



## S1: E2 - Anna McNuff | Everyday Adventures

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**Beth Stallwood:** Welcome into this week's episode of the Work Joy Jam podcast. This week, I've been joined by the fantastic adventurer author, mischief maker, Anna McNuff, in a great conversation thinking about how we can all take some of the ideas and things that adventurous do into an everyday adventurous mindset and use that to help us create some at work joy.

Some of the things I really liked about this conversation is thinking about that curiosity, how do we keep that childlike interest? Around about the things that are going on around us. What are the stories that we're telling ourselves and all those stories true, or are they things that we've made up for ourselves when we don't match our own expectations or when things don't align with our own perceptions?

Also one of my favorite bits here is around how we all need some ripe bananas in our life. So it was great to talk to Anna. I hope you enjoy this episode.

Hello and welcome to the Work Joy Jam podcast. In this episode, we are joined by Anna McNuff, and she's going to introduce herself in a moment. So welcome Anna. Thank you very much for coming on the podcast and it'd be great. If you could intro yourself, maybe do a bit of your backstory and how you got to where you are today.

**Anna McNuff:** Yeah. So I'm an adventurer author, speaker mischief maker. Long story short is that I, I had a career as an elite athlete and then I went and worked in a corporate job. And in my late twenties, I turned to a life of adventure and I ended up going off on adventures and coming back and writing and speaking about those adventures.

And that is now how I make my living. And that is my jigsaw career.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:02:21] I love it. It's such a great introduction that your, your job title is, number one, made up by yourself and made up job titles are the best. But imagine the first bit of your job title when you were like a child, thinking that your first bit would be an adventurer.

**Anna McNuff:** I, know, I think I was supposed to be a music therapist. That is actually what the, and you went to career advisors at school and you had to be told what you were going to be doing. And

you filled in all these forms and you were supposed to be a music therapist. But, I do always say, especially when I'm talking to schools, I say to the kids, you know, the jobs that you're going to be doing, they haven't been invented yet or slash you're going to have to invent them yourself.

So I just find that that just blows my mind. And it's really exciting.

**Beth Stallwood:** Really exciting. And I love the idea of being an adventurer. We're going to talk a bit more about that. And obviously then speaking and writing about your adventures to inspire people. But before we go into the detail of the work joy, tell me more about mischief maker.

[00:03:18] Because for somebody like me, that sounds like a lot of fun.

**Anna McNuff:** Well, yeah, I just started putting it in there because I think I, I was, I was getting to that point where I was actually able to make a living from things that I enjoy doing and it wasn't having so much pressure and anxiety about the daily hustle of it.

And so I started thinking I to have some fun with this, and if I, if I'm the one defining my job description, then I just want to put in what I believe to be true. And I am just such a believer that's where there's mischief there's fun and we should all not behave in a childish way, but we can be more childlike in the way we approach things in terms of our curiosity and just the interest we have about the world around us.

And I think that gets a bit squashed sometimes. So I thought mischief maker just seemed to sum it up perfectly. And I hadn't heard anyone else with that as a job title. So I stole it.

**Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. I've never heard of anyone else with that job title. And I think it's really exciting and how true that often the things that excite us or give us some joy or make things fun. They get a bit squashed in the world of work sometimes don't they.

**Anna McNuff:** Massively, as you grow up, I think it's, I mean, it's, it's completely shown when you're in a meeting room, we have the people and you have a question pop into your head and I don't know about you, but I remember, certainly in the corporate world or in lots of situations, even now that the question pops into my head. And the second thing that pops into my head is that's a stupid question. Or someone's already asked that when the reality is they haven't. And quite often, when you actually pick up the courage to ask that question, there are a lot of other people in the room going, Oh, I'm so glad someone else that cause I was feeling really stupid cause it made no sense to me whatsoever.

It's especially when there's jargon being used. I'm sorry, what is that? I'm actually talking about what I actually talking about, or especially in a lot of my meetings, which involve. You know, you're talking to a client or you're hoping it's going to book you for something and they're there, they're talking about things and you're thinking, should I know about this?

Is this something I should be already have expertise in? And therefore I should understand that word they've just used. And so I try and make sure that if I don't understand that there's just no shame in going, do you know what? I've absolutely no idea what you've just said. Can you explain that to me in layman's terms?

And we'll go from there and then actually they enjoy it because they go, Oh, sorry. Of course. You know, I was in my little world. So I do think we lose that and then that's that, that sort of tendency to be like a child. And that's what I love when you do, when I do give talks to rooms full of children, they just don't care.

They will just ask the question because there's the question popped into their mind. Therefore it's going to come out their mouth no matter how appropriate or not that question is and I just think that's a wonderful thing to try and maintain.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:06:06] I love the idea. And obviously in the real world, we don't always want to be asking everything that pops into our head.

We do need to have some form of what I like to call a professional filter, because if I said everything that popped into my head all the time, I would be, there would be some effing and geffing thing that goes on, which wouldn't be appropriate and things like that. But it's about how do we have a professional filter, but without a big filter, without filtering too finely out, some of the things that could really bring us the joy or that could help us understand better or be more engaged with what's going on.

