

# ART2LIFE

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## ACADEMY

Nicholas Wilton: That's it, isn't it?

Rachel Davis: It is.

Nicholas Wilton: It's fear.

Rachel Davis: It is, it's fear. Thinking what is it that helps you proceed, "I'm a fraud, I suck, I won't be allowed ... I can't call myself an artist." If the dad can stumble and fall and get up and live to tell another day, I can too. If it's not amazing, then what?

Nicholas Wilton: Hey everyone, it's Nicholas Wilton, and I'm super excited to be sitting her today with Rachel Davis. Rachel is a artist, a mixed media artist. She actually is in the studio that I'm in in the building, just so happens. She's also a psychologist and has been working with artists for decades. Rachel and I are always having these conversations around getting stuck and unstuck and the barriers that artists face, and she's particularly suited to speak to this because not only is she an artist, but she also understands the backstory and then working with artists and the experience. Our hope today is that we can shed some light on some of your challenges and ways to move through it. Thanks so much for being here Rachel.

Rachel Davis: My pleasure.

Nicholas Wilton: It's great. I know we talked a lot about this just in the halls. It's nice to kind of memorialize it and get it down.

Rachel Davis: Cool.

Nicholas Wilton: What we'll do is we'll do a little quick back story of how you got here. You were doing art second and psychology first. We're always interested, and that's really interesting, so let's dive into that a little bit. Then we'll dive into the artists that ... the creature of the artist that we all are.

Rachel Davis: Sounds good.

Nicholas Wilton: The problems of that.

Rachel Davis: All right. Like you said, it's been decades. I think it's probably been 30 years that I've been working with artists. I started working with artists before I was an artist, many years before I was an artist. Backstory for that, I had a beautiful mother who cared for about beauty, and I sort of got that bug. The rest of my family, brothers and dad could give a damn, they just didn't care but I really did.

Nicholas Wilton: Do you mean she was aesthetic?

Rachel Davis: She was very ... She grew up in the Madmen era.

Nicholas Wilton: Interesting.

Rachel Davis: She was just very into that stuff. She would want to go to museums and things like that, and he just didn't care. Good guy, but he just didn't care. I followed that path with her.

Nicholas Wilton: I see.

Rachel Davis: We would look at beautiful things together and colors and all that stuff. I didn't think of myself as having any artistic talent whatsoever, any bent towards it, nothing, but somehow artists ... I was just opening a general practice in psychology and artists started appearing, I don't know why, but I was really good with them. I was incredibly interested in what they were doing and couldn't hear enough about their process. When they were stuck I just knew what to do and how to help them.

Then 20 ... I'm trying to think ... 22 years ago or so, I started doing Japanese flower arranging, which I didn't recognize as an art form. I just thought it sounded cool. One of the first things I wanted. An object that was beautiful that I wanted was a Japanese tea set that my mom got from her sister when she traveled to Japan. As a little girl I said, "I want that." And she said, "When you get married, I'll give it to you." I still have it. I was just always drawn to that aesthetic.

Nicholas Wilton: Oh, I see.

Rachel Davis: That's how I got into Japanese flower arranging.

Nicholas Wilton: Did you study with like a master?

Rachel Davis: I'm still studying with her. Yes, I'm still ...

Nicholas Wilton: This wasn't just a craft thing. This is like...

Rachel Davis: It was initially. It was just at a local community center, a little local, Marinwood community center, Japanese flower. I said, "Oh, well, that sounds cool." Everybody dropped out of the class, and it's been just me standing. I've been working with her for 22 years.

Nicholas Wilton: You are kidding.

Rachel Davis: No, no. It's just one on one at this point.

Nicholas Wilton: It's not you. Of course, you can go very deep with this, but wow.

Rachel Davis: It's been amazing. Now I'm teaching it. It's a thing. It's beautiful. 10 years ago, or maybe a little bit more, I started doing print making, monotype and mixed media probably. Some classical portraits are thrown in there, which I sort of loved, but I hated it because there were so many ways to be wrong. That wasn't fun, but I love faces and I care about people, so I continue to be drawn to that.

