

Pigeonhole Podcast 57

Introduction

[chill, lo-fi music]

CHORUS OF VOICES: Pigeonholed, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole.

CHERYL NARRATING: This podcast has never had a season focused on one topic. In my whole 14 years of podcasting! I'm not linear. I bounce from interest and topic to other interest and other topic like I'm in a bouncy house. I bounce around different interests and topics, but I don't bounce around ideas because I rarely have ideas. [lo-fi music fades]

Especially with getting sicker and being in much more pain this year, experimenting with medications and treatments, and living the workaholic freelancer life, I don't have time for ideas. This is why I've only put out, like, five episodes over the past two years. I got no ideas!

I listen to other people's podcasts, feel inspired, and then I go stare at a blinking cursor on a blank Word document like I'm starring in a fiction film about someone with writer's block. In fiction, opening with writer's block is a recipe for great and wild adventures, probably a love interest, and the inevitable unblocking of the block. But that's fiction. That is just not what happens for me. Now and again, I'll get a flash of something. I have a lot of documents with introductions and no story. I'm still here, without any ideas.

[cute, quirky music]

You know who has ideas? Good friends. And good friends who have experience in improv and have their own podcasts are who I want to get some ideas from.

Brainstorms

So, I sat down recently with my dear friend Jonathan Paradox.

PARADOX: Jonathan Paradox here.

CHERYL NARRATING: And we brainstormed ideas. Starting with this all-time great unblocker...

PARADOX: One of my favorite things to do is come up with bad ideas.

[music stops suddenly]

CHERYL: [loud, spluttering cough]

PARADOX: [laughs]

BOTH: [giggling chuckles]

CHERYL: So that was I had a burp building up for a while, and then the laugh, and they interacted and became a cough. I can't wait to come up with some bad ideas with you.

JONATHAN: Great.

CHERYL NARRATING: I should know after 14 years of podcasting to not drink seltzer during a recording session. And yet. So, the bad ideas, just like the fizzy water, as they say, flowed. Which eventually, and fizzily, led to a very good idea, because the pressure was off. And this is the season I'll be working on next.

PARADOX: The name is *Everything is RouRou*. [pause] I just feel like you could do just, like, monologues, but also maybe an interview with RouRou. And maybe people that know RouRou, but how everything is [laughing] RouRou.

[repeated whiny meows, fading with an echo] [upbeat music]

Everything Is RouRou

CHERYL NARRATING: RouRou? RouRou is my cat. He's over 17 years old. He and I both manage a chronic illness, love fuzzy blankets, and co-run POD Access with Thomas Reid, who's actually the person who had the idea that I should get some ideas from someone else. RouRou over the years has been exceptionally ill, I'm allergic to him, and I almost gave him up earlier this year when I got a scary diagnosis that I thought was more serious than it is, and I worried that I wouldn't be able to take care of him anymore. We have a lot of overlapping stories of illness, pain, and disability.

Everything is RouRou will invent itself as it goes. One thing is for sure: *Everything is RouRou* isn't related to the *Purrcast*, or other podcasts that consist of a cat purring into a microphone at close range.

I'll talk to my cat and with my cat. Yes, I talk to him and then I respond to myself as him, and that's the with part. I'll also get into conversations with other disabled people about my cat, about their dogs, about whatever it is in their lives that brings support or love. Or allergies.
[upbeat music fades]

Everything is RouRou is on its way. The first episode: A recording of me trying my hand at live storytelling with Portland Story Theater years ago in front of an audience of 300 people. I'd decided that my personal story for the class would be about RouRou. The instructors were very experienced at personal storytelling, so they insisted that my personal story be actually about me. So I compromised and shared about how helping RouRou through a life-

threatening medical emergency and his recovery changed me. Just like getting an idea from Jonathan Paradox revived this podcast, those instructors also had a very good idea.

CHERYL: *Everything is RouRou.*

PARADOX: [quietly] *Everything is RouRou.*

CHERYL: [sounding calm] *Everything is RouRou.*

PARADOX: [sweet laugh]

CHERYL NARRATING: Check out *Paradox at Play*, Paradox's very inventive, clever, and quite ridiculous podcast.

Wrap-up

[lo-fi chill music returns]

CHERYL: Transcripts, show notes, and so much more at WhoAmIToStopIt.com. I'm Cheryl, and...

TWO VOICES: this is Pigeonhole.