning opportunity for them, which allows me to help train them and bring them along. But other times it makes me stop and question what I was just assuming. And that's a good thing as well.

Debbi: Yeah, assumptions don't help, do they?

Michael: Right? They're easy, right? They're shortcuts.

Debbi: Of course, of course. So helping people understand the value of their unique voice, their experience is what they're bringing, that they are creative and that they have something to contribute, how do you, in what you're doing, how do you get them to understand that within whatever parameters you have, that that is important, that their voice matters?

Michael: [8:20] So the way I view many of our problems that I'm trying to solve as a lawyer, a lot of them... So, if we're dealing with a litigation, do have a structure to them. There is a presumed way that a litigation is going to be handled. The plaintiff files the complaint. We, as the defendant, generally will file a motion to dismiss. If that's unsuccessful, we'll move on to discovery and then summary judgment and eventually a trial. So there's a form, a basic form to it. Not unlike in music, we have a sonata form or song form.

We have a structure and then we can be creative within that form and it's not just a free-for-all. I mean, there are, there are guide rails here, but as we move through this litigation process that I'll just use as an example. Again, I can't do this all myself and it's the junior associates, who really are taking the laboring oar on getting much of the work done. And what I mean by that is, we read the complaint, we try to understand what the plaintiff is alleging, and then we need to come up with our theories of the defense.

Usually, I'll have three or four theories of defense we want to start, the road we want to start going down, and we'll talk about it as a team. And then it's the junior associate's job to start going out, not only doing the research on those three things to see if they work, finding out how they could work. Do they work in this state? Or do they not work in that state? Or... fleshing those out.

But as they're doing their job on those three or four ideas that I've come up with, it's their job to then piece together what are options five, six, seven, and eight that weren't apparent to me at the outset, but they've started doing the work. And so they're the ones that are really immersed in it, and they're down at a detailed level, really granular level.

And things are going to become apparent to them, hopefully, if we've done our job to hire the right people and train them the right way, and make sure that they understand that

they're not just solving problem A, but they need to be looking around the corners for B and C. That they have the freedom, and really the expectation, that they should be using their own brain not to do just what I've asked them to do, but to go beyond what I've asked them to do, and to report back and help educate me.

And so that's, I think, part of the environment, which is setting up an expectation that they're not only going to get done what's been asked, but they are independent thinkers, and their real value added is looking into options five, six, seven, and eight that we didn't think about the first time.

Debbi: [11:15] So much that you're describing is just right out of the playbook of, well, creativity, making connections. But as you first started talking, you could have been describing jazz to me. You've got this framework, and then you take those elements, and you create something else within it.

Debbi: So I'm thinking if you're doing litigation, and you're working as a team, but you also have to work with, I'm guessing, the other side. So when I, and maybe this isn't fair, but I think that if I weren't planning on this lovely discussion with you, if I knew that I was going to have a meeting with an insurance lawyer, I might have a little bit of anxiety, which is on me. But thinking in a situation where you need a lawyer, I'm guessing that there are two conflicting sides, often.

And so how do you creatively reach out to and generate a discussion with what could be viewed as the other side to come to an agreement or something that is hopefully beneficial to each side, or how do you approach that?

Michael: [12:30] Yeah, that's a good question. So I'll take a step back though and say, so many times we are in an adversarial position with another party. Part of what I do, however, at the beginning, is I think about, do we really need to be in an adversarial position? Is there a true conflict between my client's position and the other side's position? They might not truly be in conflict. We might want different things, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they conflict with each other. Can we both get to the same place? Can we both get what we want without five years of litigation?

Sometimes we can, and sometimes we can get rid of what looks like a dispute more efficiently by not engaging in litigation. Now, it takes a certain set of circumstances, and frankly, it also takes somebody else on the other side to recognize that there might be a way to approach this that isn't in the structures that I've laid out. There may be an alternative. So I think about that upfront. But to your point, let's assume that we're in litigation, we're in an adversarial process.

Yes, we have to deal with the other side's lawyers. So my team, the other side's team, there are some lawyers and some people who really only have a few tools in their toolbox, or they go at one speed all the time. Part of the creativity on my side is figuring out what is going to

work best here for my client. Is a real hard-edged, hired gun, is it the only way to solve this problem? Is it the best way to solve this problem? Or am I a good cop to somebody else on my team who's a bad cop? Is this more of a collaborative effort with the other side?