**Anna McNuff:** Yeah, I guess that's about practice, isn't it? Because you're absolutely right. I mean, if the things came out of adults mouths that came out for children's bouts that I've been to, you'd probably be like, that's not really, how is that relevant or things like, Oh, did I leave the oven on this morning when I left the house?

[00:06:53] Probably not relevant, but I think that's with practice. And I think it's a similar practice too. When as time's gone on, I've tried to become more assertive. So when someone says something or discusses an option and I'm actually not happy with it, or I'm not comfortable with it old Anna would have just gone. Yeah. Yeah. That's great. Fantastic. When really inside I'm going, no, I'm not comfortable with that. You know, I, that's not going to work for me. And so I've tried to get better at catching that moment. And I think that's filter for asking the right questions is a very similar thing. You've got to be able to just catch it really quickly and go, I have a question. Do I really need to know this thing? If I do, I'm going to ask if the only thing stopping me asking. Is because I think it's a silly question then. That's not a valid reason. Just take that out. So I guess there's a sort of a four-stage process that happens really quickly in your brain, but I think it does take it's like training a muscle, isn't it?

[00:07:50] It just takes practice. But I think the major thing is if you, if you want to know something, just ask.

**Beth Stallwood:** Definitely. And the more people ask, the more people are aware of what's going on or how they come across or what information is missing or how much jargon people use and understanding and engaging people.

[00:08:08] So definitely. So tell me a bit more about in your world and from what you've been doing. Adventuring speaking, talking to kids, authoring, lots of books in your world. What are the things that you think people can do to get more joy in their work. To get the work joy factor going.

**Anna McNuff:** [00:08:30] Good, really good question.

So last year I started, I started actually mapping this on, in physical form on paper and every day I've got this, I have this journal where at the start of the day, I'd write down what are the, what are the three things that I want to do today? Like, what are my top three priorities? Because I think if you've got more than three.

[00:08:51] They're not going to happen. and I used to have to do lists in notebooks, but now I have to do lists on post-it notes because if it can't fit on that post-it note, it is not happening. Does that in that day or in that week. So, I, I, but I started really interesting thing. I started tracking what I'd set out to do that day and then how I actually ended up.

Spending now as of that day, and then I would go back and I would highlight the things that I enjoyed or that were slash on track with what I wanted to be doing. And then a different color. I would highlight the things that I'd felt like were a complete waste of time, even though they needed doing, or they were things that I could have actually outsourced or got someone else to do because either it's not my area of expertise or I really just absolutely despise doing it. and it was really interesting. I did it for a period of three months and watching there were patterns that started to emerge and I found that a really useful process now, of course, there are things we have to do that we don't always want to do you know, filling in forms and paying taxes and all of that. But wherever possible, I just keep asking myself the question, can someone else do this? Or are they better qualified to do it? Is it worth me paying a freelancer for them to do it? Because that investment of money, actually, my time is better spent.

I always measure it against, I could have written a chapter of a book in the space of two hours versus I spent two hours trying to work out how to update this thing on my website, which would have taken someone else 20 minutes, you know? So I guess writing it down was a really big process for me and, and looking at it and going well, how I'm actually, how am I spending my days and what are the things I enjoy doing and what the things I don't enjoy doing.

And then seeing if there's any way I can take out the things that I don't enjoy doing, it sounds simple. Doesn't it?

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:10:37] Yeah, it does. And it's, it's really interesting cause it's one of the first activities we do on the work joy coaching program to just track, just, just find out what is giving you joy, what isn't, what's going on for you, how you're feeling about stuff.

Because so often I think we walk through life just unconscious of all of these things. Apart from our mood. So we kind of have to say, I'm in a bad mood or I'm a good mood, but never actually really understanding why or what are the factors of major in a good mood. And what are the factors that have really kind of got you down and are you overplaying or underplaying some of those things.

[00:11:08] And I love your idea there that, you know, you can outsource the stuff that, you know, isn't something that you enjoy or something that you're good at, but there is still, and this is one of the big things I talked to. A lot of people about is there is still, even if you like, you are an adventure, that is your job title.

[00:11:23] You get to write books and go on adventures and do talks and all the exciting stuff on paper your job is awesome. Right?

[00:11:34] You still have to do the adulting stuff. Don't you of like organizing yourself and paying taxes and there's still going to be some stuff in your world. Although your job as a whole is brilliant and awesome. And you've created this life with your work for yourself. There is still some stuff that isn't going to bring you joy within that.

**Anna McNuff:** A hundred percent and so classic on the tax return. So one of the things about running being a limited company is of course you have to do your own tax returns. And, even though I have an accountant that helps me, but you still have to submit all that information. And my last adventure where I was running from the Shetland islands to London last year, it got about three weeks out from my tax deadline. And so I was having to run during the day. You do all the social media, the adventure, and then no one of course knew on Instagram or whoever was following, but I was then spending like three hours in the evening trying to get my tax return completed while I'm on this adventure.

