



THE PODCAST

## S1: E10 Lizzy Nichol Working With Your Values

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[00:00:00] **Beth Stallwood:** Welcome to the Work Joy Jam podcast. In this episode, we talked to the amazing Lizzy Nichol and Lizzy is a creative, she's a health coach, she's a writer. She's a trainer and she's such a great person to have a conversation with because she's so balanced in how she thinks. And I really enjoyed talking to her about her personal journey to getting more Work Joy, what she's been doing, how she always thinks about living with your values and understanding what they are and how important that is to knowing when you were in the right place or knowing when it's time to move, I love it when she starts talking about how you can grow you're here to evolve, but actually that we're also here to contribute to what she calls the ongoing creative project that is humanity. And the idea that when you look back everything that you've done good and bad, joyful, unjoyful, gloomy, happy, whichever version it is everything has somehow being relevant to where you are today. I really hope you enjoy this episode.

[00:01:47] Hi, Hey everyone. And welcome to the Work Joy Jam. This week, we have the fantastic Lizzy Nichol joining us for our Work Joy conversation, Lizzy, it would be lovely for everyone to hear about you and kind of do a few minutes on your background and your story so far. So Lizzy, who are you and what are we going to talk about?

[00:02:08] **Lizzy Nichol:** Hi, Beth thank you so much for inviting me to the Work Joy Jam. This was such an amazing opportunity for me to really reflect on Work Joy and you know, what I realized is that I've actually very naturally followed Work Joy for pretty much the whole of my career. So I spent the first 10 years of my career as a copywriter so I started, for my very first internship at wallpaper magazine, I moved into writing for a travel startup and then. Because of a Work Joy or lack of Work Joy situation I moved on. So I moved on to the charity sector and eventually I found myself in advertising and digital advertising. And then after probably about six years in advertising, I quit and became a freelancer. And I did it in the middle of the last recession, and against all sorts of advice. But I really did make a success of it. And that gave me the time and the money to, and the freedom really, to train as a yoga teacher. So I took a bit of, uh, I took a bit of a turn, I become really into wellbeing I had before I started working as a copywriter, I'd been an athlete and I'd really, it's a whole other story, but I've really, really damaged my body and my health.

[00:03:46] And I got to the point where I was like, like something has to be, I have to do something about this. I have to take action. And I got really, really into personal wellbeing. And then like, the

whole theory of wellbeing. And I use the money and the freedom from freelance writing to train in health coaching.

[00:04:07] I went to, Texas to train as a yoga teacher. So the practice that I teach is called Forrest yoga. And then I was part of a year long public speaker training program, which is something that if told me years ago that I would have done that. I just never would have believed you. And so I, for a while I became a one-to-one health coach and then I kind of found a happy place doing workplace wellbeing.

So I used to do like lunch and learns for big companies. I worked for like Nike, Amazon, Twitter, and somewhere in that period, I did a TEDx talk it's called selfish wins so that was in 2017. And you can still find that on the internet. And then I found myself kind of entirely naturally getting diverted back into writing.

[00:04:57] And I sort of took that as a bit of a sign from the universe that the next step for me was actually to, you know, to get back into creativity. And so I really embraced it, you know, wellbeing, well, be a cornerstone of how I live my life, but I feel like for the moment, the space that I'm in is really it's really about personal creativity, which I actually see as a facet of wellbeing.

So I'm following that at the moment. I'm not sure if that was three minutes, but ...

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:05:33] It was fantastic. Thank you so much for sharing your story. And I'm really interested in this idea that through your career, you were following Work Joy or finding Work Joy as a way of deciding what to do next and how many of us don't necessarily think about the Work Joy element and we're thinking about progression or, you know, moving to an exciting organization or, you know, getting a pay rise, all of these other things that influence our career. But it's really interesting the idea that you can follow the joy and not necessarily follow some of the other things as well.

[00:06:09] So love that as an idea. And. That you've kind of come around back to racing and that the creativity in there as part of wellbeing. Tell me a bit more about the writing and how that gives you some joy in the work that you do and how you've come back into it.

[00:06:28] **Lizzy Nichol:** I think it's actually, it's actually completely fundamental, so it's interesting working in advertising. My title was actually a creative. So when you, when you work in advertising, you tend to work in a creative pair, so you have a copywriter and an art director or designer, and you work as like a little, a little sort of it's sort of informal marriage within, an advertising agency or digital agency. And it was, that has given me, that gave me the language of seeing myself as a creative. So before I got into writing, I was, um, I was very, very heavily into art. So at school and I had this. I had this, um, choice to make, when it came to choosing what to do at university, do I go to art college or do I do something more sensible?

[00:07:32] And actually I wish I do wish that I'm brave enough to go to art college. But I pivoted into history of art. Somehow. I thought that was going to be more helpful for me. Yeah. I don't know where that came from but what I left university with was, I think I'd sort of exhausted my capacity to learn about the theoretical and the historical aspects of art.

[00:08:02] But what I had taken from it was there was writing skills, essentially. So I loved, I found that I loved sitting and constructing essays. Like some people are going to be listening to this thinking, my God, this woman is absolutely mad, but I starting with like hundreds of pages of notes and books. And. Uh, sort of distilling it and distilling it and distilling it down into its essence, structuring it so that it made sense.