I mean, the other side, for example, sometimes lawyers know when they're in a dispute that they're going to lose. And the best thing they can do for their client is to lose less badly. Right? And so what is the best outcome? And setting this up for that. So sometimes that takes some collaboration with the other side.

And the creativity piece does come into this because not every problem is a nail that requires a hammer to solve. Sometimes it's not a nail, it might look like a nail, but maybe it's not. And if it's not, do we really need the hammer? So I think that to keep bringing this back to creativity, I think part of that is constantly being open to other ways of looking at this.

Debbi: I noticed as I was doing my research to get ready for this conversation today, that you are an author as well. I saw that you recently co- authored Cyber Insurance for Businesses and that you do cybersecurity.

Michael: [15:37] I do. I have several books, all legal books that I've either been an editor for or an author on. And that's, I consider that part of my practice. So I'm a lawyer. I do writing. I do lots of speaking, presentations, seminars, and I teach at a law school. I teach.

Debbi: Oh, wonderful. So you're not busy at all.

Michael: I'm not busy at all, but you know what? I think of it and I sense a question coming and we'll get to it. But when I was a musician, I was performing and teaching and doing advocacy and doing, and it was all just part of being a musician. I really didn't separate out my performing and my teaching and all that. And now I really don't separate out my litigation from my counseling, from my writing, from my teaching insurance law or being involved in a bar association. It's just part of what I do as a lawyer.

Debbi: Oh, amazing. Well, yes, there is a question coming or two. First of all, just stepping back to the author part of it and looking at you individually, what is your creative process as you are approaching a blank slate, that blank page? Are you one of those who, that that's intimidating to have that blank page or that you just like to go from scratch and jump in? How does that work for you?

Michael: [16:57] The first thing starts with recruiting the smartest people I know who can help me. I like to surround myself with really accomplished folks. I learn a lot, they inspire me. But to your question, so I was not the only author of the book you're mentioning, the Cyber Insurance for Businesses. I was one of several, but I was part of the lead team. But the first thing we do is we sit down and we brainstorm, what are all of the possible topics we could cover? Knowing that a lot of those topics won't make it into the book, but what could we cover?

Thinking about what's already been covered adequately somewhere else. To use a music analogy, do we really need another recording of Beethoven 5? There has to be a really strong reason for a major orchestra now to record Beethoven 5. So in my process, what's already been covered elsewhere? And what is the need? What's the niche that has to be filled here? And then we start looking on either side of that. What does the reader need to know before we get to that issue? So what's all the background? What is the major issue? And then where are we going?

I really just start from a broad view from the brainstorming process. What are all the possibilities? And then once we hone in on the possibility, then expanding that one possibility and making that one dot a bigger circle and building out from there. Once we get into those sub-issues then, it really is making sure that we are disciplined in uncovering all the information we need and perfecting the way that we say it and we present it to somebody.

[18:49] And this is where my creative process in writing is very similar to how we were trained as musicians since we were five or ten, whenever we started. And if you'll indulge me for a moment, I'll explain. What I do now, whether it's writing a book or it's solving a legal problem is I take the issue, I break it down into all of its component parts. I research those parts. I figure out the background and the history of those parts. I then perfect each one of them.

I make sure that we've really dug in and then I put the whole thing back together so I can present it as a convincing whole. As a musician, this is what we've done since we started performing. We have a piece of music. It's not a problem, but it's a piece of music. We break it down into its component parts.

We understand where it came from, we understand the history. We break it down into every two measures. You know that we perfect them so we can perform them, and then we put the whole thing back together and have to present it to somebody as an effective piece of music, as a performance.

And so when I went to law school and I started writing, I thought that everyone approached issues and problems the same way. It was baffling to me in law school. I just didn't understand why classmates were having such a difficult time, because this is, in law school, how they teach you to solve problems, and to me it was just the most natural thing in the world, and it took me about a year to figure out that not everyone thinks this way. That's why these other folks are having trouble. They all should have been musicians, and if they were musicians they'd all be better lawyers or at least better, better law students.