[00:12:29] I was just to hell on earth. And that was my fault. I'll get it sorted before I left. Of course. But you also, right. I think you've got a take with a pinch of salt. Anything that you see if someone has this perfect, beautiful looking career that looks like it's all fun. There is always so much hard work and drudgery going on behind the scenes.

[00:12:52] And there is certainly, I mean, being an adventurer is. That is the title, but it is misleading because really you actually make your money from speaking, writing, and brand partnerships. And all of that requires you being sat at a laptop and being on email or being on or phone or being, you know, at events.

[00:13:10] When we were having in-person events. So, yes, you're so right there is, there is the reality versus perception. And for me, it's, it's always still worth it. I think that the moment it stops becoming worth it, the drudgery starts becoming worse. The, the fact that I can make my own hours and sometimes I work weekends, but sometimes I go for a bike ride on a Wednesday afternoon, you know, that's, that's when it'd be time to look at shifting the different direction, but for now it's worth it, but there a lot of drudgery too.

**Beth Stallwood:** But you're so right. Like, I don't think I'd see on your yeah. Instagram or your Twitter or wherever else, whatever social things people use. You wouldn't be sitting there saying, Oh, today I'm doing a three hours on my tax return. You'll be doing there. Here's my seven hours of running because that's what I do.

And that's what needs to be out there. We don't share that stuff. So our perception often as other people is that they have it better than us. But what we need to remember is that's all through a big filter. Isn't it?

**Anna McNuff:** Yes, massively curated. And the reality is, you know, I do try every now and then and put in a perception versus reality, but you can't do it too often because you'll bring your brand is the exciting stuff that is, you know, if you stopped, if you, if you made everything about what you had for breakfast and, the fact that you've got fill in some forms for the solicitor that day, like it's just not what people follow you for.

[00:14:30] You know, it's just not really the bag. So, but it is a fine line. So, and I'm always trying to. Just make key things as real, as possible to the point of like, I never wear makeup when I go in to do a school talk or if I'm, if I'm doing videos for kids and stuff like that. And I just think little things like that, I'm trying to go. This is reality. This is as it is as best I can. I

**Beth Stallwood:** love it. And talk to me a little bit more now about what made you think of being an adventurer and how do you start that as a career? Because it's not one that any careers advisor would tell you to do.

**Anna McNuff:** No, and it comes with an awful lot of, uncertainty and, and hustle and lying awake at night.

And wondering whether what you're doing is all a waste of time and you should just go back and get a normal job. and I guess I was reluctant at first. So when I started doing these adventures, I took a sabbatical from my corporate job. I don't hand in my notice and they said, well, how about we just give you eight months off and you come back to a paycheck.

And I thought, yes, please. Thank you very much.

[00:15:39] But again, that is an example of when you want to do something badly enough. And I thought, I don't know, I don't know where he's going. I don't care what happens after this, but I have to go and do this thing this big, I was riding a bike through every state of America. I thought I have to go and do it. And then the bonus of that was because all you have nothing to lose and I was leaving anyway. They said, well, do you want to come back? And they'd never given anyone a sabbatical that long before it wasn't in the policy. and so, it didn't last very long once I was back there, unfortunately, but and so at first I thought, right, this is the way my life's going to work. I'm going to do six months of adventuring. I'll then do contract marketing work for six months and I will, self-fund my ventures. And I'll just do that for the rest of my life. I'll be really happy. And the more adventures I did, the more it became apparent that that was where my true self was. And that was where I felt my most creative and my most fulfilled. And so the marketing work became survival work. And then it took me, I think, about six years of going backwards and forwards and taking contracts that were less and less in, in terms of, you know, three days a week, two days a week, one day a week until eventually after, after six years, I was able to say, do you know what I now make all of my living from the stories I've built up through adventure, but that was a long time.

**Beth Stallwood:** It's not a zero to hero situation as it, it's not an overnight success. It's it took years to get there.

**Anna McNuff:** Yeah. And there's most one dive out the window. I think that's, you know, for people, people, again, that's what people see. And also what they don't see is one of those, one of those trips I came back and I was absolutely like no money whatsoever.

[00:17:16] And then worse than that, I was living back with my parents. I couldn't. I then tried to get a job that would pay, just pay me in a marketing job. And then I couldn't get the marketing job because my CV was so bizarre because I done sort of four years of this, like stop starting. And, and I was like halfway there. And I just, at that point, I just, I had such a meltdown because I thought. Am I doing this wrong? What am I doing wrong? I'm working so hard. And the reality was I wasn't doing

anything wrong. I just kept doing the same stuff. And then it was just the, the, the financial side of things. They were sort of sort of six months to a year behind and they just needed to catch up.