[00:08:34] Um, pulling out the salient points, creating that argument. I learned a huge amount actually about writing at university. And I found my first mentor at university. My first writing mentor university completely informed me. She was a PhD student that I met while I was rowing. She was the first person that would sit down and like red pen, my work and go, do you know what, like this is a repetition. Do you see that? Like, she would talk to me about sentence structure and I just absolutely lapped it up. So when I left university. I I thought right now, I I'm done with art for the time being, I felt like saturated with it, but I knew that I had fallen, like basically I fallen in love with writing and through working in advertising, I came to see myself as a creative.

[00:09:28] And so writing has always been you know, no matter what I've been doing, whether it is. Whether it was blogging. I did, I was a blogger for a long time whether it was creating PowerPoints for wellbeing, lunch and learns that I was, you know, I did an awful lot of days, whether it's composing, you know, Instagram posts or, you know, one of the other amazing, very surprising aspects of creativity that I love was sequencing Yoga classes. I absolutely love one of the things I love about teaching is creative sequencing. It's putting, it's creating a story through the sequence, um, that you're teaching your students. And so I found that it's always been there. It's not always been there the sense of creativity of working through story and structure has not always been there through writing because you know, I've taken you know, I've either been writing more or less intensively throughout my entire career, but it's this sense of creativity has always been with me. And I've always been expressing that through my work to a lesser or a greater extent the whole time. And so when I started. The most recent expression of this is during the first lockdown in spring 2020, I wrote 85,000 words of a novel, and I'd never written any fiction before really, um, a few short stories here and there, but I did really feel like I have come full circle and gone back to that really, really kind of intensive identity that I have as a writer and a creative, um, so maybe that answers your question.

[00:11:27] **Beth Stallwood:** It's that story of, you know, it's always been there as something versus I'm doing it all the time and it's something that brings you joy in different guises in different ways in different times and in an indifferent, you know, different organizations and different places where you've worked.

[00:11:48] And because you're somebody who you've worked in organizations, you've worked in those kinds of creative pairs, you've worked as a freelancer and now you're, you know, writing your book and you're in that zone of writing something fictional for the first time you've been in lots of different situations.

[00:12:03] And I'd really love to know for you personally, your perspective on Work Joy and how you do it and how you think other people might be able to create that or cultivate some more joy in the work that they did.

[00:12:18] **Lizzy Nichol:** [00:12:18] Yeah. I think that that's such an important question. And like I said, you know, right at the beginning of our conversation, I think I've done that very naturally.

[00:12:26] And it's not always been about following the joy or perhaps it has, but I've always being brave enough to leave situations and work situations that weren't bringing me joy. I think something that I'm actually quite good at is not settling and having been a maybe it's because I'm, maybe it's because I'm a creative.

[00:12:54] And because, you know, as, as a creative person, I think a lot of creatives, they, we have a mindset of, we can't, maybe we do work for somebody else, but we kind of work for ourselves. And so. That it, you know, we always have, you know, personal projects on the go. And I think, you know what I've seen with people with colleagues in the past, and what I've seen with friends is that can be a lot of fear, which is that if I don't do this, if I don't stay here, if I don't stay in this job, what am I going to do?

[00:13:30] Where am I going to go? Who's going to want me, whereas I don't, honestly, I don't know where it comes from, but I've always had this conviction that I have skills. I have marketing skills. I will always be fine and I can always afford to move on and find my next adventure. And I've never been scared to do that.

[00:13:52] So actually I've never been in any role for longer than three years. I think it's about three years now. Because I'm always, if I get to the point where I feel like I've taken everything that I can from a role, it's no longer bringing me joy, perhaps it's actually making me unhappy. And I just can't, I can't exist.

[00:14:14] Maybe it comes from being creative person. Like it actually can't. I can't stomach being unhappy for like eight hours of the day in a workshop I will move on and have the confidence that there's something else that, you know, there's another step. There's something else, more exciting waiting for me. So I think also what I'm always looking for is to do work that is aligned with my values. So I sat down with a coach who is a great friend of mine. Actually. She became a very great friend of mine years ago now, and I'll never, ever forget this. We were sitting outside a cafe, in west London and she had all of these little tiles and on each of them was, written a word.

[00:15:09] So, and she said, you know, pick out the words, the values, basically, that don't really speak to you. And, you know, we started with like 10 and she was like, right, let's go deeper. And we got down to five and then we got down to three and I've never, ever forgotten them. And my words were freedom, wisdom and growth.

[00:15:30] And they have, I think really given me they've provided a cornerstone for me. So I've all, I always need a certain amount of freedom. I need freedom to be creative. I also like, you know, being a freelancer, I like freedom in structure as well. I don't thrive in a nine to five. I don't necessarily thrive in an office environment.

[00:15:53] If I am working with an organization I'm always looking to do it flexibly. Wisdom. So if I'm earning and I've all I remember, I got probably my first writing job in advertising on this is the answer to a question that the creative director asked me. He was like, no, what motivates you? And I said, just want to become a better writer.

[00:16:15] That's always motivated me if I'm learning. And it doesn't necessarily matter what I'm learning about because everything is relevant. So, you know, as I'm learning from writing Fiction now everything is relevant. Like everything is an ingredient is something that you will use later on. Um, if I'm learning, I'm happy and if I'm growing, I'm happy.