So I think the way that I approach a legal problem or a new book is a lot the same way that musicians approach solving, studying, and performing a piece of music.

Debbi: Yeah, and I can imagine the same way as well, composition of any kind. You know whether you're writing, you're finding the right words, or you're painting and finding the

right hues and and finding the right notes, that it's that sort of seeing the bigger picture and all the perspectives and then deciding

Michael: Yeah, that's interesting, I hadn't thought about it that way ... different colors and hues in a painting.

Debbi: Or in music.

Michael: Yeah, or in music. Yeah, absolutely. In what I do now as a lawyer, I have to think about how I'm presenting a written brief to the court. I have to understand who's my audience. What is my judge expecting? You know what's her background. Is she going to be put off by strident language? Is she going to expect it? Does that impress her? Likewise, when I'm in front of a jury or even a judge in court, what's the tone?

The tone that I'm using speaks volumes. Is the audience here going to be more receptive to the professorial tone that I can use? Do they really want me to go after somebody on the stand who is not a good witness and they're not gonna like? So the creativity also comes in for me that way as well, which is there's lots of options on how to question a witness or present an argument to somebody, and the more tools you have in your toolbox, the more effective you're going to be if you know how to win and how to use them.

Debbi: [22:06] Absolutely. And I think that... You know I used the example of maybe words and literature and visual arts, but I think it goes back to when we're young and how we're educated. It goes beyond the arts. It's in sports: if you learn to read the room, you know who you're gonna pass that ball to, or work as a team, just learning to experiment and see a bigger picture. I think we isolate the parts of ourselves sometimes, I think, and I think the creativity can be fostered and nurtured in so many different ways that are really instinctive for us, especially young, but music is a huge one, obviously.

Debbi: Back to the cybersecurity thing. I'm a little bit fascinated. I won't understand if you go into a lot of specifics. I'll be honest. It's it's a different language for me, but it just feels like there's so much maybe unknown and that you have to have creativity even to think about possibilities in order to either protect against them or to take advantage of them. I don't know that when we were in college that cybersecurity was a thing. Maybe it was and I just didn't know about it, but how do you approach something that's just we don't know where it's going.

Michael: [23:28] Yeah, so I'll tell you. It was not a thing when you and I were in college, Debbi. I remember bringing a typewriter to college, so so that's that's interesting. Let me... So in the cybersecurity, not only do we respond to breaches, but I also advise clients before a breach how to handle data, what systems they can have set up, and it's actually really easy to lock down all the sensitive information so nobody can get to it. But the problem is that no one can do their job at the company.

So we could swing the pendulum and make sure that nobody ever has access, including the bad guys, to the data, but we need people to do their jobs and they're gonna need access to the data. So how do we balance the security need with the business needs? So what is the art of the possible here? Yes, we could give only one person in the company the rights to access certain kinds of files.

And if that's the only person that needs it, great. But that's rarely the case. So, a lot of the counseling that I do on cybersecurity is figuring out, we have this data, we wanna keep it safe, of course. Who needs access to it? How do they need access to it? How do we shut off the people who don't need it? Or if some people need it, do they really need all of it? And so there's really several sliding scales that we look at for every question. And a one-size-fits-all approach is never the answer, even if I'm looking at two companies in the same business line.

It could be two different manufacturers of bolts and nails. They could have very different needs. Maybe one of them does government contracting and they're supplying bolts to the Department of Defense to build airplanes. And another one is selling to Home Depot. And so there's gonna be different risk profiles in there. And so recognizing these variations, you know, that's what the clients pay us to do, to help assess their specific needs and then help creatively take all the possibilities that we have at our disposal in cybersecurity and figuring out which ones fit their needs, fitting them together.

Once we get them there, what allowances can we make or how do we need to tighten them up a little bit? So there is a creativity there. We don't really talk about it as being creative. And, you know, we kind of take it for granted that this is what we do, but to my mind, this is how a lawyer can best serve the client, which is, you know, the client is paying me a lot of money to think. You know, all I have to do, I sell two things. I sell my time and my ability to think and some other things. I have to be responsive, all of that. But at the end of the day, they're paying me to help them think through problems. And if they could pull a book off the shelf, as helpful as my book is, it's a starting point. You know, maybe we can think of that as the theme on a set of theme and variations.