If you see what I mean, all the effort I'd put in, just hadn't quite. [00:18:00] Made it there yet. And I think it was a phone call with my mum and she's the most risk averse woman on the planet. And, and, and she, and she said to me, crying on the phone from some cafe in Patagonia, I'm such a failure, I'm going to come back and I've got no money and what am I doing with my life. And she just said, she said, I think I said something like I'm not successful. And she said, you all success will, you just don't get paid for it yet. And I went. Oh, okay. And that was it. And she was so right. Literally six months after that, everything just started taking off because of all the effort, I'd put it over the year. So, yeah, of course, mum loves what I do now and she's very proud of me.

[00:18:39] And of course she thinks it's a wonderful idea, but, earlier on in their career. She, she wasn't quite so sure and convinced. So that was big news coming from her

**Beth Stallwood:** Great advice as well. Isn't it thinking about the idea that it just because you've planted the seeds now, the flowers aren't going to grow straight away.

You have to wait. And sometimes it's about the effort and the things you're putting into it and really committing to it and being, being on it that will make it happen versus expecting it all to come straight away.

**Anna McNuff:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think that's where a lot of people who try to make that leap from, from a traditional job to one that is more stable in terms of income and contracts and, uncertainty. I think some, some of these people, you know, they, it can be given up on too early, but at the same time, I've got a lot of friends who have tried to make that leap and they've just found the uncertainty of it too much. And so they've had to kind of backtrack and find a halfway house. And I think that's great too, because I think in that process, you learn what kind of person you are. And there's no, no point in loving what you do every day, but then going to bed at night and having panic attacks that you're not going to have a steady income. You know, I think you've got to find where you are on that spectrum of what you need to be able to feel comfortable and secure, but also fulfilled.

[00:20:02] And that's different for everyone. So anything goes wrong.

**Beth Stallwood:** Definitely. And let's not forget, some people love the traditional job, you know, the, you know, the standard, the, the, the process of it, all, all the things that you get, and it's just different horses for different courses. Isn't it?

**Anna McNuff:** Brilliant. Yeah. And I think that, that is definitely one thing that I will always say is if you, if you're in your, in your job and it is a, a normal nine to five and you love it.

Fantastic. I wished life would be so much simpler if I was one of those people, you know, and that's, and that's why I knew I had to leave my, my office job because everyone around me was so excited about what they were doing. And I wasn't, I'm like, something's wrong here. These people love being here every day.



And so I feel one of those people and you love it. Cracking. That's all, that's all you ever needed in life. And my siblings are those people, you know, I've got two brothers who on the wayward sister and they are an accountant and a project manager and they just loved their jobs, brilliant.

**Beth Stallwood:** Brilliant stuff. So tell me a little bit more on the side of, so thinking about people who are in a job where they work for themselves, or they work in a traditional job. Sense of adventure, I think is a really important thing, whatever that sense is. And however, big or small. So your sense of adventure is obviously massive because you're out there adventuring massive, big challenges, big projects cycling across all the States of America.

You know, running across the UK, all of the things that you've done, but how can. We think about a sense of adventure from within our working contexts, what are the things we might be able to think about that gives us more of an adventurous mindset, even if we're not fully full-time adventures, like you.

**Anna McNuff:** That's a really good question. I think it all comes down to the, how you define adventure and adventure. In my mind, isn't necessarily about the size or the scale or the length of it. Adventure is just stepping out of our front door and trying to have a new experience or look at something that you thought was familiar, but with a fresh set of eyes.

[00:22:08] And so this year is a great example of that because we've been confined a lot to the area around our home and our local area, which meant that suddenly the sphere for adventure is, has shrunk. And at first that felt like freedom have been taken away and then suddenly realized there were all these trails in the park opposite our house that I had never explored.

[00:22:30] And so I spent three months trying to run every different trail in there in that section of woods opposite the house. So. I think what people can take from an adventurous mindset is it's just about keeping that childlike curiosity for the world around you. And, and, and I always, my adventure is always start with, I couldn't possibly do that.

[00:22:50] And then it goes, I wonder if I could dot dot, and that can be applied to anything. Because you don't, you realize actually the, when you come up with an idea, the second set of thoughts that pile into your brain, you know, all the reasons why you shouldn't do it. And, but also in there, all these stories, we tell ourselves all these assumptions we've made of things that are true.

[00:23:08] That actually they're not the true they're, they're what we believe. And, you know, I mean, it's classic with things like saying, Oh, I'm no good at languages. That's not, not actually true. You could be good at languages if you wanted to. And so all these things that we tell ourselves, and for me, it was, Oh, I'm not a runner.

[00:23:27] And so I did one of my adventures to go, well, am I, maybe I could be a runner, maybe a runner. Isn't what I see on the front of a running magazine, or it's not Mo Farrow and the little skinny shorts on the telly go around the athletics track. You know, maybe a runner is someone who goes slowly and over mountains and each state and orange scones and drinks, lots of flat whites like, you know, so, I think it's about just trying to take that adventurous mindset, which is that curiosity of, I wonder what happens if I do that? Yes. And let's find out and go from there rather than actually stopping ourselves and telling ourselves we can't do it before we even give it a bash.