[00:16:38] So if I'm, if through the journey, through the relationships in the work, um, through, you know, the, you know, the people that I'm coming into contact with through a job, if I am growing personally, I am happy and I'm happy and I will stay in a role. And I will really get all [00:17:00] the juice from it, but I'm also really good at being like, do you know what, like I have taken all that I can from this role and it's time for me to go, you know, to go to move on, to find the next thing.

[00:17:16] And I've always had the confidence that, that next thing is out there and that I'll be fine. And I can really see that. Yeah, I think that's the key for me. That's the key. To Work Joy, which is like, find something that's aligned with who you are with, who you're with what your values are. Don't be afraid to jump.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:17:35] Yeah. And like have that bravery and that courage to just do what you think, you know, you really deeply feel as the right thing to do at that time and, and trust that there are other things out there and exciting things and more joy to be had. I'm really interested in this idea about. Making sure that you really understand your own values and that's sometimes a hard thing for people to really articulate or [00:18:00] to understand themselves, but it sounds like you got two or three that really drive almost everything that you do.

[00:18:07] **Lizzy Nichol:** [00:18:07] Yeah, absolutely. I completely agree with you. I think it's absolutely fundamental to understand the things that are really important to you, because then that becomes a lens through which you make your life choices and you make your work choices. You know, you could be sitting in an interview and you know what to ask.

[00:18:32] You could, it's a way it helps you reflect on relationships on professional relationships on the work that you're doing within a role. I think it just gives you this touchstone that you can always come back to for me, it's like, is this, do I feel like I have freedom? Is this. Am I learning, am I getting that wisdom?

[00:18:58] Am I growing? If not something's out of kilter and that might not mean leave. You know, it might not mean leave. It might mean talk to your boss. It might mean make a sideways step within an organization. I know so many people sure you do that. I've been working within organizations for a long time, but actually they have carved out a niche role for themselves.

[00:19:21] That fulfills those values. It doesn't always mean making this giant leap. You can kind of, you know, you can use them to sort of sidewind and explore things. But that self knowledge is to me, absolutely critical. And I would say, you know, I did it with a coach and I'm so glad that I did. And I would just want to make the point that actually having somebody else to work with to reflect back to you, to give you those exercises.

[00:19:57] I think. I think it's a great way to get it done. I've been, I was, I've been working actually the person that I'm a freelance project that I'm doing at the moment, it's actually for a leadership coach. And she talks about this a lot, which is that you can learn a lot from books. So I, and I certainly

like, I call it going to the books, which is like, if I need to know something about something, I buy a book about it and I read a book about it, but how many.

[00:20:25] How many of us don't actually take action. Do we read the book, push it to a side. Go. That was interesting. I'll think about it later. And we never actually take those actions. Whereas if you work with somebody and, you know, through conversation in context, um, Through experience. I think you can really drill down into what's important for you.

[00:20:51] So certainly doing it with somebody with a coach worked for me.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:20:56] Definitely that collaboration and the conversation versus just reading something. And I, you know, I'm a total book nerd, so I read and I love them all, but I also love to talk about the book and to have a conversation about what it really means and to understand what that means to me.

[00:21:12] And I, you know, for me, that happens in conversation and collaboration with others. So totally get the perspective about the coach. One of the other things I just want to pick up on what you said, because I really loved it is about your learning and the idea that everything is relevant. And how many of us kind of get ourselves into a really narrow position about, I need to learn about my subject or my topic or what I'm an expert about, or I need to go really deep into my professional.

[00:21:37] Learning versus really seeing everything that you do in work or out of work as a learning opportunity and as relevant to somewhere, even if it's not relevant right now, it might be relevant in the future.

[00:21:48] **Lizzy Nichol:** [00:21:48] Yes. So my favorite quote of all time, um, and it's something that my husband and I reflect back to each other a lot is Steve Jobs.

[00:21:59] And he said, you can never join the dots up forwards so you can never. I think people I've seen many people and I am certainly guilty of this is looking at my career and thinking, well, that kind of looks messy. I'm not sure, you know, I've done so many. Yes. I've always been a creative. I've always been a writer, but I've taken left-hand turns and right-hand turns and gone round roundabouts.

[00:22:25] And it hasn't been this. You know, this step-by-step process this step by step moving up a ladder that certainly a lot of my friends have done and I look at them and I think I wouldn't necessarily want to have done that because I don't think it's right for me, but yet there's a perfectionist side of me that wishes I have to quieten her down a lot.

[00:22:46] The kind of wishes that I had. I, you know, I do that. I had this sort of vision in front of me, this ladder that I was climbing. But the process of writing a book has been fascinating because thing I have brought topics, I've brought skills from everything that I have done from so many inspirational leaders that I've worked with from, you know, jobs that I've had.

[00:23:21] I brought them into this piece of fiction, this piece of art that I am making essentially it's my moment of looking back at all of those dots that I couldn't join up forwards, you know, from my 22 year old self, you know, working in my first job, a travel company as a copywriter and a travel company, I could never have predicted that 15 years later, I would be writing a book and in that

would be my passion for travel. I thought it was something that I'd left behind. So I think it's incredibly empowering to look back at your journey and say, do you know what, even though I was anxious about it, Even though it didn't necessarily seem to make sense. I get it now. I needed all of that.