Debbi: Nice.

Michael: You know, the real work of the composer or the lawyer or the problem solver is how do we take that theme, and which variation then works for this client?

Debbi: Right. It's interesting, we're talking about a lot of ambiguity and being vulnerable, and it's not always a good thing. In creativity, it's something that we need to be able to go forward and be creative, but obviously you don't want your clients to be vulnerable. So it's looking at even those words and those definitions in a different way, a little bit.

Michael: [27:17] Yeah, I think so. You know, on that point, I think you have to be comfortable with the ambiguity.

Debbi: Exactly.

Michael: And some people aren't.

Debbi: Right.

Michael: Either they're not wired that way or it just makes them uncomfortable. I'm okay with that. And it's not exclusive to music or the arts or anything else. I mean, certainly we all know, you know, the art of war by Sun Tzu. You know, you plan the battle, and then as soon as it begins, the art is in changing the plan. You have to respond.

Debbi: Being flexible. Absolutely, and adaptable. Absolutely, yeah. And I mean, as far as people think that maybe if they can't live comfortably in that ambiguity, they're not being creative or whatever, but that's not true either because there's just different kinds of creativity. If you're an innovator and coming up with something from scratch, or you're the adapter and you're just adapting what's already there, but you don't have to be in that total unknown and scary place if that is a scary place to you.

Michael: Yeah, and when I train my younger lawyers, part of that is giving them the training so that they have the confidence to be creative. So for example, you know, the first few times a young litigator takes a deposition, they're going to have their nice, conformed outline in front of them of the questions they're going to ask, and they very rarely stray from that.

I mean, they have their list, no matter what the witness says, but giving them those opportunities, and they have to do that a few times, and then they have to go back and they have to read, you know, their transcript and understand what follow-up question they could have asked and should have asked, but didn't because they were married to their outline.

This reminds me of, you know, when I was in music school, you know, we'd take a conducting class and our conducting teacher would make us videotape ourselves and watch back, and it was horrifying to watch yourself, or you know, or when we're playing, to record ourselves, and it's awful, but it is really important for our development to understand what could we have done differently, which expands our options the next time we do it.

Debbi: [29:17] You were talking about teaching, really, you know, talking about working with young lawyers and you said you are a teacher. So just briefly, I'm always interested to see how people feel that creativity should be part of education. I know that's a huge question, but no.

Michael: I'm smiling. I know you can't, you can't hear the smile, but I've been teaching the same class for 13 years now. I teach insurance law. Last year was the first time I went without a book.

Debbi: Wow.

Michael: No textbook. Law school classes, typically there's what we call a case book that the professor uses and it's written by another professor, you know, each subject, you know, in

insurance there were like four case books out there and everybody teaches from the same case book. We teach the same cases in the same order, everybody.

But this year I did away with it and I used all my own materials because I, going back to the experience when I was saying with junior lawyers, but now I've taught this class enough times. I've seen how students react to it. I now have students who are now, who are out in the industry who have taken my class and, you know, I've really started thinking about what do they really need? What can I get rid of that's in this predetermined case book that we really don't need, that really doesn't matter? What are the holes in it?

And even if the topics are the same, are they being presented the way that I think are most effective? So in the teaching, for myself as a professor, I think there was, there has been a building amount of confidence in what I was doing and just doing it enough to have enough information so where I could be creative and change the notes on the page and improvise and create what I think is a better way.

Debbi: [31:11] The creativity we're talking about is a lot of collaboration and connecting. And I think that it goes beyond the arts or beyond a profession into community. Do you see ways that that translates into building a better, even global community?

Michael: Yeah, I think it translates into us being able to have a more, let's just say, just more of community. We're so separated now. We could name all the ways where we've become tribes. You know, the tribalism issue. And at a basic level, any time that we have more than one options on how we do something or how to say something, we're being creative. We have to choose one of those two.

Hopefully we can go beyond, I choose one just reactively, and we can be a little bit more thoughtful about it. Because then whether it's a decision in the local town whether to build a new high school, maybe we all want the same thing, but we don't want to necessarily get there the same way. Or maybe our instincts just don't tell us that we should all get there the same way. Maybe the building, the new building is a bad example. But there are ways where we can have shared goals, even though we can disagree about the methods on getting there. And at a very basic level, when we have those choices, we are being creative when we make a conscious decision on which of those two, three, four, five choices to take.