**Beth Stallwood:** It's so true though. When you said the, the idea that the second set of thoughts after the idea is usually here are 300 reasons why I can't do that.

You know, I think we can all probably relate to that as a consideration of what we do. It's like, Oh, I could try doing this. And you, you know, you say you're not a runner and I go, how could you ever thought you're not a runner. You run the length of the UK and I believe you did it without any shoes on.

**Anna McNuff:** Yeah, that's crazy. That's crazy. But, even now, so I feel like I am, even though I like to run, I always say I like to run, but I'm not a runner. And I think that's just because of this perception we have of runners and what that, what that, and there's this sort of othering isn't there, there's this Oh, that that person or that group of people are other to me.

[00:24:49] And I think, and I always remember when I was in a nine to five job that the directors and the CEOs and the people that were in positions of power above me, that they, they seemed other, but they must have this sort of seventh sense and they, they just know. And actually you realize it's it's years of experience and they're pretty much just like you and they've learned it all.

] So, yes. Yeah, the, the, the thoughts and the reasons not to do stuff, never stop. They never quiet down.

**Beth Stallwood:** So I'm sitting there thinking about, you on your, all your adventures and how easy this idea would be for other people to go, Oh, well, honor's just got this special scale or this special thing. And I'm not saying you haven't got special skills or special things within you that make you be able to be an adventure that I could never have.

But actually from what you're saying, it's more about just deciding to do it versus actually having something special that you are, you know, that you are other or different to everyone else.

**Anna McNuff:** Yeah. So a great example, actually, I've read a lot about recently is, and bear with me on this one, Beth, but cold water swimming.

[00:25:58] Okay. Cold water swimming. When you go into cold water, your body has this fight or flight response. All these things get released. You know, you've got endorphins and just all these quarters are flying around your body and your body is screaming. Get out of this. Water is freezing. What are you doing?

[00:26:16] You're not turning around and. Then ask you if you keep doing it, if you do it every few days, go into cold water. Actually you start controlling your breathing and you are relaxed, and you're almost very aware of your body's reaction to that because your body's screaming you to run the other direction, but you're overriding it with your brain and saying, it's fine.

[00:26:37] I know this is all good. You know, this calm is chill out and you find that you can stay in longer and longer. I was fascinated by this because I thought, well, maybe the effects are less than that. Maybe, maybe the fear, the physiological effects. When you go into that cold water, it was actually less than every time you go in.

[00:26:52] But the reality is it isn't actually, when you're going into cold water, the same amount of chemicals are rushing around your body, but it's your brain's response to it. And it's your brain. So

your brain then goes, I'm not stressed out by that anymore. I'm much more used to it. And I, that is the way I feel about these adventures that I've done is that I still feel those feelings and I still feel that moment of what on earth am I doing? And please kind of hole in the universe, just open up and swallow me up. So I don't have to go through with this, but I'm more used to it by now that I just go, well, hang on. I've been here before and it's okay.

[00:27:29] And so I think that it's just about practicing, practicing it. So rather than when you feel that rush of, Oh my gosh, I don't want to be doing this. And and lots of your, your body or your brain is screaming at you. That's a bad idea. And just give it up and stop that. Actually, if you just start overriding that even really, really slowly, the more you do it, the easier it becomes next time, even though the feelings are still there, if that makes sense.

**Beth Stallwood:** I love for us a really concrete example. And I'm sitting there thinking I did some cold water swimming this year, and I totally loved it. I love water and whatever version it comes in. And I felt like a whole real human being. It was like a really weird sensation. So totally get it from that. It is practice is repetition it's experience within that. Being able to manage your reaction to something versus go with what your brain is telling you, because our brains don't always tell us the truth.

**Anna McNuff:** [00:28:24] No, and it's fair. And it's a primal brain as well. Of course, I know. We're we are built to survive.

[00:28:28] Therefore we're built to catastrophize and look at what the worst. Possible scenario is to protect ourselves, but we don't, we don't live in a jungle with tigers chasing us anymore. Well, I don't anyway. I mean, you might, but some people do exactly. So it's just about trying to, I guess yeah, like you say, trade it.

**Beth Stallwood:** I need to do it more, but it was amazing the best bit about it was watching my husband on the side of the river. Look at me like I was insane. I've seen that look many times in our marriage, but never to this kind of level. And when I suggested that maybe he put his toe in, he was like, no, thank you.

**Anna McNuff:** You get so much bang for your buck though. You can be literally, I mean, I did, I bet you I'm in there for about two to three minutes and I come out and I feel awesome for four hours afterwards. That's it? But actually swimming, just cold water paddling.

**Beth Stallwood:** amazing. I don't really swim. I just kind of sit in order of how amazing it makes you feel.

[00:29:26] I think it's brilliant. Yeah. Right. Talk to me a little bit about your joy and, on your adventures or in what you're doing, what are the things that you've done that you've kind of felt that real high of the joy in your work?

**Anna McNuff:** Oh, I think I get a lot of physiological joy from so if I'm running up a mountain, gorgeous blue sky, my lungs are on fire.