[00:24:14] I needed to work for that terrible boss I needed to. I mean, we've all been there. Haven't we? I needed to work. I needed to, for me, like spend, you know, I spent probably six months of my life writing about trucks. Like Volvo trucks, like as a copywriter, you write about you end up, you know, and I did the same with like credit cards and mortgages.

[00:24:39] Um, you don't always write about things that are really glamorous. Like, yes, I worked, I was a copywriter for like Nike and that was really fun. I also spent the first job in advertising that had was a thinning hair products. Like no joke. It was a thinning hair products, but all of it is useful somewhere.

[00:24:59] You know, and I love this looking back and going, do you know what, like here's this nugget that I mind when I was 25 years old and now suddenly it makes sense. And now, now, you know, I understand why I needed to learn to manage a hundred page copy documents because here I am now structuring and being really confident in.

[00:25:24] Having in doing, you know, keeping a narrative going or managing a hundred pages of fiction or everything that I've learned has all somehow being relevant. Um, I don't think that's, I think that's amazing. Like I'm so grateful to be able to, to be able to say that. And I think it's something that I encourage a lot of people to do, actually, which is, join the dots up backwards.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:25:57] Yeah. Join the dots backwards. And I'm really interested in this idea about careers. Cause I talked to a lot of people about careers, either in workshops or on one-to-one coaching and things like that. And I often say to people that. Most people's careers look more like a bit of what spaghetti thrown a wall than they do a nice, neat and tidy ladder.

[00:26:18] And I think in some ways, when we're younger, we're all sold this vision, somehow that it, you go on and then nice and neat and tidy. And it's very structured progression. And, but I don't think the world works like that anymore. I don't think careers work like that. I'm not sure they really ever did for many people.

[00:26:35] I think there were some more industries that do, but it's a really interesting thing. And, um, I'm really interested in this idea of actually work as itself. Like if we think about work and joy together, as in Work Joy is that work is different to how it used to be. And we can all think of work in different ways.

[00:26:51] And I'd be interested in knowing like, how do you in your world when you have done and do so many different things, what do you define as work?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:26:59] I'm just so glad you asked this question because it's something that I, something that's been on my mind for a long time. So I think that for many of us, that is the work that we do on a day-to-day basis, the nine to five, or that, you know, the eight to six, or they've gone that, you know, the work that you do and you get paid to do.



[00:27:20] And then that is. Our life's work, then there's your life's work. That is the work that you are kind of commissioned to do on a much higher, broader level. And I hope you don't mind if I get a little bit spiritual here for a minute, like I am after all. So a lot of my approach to life and work comes from my beliefs.

[00:27:53] Say for instance, you know, when I talk about, you know, not being scared of the next step, that's because I have this inherent belief that I will always be all right. And that I am supported. Um, that's a spiritual belief for me and it's the same with, I believe that we are all here. We're here to grow and evolve, but we're also here to contribute to this ongoing creative project that is humanity.

[00:28:19] And we all, in that sense have a job to do. We all have a contribution to make. And I, for me, you can look at work as, you know, what pays your salary, um, or what pays your bills. But you can also look at work in that this much. This much more profound sense. And I think, especially if you're in a situation where, you know, your nine to five is not bringing you the kind of joy, the kind of fulfillment that you're looking for in your life.

[00:28:55] A really powerful thing to do it could, is to expand outwards to think. Well, actually what's my life work. It could be something completely different and crucially, it could be something that you don't, or you never get paid for. So it's the thing that you get caught that you are called to do, that you have to do.

[00:29:16] I've known that I wanted to write a book since I was a teenager. And it's so funny about it. Cause I remember sitting down, um, My dad had, uh, must have been a teenager. My dad had a friend who worked at a magazine. He was a journalist and we just got chatting. And I said, you know, I really, I really want to write a book.

[00:29:36] And he don't really know where it came from. And he was saying, he was really humoring me, like it all credit to him, but he was like, you know, you might need a little bit more life experience first. And then I was like, yeah, you know what? Yeah, I probably do need a little bit more life experience first and.

[00:29:50] I've now gone and got like 20 years of life experience. And now is the time for me to write my book and to make that piece of art and to put all my experience into that. It took me 20 years, but that's fine because I always had this calling I'm like always knew it was there and actually lots of ideas for books have.

[00:30:14] And for stories have always kind of floated up for me and then sort of gone away. But this is the one that I really harnessed. So, you know, I have this lovely example as well. I used to work for creative director years ago, who took a year off of work to learn basket weaving. And I worked at that very first travel company.

[00:30:35] I worked for, I worked with a woman who now. Makes her living, making mobiles for a living. And she actually makes a living from that. And I just, I so admire people who. Have that courage or does he really that audacity to go? This is my work. This might not be, what's going to pay my bills, but this is my work.



[00:31:01] This is my joy. This is what lights me up. And they find a way to follow that. And it couldn't, it might not be, you know, basket weaving or mobile making. It could be, it could be parenting, you know, I think increasingly for people and I certainly follow people for whom that their life's work is activism.