One thing that I've come to do every year, because I'm not a practicing musician anymore, but I've taken the time now to, about once a year, take a new piece of music that, as a saxophonist, I would have never studied or needed to study. And I dig into it. So for example, as a saxophonist, I would never have a reason to really study in depth the Goldberg Variations for piano. I just wouldn't.

I'd be so busy perfecting the saxophone repertoire and performing there, I wouldn't have time to stop and look around and think more globally. I've also done the Bach B minor Mass, which you may know, does not have a saxophone part. Or more recently, the Beethoven

piano sonatas. These are things that I would never have done as a saxophonist, certainly not as a lawyer.

But I get the scores, I get commentary on them, I read about them, I get several recordings of them, and I just spend time with them. And I wish this is something that I did when I was a practicing musician, that I took the time to step back and explore these things that are outside of my immediate needs and what is a priority at the moment. And I think stepping back often, doing that, really helps me be creative, fulfilled, interested when I get back to the minutiae or the hyper-focused issue that I'm dealing with for a client.

Or it could be reading. I've been reading the Stoics lately, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, and that's not necessary for my legal career. But it broadens my horizons, and it makes me think differently.

Debbi: 00:35:02 Absolutely. It does give you new perspective and just a more full existence, I think, and a way to look at things. It is really interesting to me how someone like yourself, who... what seem to be very different careers can see all those parallels about how we apply communicating and collaborating and working in ensemble and listening to all aspects of their life. And I really respect that so much, even just in talking with you, how you do that.

Okay, so this is a Defining Creativity podcast. And so my final question to you is, indeed, how do you define creativity?

Michael: [35:42] I don't think I've ever been asked this, so let me stumble around a little bit. I think of it as identifying all the choices, and then deliberately or consciously choosing the one to achieve the result you're looking for. I think it's a little bit different than what I'll call inspiration, which is that original thought that comes out of nowhere. To me, that's part of creativity. But to me, creativity is also part of how do we build something. There's lots of choices, and it's not just picking one randomly. I don't think there's a lot of creativity in throwing dice, just taking what comes up. It's not random. It's a conscious decision from a menu of choices.

Debbi: Yeah, making connections. And the more experiences and the more exposure to different ideas and perspectives and people and situations we can have, the more options we have for making those connections.

Michael: Yeah. I'm at a law firm, so I have lots of partners and colleagues. One of the things I really enjoy is not only are they all great lawyers, but they all have something else interesting about them. And that's important to me in an environment, is to be around people that I find interesting, particularly in areas that I wouldn't know about otherwise.

Debbi: Absolutely.

Michael: I like your choice of words about making connections. I think it's a nice way of thinking about how do we expand our own little box, making that box bigger.

Debbi: Absolutely. Well, Michael, I cannot thank you enough for spending time and discussing this with me today. And it's new perspectives for me. So you have broadened my options and put more hues in the color of my palette in order to make connections and be creative myself. So thank you.

Michael: Well, this is fun.

Debbi: For me, too. This is exactly what I'm interested in, how creativity developed in one area applies across disciplines and in your case, how being a musician and artist informs your work as a lawyer. I think it's so important to make those connections and embrace a wide variety of experiences that then can be utilized no matter your journey. Thus, artists and people who have developed their creative chops can make good lawyers.

Michael: I love hiring artists. I love them. When they come through, if they have an arts background, I don't look at that as a negative that before law school, they had an arts background. I look at it as positive. I want dancers. I want visual artists, A, the way they think, B, they're a lot more fun to be around. And we were talking about that collective creativity. The more ingredients we get in that soup, the better it's going to be. It makes life fun.

Debbi: Agreed. And again, Michael, just thank you so much for this insightful conversation.

Michael: It's been my pleasure.

Debbi: That's a wrap for Episode 9, my discussion with insurance lawyer Michael Menapace, who also happens to be an author, teacher, cybersecurity expert, saxophonist, and so much more. I'm so grateful for Michael 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 sommelier David Hale. Meanwhile, be open to possibilities, make connections, and embrace your creativity, however it manifests itself in you.