My legs are burning, but the scenery around me is just phenomenal. And I am high as a kite on those moments. I am thinking this is amazing. Yeah. And you're just full of all these good things pumping

around your body. So I get a lot of joy from that process. Conversely there's a lot of times when that is not happening. So you have to really,

**Beth Stallwood:** the thing is they to get that level of joy, to be able to run up a mountain and do it, there's 1,000,001 steps before that, right there.

**Anna McNuff:** Absolutely. And there are the days when it's cold, it's miserable. It's where you can't see anything whatsoever. Your body's tired. You're hungry, run out of food, all of that going on. So, there's the physical elements that I love from adventuring that I just, I just get high as a kite, but that can also happen when I used to live in London.

[00:30:43] I'm running across Richmond park in London and I'm like, Oh my God, look at that dear woo. It doesn't have to be up a bouncing in New Zealand. and then I guess. Learn as time goes on. I love to tell the stories. So I get a lot of joy out of crafting a story, whether that's doing it to deliver in a talk or whether I'm actually just sitting down and putting it in a book.

[00:31:08] And normally there's a lot of overlap between the two things they sort of, if I've developed a story for a talk, it then ends up in a book or vice versa. I enjoy that process because it's very cathartic and it's almost like you're reliving the adventure. It's double whammy. You get to live it all over again and feel the things you felt and, and look at pictures and try and conjure up I guess just to, cause I'm trying to take the person that's reading or watching into that world with me, I'm trying to say, leave everything else behind, come with me into this place. And this is what you're seeing. This is what you're smelling and I get great joy out of that. And that means that when something happens, that's really cool that I think this is going to be an awesome story, but then get excited after it's happened as well. Cause I think now that is a story like I was in, I was in Chile and South America. And I got bitten by a dog, which was dreadful, but I remember having the foresight at the time to say to my friend, Faye is there's like blood pumping down my leg and I'm thinking about, I need to go and get a rabies shot, going, take a picture, take a picture.

A good story. If I survive. You know, beforehand, I would have been too frightened, but I thought, well, if you do make out of this particular predicament, you're in, as long as you know, you're not putting yourself in any more danger by recording it, then you need to record this because it's a good story.

[00:32:41] **Beth Stallwood:** [00:32:41] It's interesting as well. One thing that we talk about in the work joy theory of life is what I'm calling it at the moment is that one of the things you really need is a really good squad around you. That success enjoy very rarely happened in the things that you're doing, that you've done just on your own.

[00:32:57] So talk to me a little bit about when you adventure or before you adventure, after your adventure, who do you put around you? What's your squad that helps you to do the adventures?

**Anna McNuff:** Oh, that's a that's, that's a really good question because I, I wrote an article recently about this actually about findings.

[00:33:14] I called it, surround yourself with ripe bananas, because obviously, you know, if you want some fruit to ripen in a fruit bowl, you put it next to the right banana don't you? so is related to

running, but I was saying how grateful I was, because my family were a bit bonkers anyway. I mean, I've got two parents that went to the Olympics.

[00:33:35] I've got two brothers that are incredibly supportive of the bonkers slightly wayward sister and just roll their eyes and smile, and a very, very supportive. And I have a boyfriend who does similar things to me in terms of he does adventures and he gives talks about them. So I just became very aware how grateful I was of having those people around me, but also I guess in the journey of the last six to 10 years, I have had people. In my life or come into it, who aren't that positive voice. And sometimes, sometimes there's people there it can really hurt, especially if they're close to you because you know, it's, you, you value their opinion. So it's difficult not to take it on and to start doubting yourself, especially when you're in that I find it, the at the start of something new. You're very, your thoughts are very fragile that they're sort of, I describe it like a ball of threads. All my fears are in this thread ball and there's all these loose edges around the edge. And if someone pulls one of those threads, it's like the whole ball will just unravels.

[00:34:37] And then you'll just this mess of fears that your feet and parents are very good at doing this. I mean, like I said, my, my mum was quite nervous about when I was first starting on this journey in my new career. And, and she had a lot of her own fears about financial stability and stuff. So I guess as the years have gone on, I've just learned to focus less on the comments from the people that aren't supportive and just turn towards the ones that are and think unfortunately I can't change those opinions of those people. And actually the more time goes on, the more you realize when someone says something to you that isn't supportive and there isn't. They're not being your cheerleader. It's actually, it's a reflection of their own fear and not yours. And once you realize that you just go, Oh my gosh, that makes so much sense.

[00:35:23] That's what you're frightened about. Know what I'm frightened about. Thanks for that. But cool. I'll take it and move on.

**Beth Stallwood** Yeah. Like you don't have to. Copy. They're fair. They're fair. You're fair can be different to there. So I can totally imagine a situation where you're talking to someone who totally loves their corporate nine to five and the stability and all the things that gives them being very fearful of having no guaranteed income and wandering around the country with no shoes on that that is kind of part of how people experience things differently.