[00:31:18] And I think we're seeing that a lot more at the moment. It could be teaching something that's important to you. It doesn't necessarily matter what it is. I think that's the piece of Work Joy. That we do need to get, and I think also can go a long way towards compensating or helping us to live with a 9-5 that perhaps isn't lighting us up, you know, always that's the dream.

[00:31:48] Fantastic. You know, some people have really, really lucky, you know, I've really been really lucky and you have to do work that. I love, even though I haven't always loved every tiny [00:32:00] little bit of it, but having this bigger sense of what am I here to do, that's really the root of Work Joy for me, I think.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:32:09] Yeah. And with that understanding that not everyone can. Make the, not nine to five happen. Not everyone can have that freedom and not every job is always going to be filled with the joy that you would like, not every job can pay your mortgage if you have loads of passion for it. And so it's, I, I I'm really into the idea that work is more than just.

[00:32:31] What we get paid for. It goes beyond that, into whether you're in the spiritual zone, like kind of not sure what life's purpose and what are you here to do, or whether it's about finding something that you really brings you joy outside of work, whether that's volunteering or activism, or as you say, parenting, or, you know, a hobby that you do that makes things happen because work is a part of human nature.

[00:32:53] It's something that we all do. And actually, when you look at the science behind work, it gives you. So much in your day-to-day life about, you know, purpose and meaning and all different kinds of things. But sometimes I job can't give us all the joy that we want and it's beyond the actual job.

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:33:09] And nor should we always ask it to, I don't think, you know, there are always those unicorns out there who, for whom, for whom there.

[00:33:24] The work that pays their bills, pays their salary and their life's purpose is one in the same thing. Um, but I do think that sometimes we do have to be realistic and it's also, it's also, it might be the case that something is for now and later you always have in your eyes, in your mind that later you can pursue this.

[00:33:48] Thing, you know, it might, especially when you have kids, you know, cause I have, I have a two year old and another one on the way. Sometimes you do have to submit to practicality [00:34:00] and to say, you know what, like I'm gonna do the Excel spreadsheets. I'm going to do the management meetings. This is work right now, but always have and feed that little part of you that knows.

[00:34:16] That it's not always going to be this way. I always find that a hugely powerful thought, you know, something just because something is for now doesn't necessarily mean that it's forever and

you can continue in the tiniest, tiniest, tiniest ways to feed this part of you. That is, that is about something bigger.

[00:34:37] That is about your life's work while continuing to show up to your nine to five. Every day and pay the bills because perhaps that's just the way that it has to be right now in the, you know, the period of your life that you're in right now.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:34:52] Definitely. I think that there's something there isn't there about it.

[00:34:55] You can still do something, even if it's tiny, even if it's small, that leads towards something bigger potentially in the future. And on the other side of it, I also think that even people who are living in their passion and being able to work in their passion and kind of deliver with that, there's still stuff at work that might annoy you.

[00:35:13] They're still going to be the stump that doesn't bring you joy because you know, they're still there. You know, there's still meetings and there's still conversations that you're not enjoying. And there's still administration that you might not enjoy or finances or some parts of your job. I don't think anybody has 100% Work Joy, but I think what we can all do is to find a ways to get more of it and to maybe sometimes minimize the stuff that doesn't give us the word joy that gives us the work gloomies, you know, the stuff that just.

[00:35:38] You know, winds us up. Tell me a little bit more about, um, you and in your world and in your life, how you manage to create the right habits and the right focus to keep your joy at the right level. What are those things that you do? What are your little tips and tricks for people?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:35:55] This is a really interesting question.

[00:35:57] I'm very interested in habits and disciplines and behaviors having come from having diverted into wellbeing, because I think my reflection would really be that the same things or the same approach that keeps you healthy and your body humming is the same or the sorts of the same. It's the same approach that.

[00:36:27] Keeps your work, joy, you know, bubbling. So it is really all about the little things. So yeah, actually yoga has taught me a huge amount because in yoga, we talk about having a practice. You don't yoga. Isn't a, you know, it's not a sport, it's not a game we know as yogis and anybody that does yoga, that's listening well, understand that you don't do yoga to be better at yoga.

[00:36:54] You do. Yoga for its own sake. And then, you know, just as in that Steve Jobs kind of scenario, you are then able to look back and go, actually, that has fed me in so many different ways, but you sit on your mat every day or every two days or every three weeks or every week you do it because it's your practice and you do it for the sake of doing it.

[00:37:23] And. You're not always looking for those rewards. And so the idea of having a practice, whether that is a physical practice, whether it's a wellbeing practice, whether it's a creative practice, whether it's a Work Joy practice is so important. It's I know I'm such an advocate of like single right actions done consistently over time.

[00:37:49] My husband always has his bonkers. I haven't forgotten it, but he has this bonkers quote. He calls it, eating your elephant with a spoon, um, which is, I don't know where it's come from, but I

kind of love it, which is like, I don't know why it's an elephant and why it's a spoon, but the idea is that you, you have this huge thing and you're just taking little, tiny spoonfuls every day.

[00:38:11] And so for me, I'm actually given that, you know, I have. You know, I have a toddler I'm pregnant. My practice has been at points in my life it has been incredibly disciplined and it's been incredibly in depth. So I have compares of my life where I've done the inspirational reading every day. I've had my hot lemon water every single morning.