**Anna McNuff:** Oh, absolutely. And, and one of my jobs that I left, I had a really shocking [00:36:00] reaction from one of my superiors who I'd always loved and got on with really well, that they'd been at the company a very long time. And their reaction to me leaving was pretty, it was, it was very strong and, and, and not nicely worded.

[00:36:14] And I was just shocked, but what I realized was it because they, they been in that life for so long. perhaps there were elements of it they weren't happy with. And all of that had them come out on me and I'm like, you can't leave. How come you get to leave, you know, it was like that. And I was just shocked and I was young at the time, so I didn't really understand it, but looking back now, I can completely see what happens.

So yeah, it's tough. It's tough. I think if someone is offering you advice that you didn't necessarily all through, I think the biggest thing is to sit down and go, I'm only worried about that. Like me, am I actually worried about that? And if you're not then

**Beth Stallwood:** And I always think about this as well as that, You know, that, that question you asked earlier about like how it's going to be scary.

[00:36:56] You're going to have to push yourself out of your comfort zone is you might be a little bit worried about it, but you might also be really excited about it. And is your excitement outweighing your worry?

**Anna McNuff:** Yes. I always say if you feel 50% terrified, 50% excited, that is the right thing to be doing.

Absolutely a hundred percent. So both those elements in it,

**Beth Stallwood:** Because effectively, if you're not worried or terrified or a little bit scared, it's not really pushing you out of your comfort zone.

**Anna McNuff:** No, that's, that's exactly right. That's exactly right. And I think the more you do it, but the more you get used to it and the more you go, Oh, this feeling is this feeling means that there is something awesome.

On the other side of this, that, that feeling of wanting to turn and run in the opposite direction. Soon as you get that feeling. Great. Keep going

**Beth Stallwood:** Like feel the fear and keep

**Anna McNuff:** That's it that's exactly. And I talk about it in terms of a P a lot of people, I think, see that all those reasons, if not to do something in that fear and that, imposter syndrome, all that stuff, we have, they see it as a wall.

And actually it's not it's it's this doorway it's, it's. It could be pushed open. There's a secret, you know, like a library, a bookshelf in the wall, you just push a book and the door will open. You'll go through it, but it feels like it. It's a blocker and it's not it's actually got a hole in it some way you just need to find out to get through.

**Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. So you just have to keep working until you find the right way and keep going at it rather than just saying, Oh, I'll just turn back and go back to what I've always done and live in my comfort zone of okayness.

**Anna McNuff:** Exactly.

**Beth Stallwood:** Amazing. Thank you so much for sharing all those bits of insight and inspiration.

And, it's so lovely hearing about your adventures and how you get that adventure mindset. I do have some quickfire questions for you if you're happy to go for it. Right. First one, and maybe think about this one as, rather than the massive I'm at the high of my adventure. Think about it as more of a small everyday thing.

What's one small thing that will always guaranteed bring you some work joy.

**Anna McNuff:** That's a really good one, one small thing that always bring me some, when I feel like the best version of myself. That was it. And that can be, that could be on an adventure, but also for me, that can be, I'm sat at my laptop, writing about an adventure I've had on my happy place is between my brain and my fingertips.

So I think it's where do you feel like the best version of yourself in your day and your week? Go there.

**Beth Stallwood:** Brilliant. And that will tell you so much if you explore that right.

**Anna McNuff:** Absolutely. Yeah. And it takes a while to work that out. But you know, when you're behaving like a terrible human being, because I do that all the time.

So, you know, the opposite, you know, when you're just like, what is wrong with me? I'm so grumpy. Like why, so you just go find the opposite of that.

**Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. Find the bit where you just feel most, you like yourself, most inspired, most interested, most engaged, most focused. And that's probably where you should spend more time.

[00:39:54] Absolutely. Next one. what book are you currently reading?

**Anna McNuff:** [00:40:01] I'm reading one, actually. It's called, you're not listening by Kate Murphy it is all about listening and listening as a skill and how we are basically. We, we brought up, we live in a world where we're willing to talk a lot, but actually the amazing skill is in listening and how much you can gain from listening and, and really listening, not doing anything when you nod your head and go, but actually where you, where you try and hear what the person is saying, even if what they're saying, isn't necessarily the words that coming out of their mouth, you know, it's the story behind the story kind of thing.

Yeah. So I'm really, I really enjoyed that because I'm fascinated by the idea of listening properly. I think you can learn a lot, even though I talk a lot, but

**Beth Stallwood:** It's a big part of curiosity, isn't it actually listening and really getting to understand what's not being said as well as what is being said.

**Anna McNuff:** Absolutely. And the best stuff has happened on all of my ventures I've been on is when I'm sat at a dinner table with a host in a local area, you know, Midwestern America. That's taken me in. I know I just listened to their life story and I love it. And you just, you learn so much about the world by just sitting and being quiet.

**Beth Stallwood:** Excellent. Next question. what is the best or most useful bit of advice that someone's given you that you always come back to?