[00:38:37] I've done my yoga practice. I done my, you know, I don't love meditation, but a lot pranayama, I love breathing. I've done that every single day. I've done the journaling every day. I mean, God, this stuff takes like hours and sometimes I have been able to do it. And right now I'm in a period where. I can't, I don't have the time or the capacity or the energy, frankly, but it's about scaling that [00:39:00] back and doing whatever, like whatever you can, and there are, there were so many things that I think I do, and I don't necessarily even know now that I'm doing them, that it is a wellbeing practice or that it is a creative practice.

[00:39:17] Like. You know, we were talking earlier about, you know, making notes for my book. You know, even though I'm in a period now of research, I living with I'm living with my characters all of the time. It's like they're in suspended animation, and I'm always. Going about my life hearing, sorry, anything on a podcast, reading something in a book, making a note of it, making a note of a change that I want to make.

[00:39:42] So that's kind of become a practice for me at the moment. I still have, um, you know, I'm getting like heavier with my pregnancy and I'm kind of mobile now, but I still we'll have like a physical practice that helps too. Round me and put me back together. This is something that we've also talked about, Beth, which is that dog walking is a huge practice for me.

[00:40:05] And that is a wellbeing practice. It's a mental health practice. It's a physical practice. It's also a creative practice for me because I've had, you know, We got a rescue dog, um, uh, four or five years ago now and dog walking is like, quite honestly, it's like the cornerstone of my day if I get to that evening and I think, oh, I just feel a bit off.

[00:40:33] Oh, I haven't gone outside and I haven't walked and I haven't connected with nature and I haven't seen him madly happy like chasing squirrels like dogs. There's so much they give you just by dragging you outside into nature. That's a huge thing for me and my walks are when I talk through things in my mind, when I create.

[00:40:58] Scenes. [00:41:00] Um, I, you know, I run through kind of conversations. It's, it's a walking meditation in a sense. So that's always been a very strong practice for me. So I think what I'm trying to say in summary is that it doesn't, it doesn't matter how small those actions are. They don't also necessarily have to be daily, but always have.

[00:41:21] Always have your finger on your projects always have, you know, that it's almost like a frequency be tuned in to, you know, to the frequency of Work Joy or the frequency of wellbeing. Do these like tiny, tiny, tiny things and understand that it's okay. That sometimes. They're going to trail off. They might just be one action a day.

[00:41:46] They might be so tiny that they're barely there at all. And other times you might find it, you have the space and the freedom for them to really come to the foreground. And that might be incredibly sort of fertile [00:42:00] period for you. Things will ebb and flow and that's fine, but know what your practices know, what your pronoun is.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:42:07] And I too love the dog walk and I'm completely dog obsessed. We got our puppy and if I could ever be as happy as my dog is seeing a leaf blowing in the wind, I think I would have achieved complete like life joy. And that would be it for me. I'd be done so yeah, the, the happiness, but also that, that.

[00:42:29] Going for a walk, getting outside, no matter what the weather we're going outside, we're making things happen. We're thinking we're talking, we're walking, you know, there's so much greatness to that. And I also, you know, the idea that you don't have to do these things every day, there will be seasons in your life where you do more, there'll be seasons where you do last.

[00:42:45] There might be seasons where you have more joy and you have less joy. And how do you just keep, keep some of those things bubbling over as you go through. Really amazing. Thanks, Lizzy. And what I've got now is we, um, come to the last stage of the podcast is I've got some quick fire questions for you. So what comes off the top of your head?

[00:43:02] When I ask you these questions? Number one, what is always guaranteed to bring you some Work Joy?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:43:10] So I think there's actually a two of these. The first one is having been a creative. I love, I love that period where everybody is in a room together. Like it's a very advertising, very digital thing where a project kicks off, they shut you all in a room or you're pitching, they shut you all in a room like a boardroom.

[00:43:33] They book it out for like two weeks solid. They give you all the post-its and all the Sharpies. I know. This is going to speak to you deep. Um, and they give you the flip charts and you're just doing, you're throwing ideas around and eating pizza and drinking, warm beer at 11 o'clock at night. I love that.

[00:43:53] I love that period, but equally because I'm such a light, light and shade person, what also brings me work [00:44:00] joy. I have a lovely study because I've worked. I've worked from home for such a long time. Like I made myself a beautiful workspace. I love. Looking outside on a beautiful day, doing my work, looking out the window, you know, my dog Bruce is like snoring next to me.

[00:44:17] And I just think this is it like this is it. I nothing makes me happier than that. Also to be doing my work in the world, in my space on a glorious day or even, you know, when it's like pelting down with rain outside. You know, that's what I think I'm doing. Okay.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:44:39] In fact, the two extremes, isn't it it's like that real fast collaboration really in it deeply.

[00:44:43] And you know, that anything that involves a post-it note, a flip chart on a Sharpie would always make me happy, but also creating that maybe more quiet, more. Considered space where you can be thinking deeply and be in the flow.

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:44:55] And also that comes from knowing yourself very well. So I, [00:45:00] I know that I have those two sides of my personality.

I'm an introvert. God, I love being like locked up, not talking to anybody for eight hours writing. Um, I, I just, I love it. I know that I thrive on that, but also even though it will be tiring for me in the long term, I love that the chat. You know, all the ideas that the working with other people in that way.

And I know I need both. Um, but, um, job that it comes from self that self knowledge, a job that only had one and not the other, I would be, it would exhaust me.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:45:34] would exhaust me. Yeah. So again, knowing yourself, understanding yourself, what is it that works for you and not thinking that you have to do one or the other, so it's not black and white.

[00:45:43] It's actually, I need a combination of these things to make him feel it. Yeah. Great. Um, question two for me, what book are you currently reading?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:45:51] reading? Uh, so I'm one of those people that. Reads like several books at one point, I've done it since I was a child. I've always been a massive bookworm and always had a pile of books on the gate.

So I'm reading books for, I'm reading a book at the moment for, um, research for my books. I'm reading white moguls by William, Darren Paul, about the, um, India about India, basically in the 17th and 18th and 19th century and the British presence in India, which is really, um, really interesting.

I usually have a parenting book on the go. Um, I do, I love to. I love the theory of things. So I'm reading 15 minute parenting by Joanna watching. Like I love to get ideas from books. I just love it. So, and I'm also, I'm always usually listening to something on audio as well. And that's something that I listen to in the car and I need it to be a little bit more lighthearted.

[00:46:52] And so just finished, Quite by Claudia Winkelman, a huge fan of strictly. So I love Claudie Winkelman and, and I've just finished her kind of, it's not really a memoir. It's more like it's non-fiction, but I really enjoyed that. I went for a long time, not reading any fiction because I thought while I was writing.

[00:47:15] Firstly, I didn't want to get disillusioned. I didn't want to read like these incredible novels, but I read a lot of, feminist fiction, and novels by women. And I, I didn't want to read something and think, I don't even know why I'm bothering, so I didn't read any fiction for a long time. Um, but now I'm sort of in a period of research, I have allowed myself to read a little bit of fiction and I just finished a book called The Water Cure by Sophie Macintosh.

[00:47:44] I'll also love a feminist dystopia as well. I know it sounds really niche, but that's where I, that's where I sent him my fiction reading. And yeah, I'd really recommend that. So yeah, I've got several things on the go.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:47:57] Brilliant. And I also do that thing where I'm reading, like something work related.

[00:48:02] I might be reading something fictional and I also love to listen to things. And it's really interesting cause I stopped doing that for a while because I used to always listen when I was traveling. And do you see obviously lockdown and the whole world changing in 2020, I've hardly been in the car or on a train or done anything in that zone.

[00:48:19] And I stopped and then I realized actually, I that gives me so much joy, like listening to something on audible or doing a podcast and I completely stopped it. And I started doing it again this week and I've had loads of more joy. So it's definitely worth maybe mixing up how you think about and different

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:48:36] books, different books for different times.

[00:48:38] Like say, yeah, like you say, listening to an audio book or listening to podcasts and things. I am exactly the same. That's for traveling for me sometimes when I'm cooking, I'll have something, um, I'll have, I'll have something on the radio what an old word. Um, I have something like a podcast on or something on audible.

And also when I go to bed at night, I don't want to read anything too serious. Yeah. So that's not the time when I would read a book about parenting that's when I like to read fiction. Um, and also, I mean, that's proven fiction helps us fall asleep at night. Non-fiction does exactly the opposite. So it feels very natural to me to read fiction in the evening.

[00:49:18] If I'm reading non-fiction I need to somehow work that into my day because otherwise. Otherwise, I won't get through nonfiction books. So that's something that I might read while I'm like do 15 minutes while I'm having a cup of tea sometimes, you know, in the middle of the day. So, I mean,

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:49:40] I feel like we sound like total, total nerds, but I'm really,

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:49:44] I don't mind it though.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:49:47] I love being a nerd. I liked being a geek. I'm happy with it. Next question from me, um, what's the best or most useful piece of advice you've ever had?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:49:56] The one I always come back to is from my dad. I don't know that he would ever actually remember telling me this, or it would have the significance for him than it does for me, but he always says vote with your feet.

[00:50:14] And I think as we were talking about at the beginning of this conversation, clearly really taken that to heart. If something isn't working for me, you know, you're not, there was a meme going round to ages ago, which is that if you're not in a situation that is working for you move, you are not a tree. You know, you are not rooted in the ground.

[00:50:38] You can decide where you go. So yeah, he always said vote with your feet and I've used it. To leave or I did certainly when I was a teenager, I used it to leave terrible, terrible, uh, waitressing jobs, terrible waitressing jobs. So yeah, I've never been scared to do that.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:50:58] Brilliant what I'd love now, before we finish off is something super practical, a bit of advice for our listeners, something that they could go and do now do tomorrow, do the next day to give them some more Work Joy, what would it be and why?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:51:14] So I think we've already touched on this, which is, I think it's just. Everything for me, the way that you create physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, the way you nurture your work or your creativity is to find that single smallest action. It's a real, I know you must recognize it because it's really a coaching mechanism, which is that if you see a coaching client and after two weeks, they haven't managed to you know, put into action. Something that you'd agreed on. It's not because the action is wrong. It's because the action is too big. You have to scale it back, back, back, back, back until you find it could even be the tiniest, the first part of an action. Something that you can do daily that grows into a practice because I always come back to, you know, We do this crazy thing collectively on like January the second, which is like, right, we're all set.