**Anna McNuff:** I'm going to quote my mum on this one. My mum is, I mean, I don't know if these are her exact words, but basically she is a, give it a bash person. She just gives it a bash and I'm talking Mum does all the DIY in the house. She can tile the bathroom. She can change a car engine. Anything. She doesn't know how to do. She will just go, Oh, I'll just get on YouTube. I'll just look it up.

I'll just give it a bash. We find what's the worst that can happen. And having grown up watching that such a strong influence on, on me that you never know, just, just give it a bash.

It doesn't matter. You don't have to be the best. You don't have it. Doesn't have to be perfect. Just get abashed and see where you go. Yeah, just

**Beth Stallwood:** Great advice and great to not just have been advised, but to be like a role model for what you're actually doing it. Not just saying to do it.

**Anna McNuff:** Massively. I mean, you should see in our household, so I'm putting flat pack furniture together. And even the way I use a screwdriver, Jamie, my boyfriend's going, how did you just do that? And it sounds silly, but just, I don't know. I've grown up watching my m use a screwdriver with a proper amount of force to get that screw into the thing. And I'm watching my boyfriend who I'm not for goodness sake Give me the screwdriver so that's it. That's it it's been such a huge role model in every sentence.

**Beth Stallwood:** Love it. That's think about really practical stuff now. So for our listeners, what is one super practical bit of advice for them on something that they could go and do now tomorrow, the next day, the next day, that would help them from your perspective, get more work joy.

**Anna McNuff:** I think it's about tracking and tracking what you do and what brings you joy? Because I don't think we approach our days with enough consciousness of that. Like you say, we just tumbled through our days and we think that things have to be done and we don't stop to question. Does this have to be done by me? Do I enjoy it? And so I think approaching your day with the. With that journalistic mindset and that curiosity, and really being aware of what does bring you joy and what doesn't. I think that's something that could really help

**Beth Stallwood:** Brilliant. And two more questions before we finish off the first one is what do you think your next adventure is going to be?

**Anna McNuff:** [00:43:42] Well, I have eight months worth of human little baby human in my belly as we speak. So my next adventure is being a mother, which is quite yeah. Quite hard work apparently. And yeah, I'm so exciting. So that again is a whole world of unknowns and are found. Even preparing for birth and life after birth as a whole, just a terrifying thing but that's it, you know, everything's going to change and we will definitely, we're still going to be adventuring. We're still going to have lifers and venturers, it's just going to be very different from now on. So, yeah, there was a big change happening around Christmas time.

**Beth Stallwood:** [00:44:23] How exciting many, many congratulations to you but do you know, give it a bash parenting, see how it goes? That's it.

**Anna McNuff:** No rule book is there, that's it? You know, we're all say, well, we will give it to bash

**Beth Stallwood:** And being a mischief maker, you know, toddlers and things will probably be quite good. Fun.

**Anna McNuff:** I'm really looking forward to that actually. And I, and I just love listening to kids talk as well.



[00:44:46] Once they, once they get you on the phone, a little one gets talking. I'm just like the things that come out of their mouth. I just think that's brilliant. I just think great. Love it. Yeah.

**Beth Stallwood:** Total zero filters will be a main thing. Absolutely. And my final question is really for our listeners and where can they find out more about you, your philosophy, your work, what you do, your books, et cetera.

**Anna McNuff:** Oh, yeah. Good one. So if you just type into Google or search engine and look enough, M C N U F F. Everything about me will pop up from on all the social media platforms and I've got website and I'm the only Anna McNuff in the whole world, which makes it a lot easier to find me

**Beth Stallwood:** Having a unique name is helpful.

**Beth Stallwood:** o pop on there. You'll be able to find out as books, details of her benches, keep in touch. Maybe even see the baby when it arrives and say hi. Yeah. Thank you, Anna so much for being part of the Work Joy podcast. It's been fantastic speaking to you and I really love your time. The license guidance and the idea that adventuring doesn't have to be massive.

It can be the little things that you do every day, pushing yourself into something new, trying something out, giving it a bash. Great advice from your mom there too. So huge. Thank you. And maybe we'll speak to you again soon.

**Anna McNuff:** I would love it. Thank you so much and good luck with everyone on their work joy journeys.

**Beth Stallwood:** I really loved talking to Anna about her adventures and how to have a more adventurous mindset to help us to create and cultivate some work joy in our lives. Some things that I'm definitely going to be taking away, two things this time are that idea. The advice from her mom and dad, moms sometimes give great advice about, just give it a bash.

What's the harm in trying what's the worst that can happen by giving something ago. And the idea that if you're 50% terrified and 50% excited, that's where the good stuff is going to be. So make it happen and also totally aligned with Anna's advice about do some tracking, understand what it is in your daily life.

[00:46:56] In your work that brings you joy. what does, and what doesn't and do more of what does, and if you can, it's not always possible, but if you can do less of the stuff that doesn't thank you all for listening, we'd love to hear your feedback. Remember that you can get involved in the conversation on our Instagram, which is create work joy.

And you can also look us up on the. Web @createworkjoy.com.