[00:52:17] We're all going to get healthy. Here comes the gym, membership the dry January, the diet, and then buy the first week of February? It's like, we can barely even remember the motivation behind doing that. And there we are, you know, sitting on our sofa in our, with easy, you know, eating cake again, um, because we try to do everything at once and I think.

[00:52:37] The key to me for chain of change is you have to fall in love with what you're doing. You have to fall in love with what you're making with, you know, what you're creating with the changes with the way that you're feeling in your body. As you make wellbeing changes, you have to fall in love with it. And that takes time starting from the very, tiniest, very tiniest little action know as working with, um, health coaching clients, you know, we would always start as I mentioned, the warm water with lemon at the beginning, you know, as soon as you wake up in the morning, because that is at least you've done that one thing, you know, no matter, no matter how your day goes sideways, at least you did that one thing for your wellbeing, that actually has a knock-on effect.

[00:53:27] Throughout your entire day. And it could be, you know, you wake up five minutes before the kids and you do a meditate like a really quick, you know, meditation and meditation apps are amazing. Um, you know, it could be that you do a tiny bit of inspirational. Reading. It could be that you get up before the kids, like, and you have a hot shower without some tiny on the door trying to come and trying to break in, like find your one thing every day, do it, practice it, fall in love with it.

[00:53:58] And then things just take on a life of their own. We don't have, when we do that with don't have to push or force. Things just situations, projects, relationships. Well-being it just unfolds naturally.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:54:17] Great. I love that the, you know, the smallest thing is usually the thing that you can achieve. Isn't it? And then you, you feel good and you can make it happen.

[00:54:22] Whereas when we set our goals too big, or we think that everything needs to be perfect, we just end up with this idea that we've failed and that we aren't good enough at it. Or we haven't tried hard enough when actually it just was never a realistic thing in the first place. We didn't give it enough.



[00:54:37] Space or time to grow or become what it needs to become. So I love that. And finally, before we finish off Lizzy, where can people find out more about you, about your philosophy, about what you're up to?

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:54:49] Well, do you know what I'm a little bit of a. Uh, I've never felt that comfortable in the digital space.

I'm still negotiating my relationship with being online. I've had various websites. I just shut down my Facebook page after watching the social dilemma. Um, did you see that? Did you see the documentary, the social dilemma on Netflix?

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:55:11] No

**Lizzy Nichol:** [00:55:12] the first thing I did I was like, haven't been on Facebook for years anyway.

[00:55:15] And I was like, I don't know why I have this Facebook profile hanging around. Like I just need to kill it. So I'm, I'm no longer on Facebook, the place where I still, um, and I'm still, you know, ever so often posting is, um, Instagram and my handle is @all.that.heals. So all full stop, that full stop heals. And, you know, always have great, uh, great ambitions to work out how to do social media in a way that works for me.

[00:55:47] But right now I'm a little bit of an introvert about it. And also you can, my Ted talk, my TEDx talk selfish wins is still online. If you Google that Lizzy Nichol TEDx selfish wins.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:56:00] Brilliant. Thank you, Lizzy. And thank you so much for joining us today and for all of your fantastic advice for your sharing, your story, for thinking about how we can all go out there and get a bit more work, join our lives.

[00:56:11] And I think the real takeaway for me is that. Do something small and tiny and just see it as something that might be useful in the future. We don't necessarily have to have an answer or know where it's going to end up and that, you know, everything is useful. Everything is part of your learning journey and really also to kind of explore.

[00:56:33] What your values are, and to use them as the decision making tool for what you do, how you do it when you do it. And decision-making so thank you so much, Lizzy we hopefully maybe get you on another podcast at some point in the future. I thank you for your time for your story and thank you everyone for listening.

[00:56:52] Thanks for having me. Thank you for listening to the Work Joy Jam with this week's guest Lizzy Nichol. I you always take so much from my conversations with Lizzy and have done over the last few years, there's so many little nuggets of amazingness in what she's saying, I thought I'd pull out a few and I really liked the idea that the same things or the same approach that keeps you healthy and it keeps your body humming is actually the same things that can keep your Work Joy bubbling. So that idea of what are those things and how can you help with your health and help with what joy all at the same time might be worth thinking about? I also love the advice that she came, comes back to, which is vote with your feet. If something isn't working, you're not a tree, you can move.

[00:57:37] Where you go, what great advice there and something that we should all remember. And I know for sure that Lizzy's advice around the taking a really small, tiny thing, the single smallest

action that you can and doing it daily until it turns into a practice until you learn to love into this, something that just is part of who you are.

[00:57:56] Makes such a big difference in how you can manage your health, but also how you can manage anything that you need to work on. So take it from me. I have taken the advice from Lizzy over a number of years now, and it has made a massive difference to me. So perhaps one for you to take away as well. Thanks for listening to the Work Joy Jam.

[00:58:15] Do, go and hear our other speakers. Tell us who else you might want to hear from, and we can reach out to them and see if they'll come on the podcast, you can find out more about us on our website at [createworkjoy.com](https://createworkjoy.com). And also we are on the Instagram app at Create Work Joy. We'd love for you to follow us.

[00:58:33] We'd love for you to tag us and to tell us what it is you're taking from the podcast, the actions you're doing, shows your photos, right. It would be great to, to hear from you. Thank you for listening. [00:59:00]