Nicholas Wilton: It's interesting how you know you can practice the psychology practice. It's almost like the master plan was you're an artist, but it took you helping them and how they came into your life and you were marinated in it. Do you know why you didn't consider yourself an ... What took so long, maybe?

Rachel Davis: It really never occurred to me.

Nicholas Wilton: Isn't that amazing?

Rachel Davis: It never even remotely occurred to me and nobody in my cohort group subculture, nobody... I mean my mother loved beauty, but even she would have thought it was ludicrous to be an artist. That was ...

Nicholas Wilton: Wow.

Rachel Davis: Though she loved to go to museums and we would do that, but that would have been just silly. It would never have been a thing. Just wasn't part of the back drop.

Nicholas Wilton: What were the challenges that you discovered? You get better at working with artists over time-

Rachel Davis: You do.

Nicholas Wilton: Because you learn.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, yeah. You do.

Nicholas Wilton: That must have informed your own practice when you started.

Rachel Davis: I don't know that ... I think I've done more in my own art practice since CVP even though I've been helping the artists all along. I've been thinking a lot about this since I knew I was doing the interview about how the process of CVP makes you ... It's sort of like going into analysis another time. It really uncovers ... Whatever crap you've got is going to get uncovered if you get serious about being an artist.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right.

Rachel Davis: I feel like I've been very good with artists all along and now I feel like I'm better because of my deep dive.

Nicholas Wilton: You're taking your own medicine.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: I see.

Rachel Davis: I definitely feel like you get better at anything you do over years, but I'm better now, the last couple years. I was good before but I really get it.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right.

Rachel Davis: I really get it now.

Nicholas Wilton: The artists that you're working with ... You're still working with.

Rachel Davis: Still working with, yeah.

Nicholas Wilton: Is it ... Maybe this just sort of ties into the big challenge as artists. Where are they getting stuck? What are you seeing?

Rachel Davis: The big challenges are they're all fear based. I want to talk a little bit about that because ... Well, I'll talk a lot about it because that's it and I'm going to lower.

Nicholas Wilton: That's it, isn't it?

Rachel Davis: It is.

Nicholas Wilton: It's fear.

Rachel Davis: It is. It's fear. I'm going to lower the bar on getting over it.

Nicholas Wilton: Oh.

Rachel Davis: Yeah.

Nicholas Wilton: For all of us?

Rachel Davis: For all of us.

Nicholas Wilton: Do you mean you'll make it easier to jump over the bar to get rid of fear?

Rachel Davis: No. I feel like we're not going to try to get over it.

Nicholas Wilton: Oh, okay, yeah.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, that's what we're going to do.

Nicholas Wilton: Because that's a lot. I don't know, we have 35 minutes here to cure everybody.

Rachel Davis: We're not going to do it.

Nicholas Wilton: We're not curing people today?

Rachel Davis: No, we're not curing anybody. We're going to give up trying to cure people, which is hard because everybody wants to be cured of how crappy it feels to feel frightened.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, that's what I ...

Rachel Davis: Everybody wants that.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah.

Rachel Davis: We're going to talk about ways to not keep trying to do that because it's [crosstalk 00:08:00].

Nicholas Wilton: We're reframing the problem.

Rachel Davis: We're reframing the problem. We're reframing the problem. We're going to reframe the problem with ... It's interesting, again as I was preparing ... with values, but not dark, light values. We're going to reframe the problem with what matters to you values.

Nicholas Wilton: Yes.

Rachel Davis: Some people don't like that word because they feel like it's too moralistic, but it's kind of where you start in CVP by asking what matters to you and why.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, and value. I get the metaphor of dark, light value, but the loud conversation, the bones of a picture, what you see the primary pieces, it's about value.

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: The values that we hold inside of ourselves are also the fundamental building blocks.

Rachel Davis: Correct.

Nicholas Wilton: The fundamental star cores, all that.

Rachel Davis: Correct.

Nicholas Wilton: So there is a nice little ...

Rachel Davis: I didn't realize that as just I was sort of thinking like, "What is it that helps you proceed even though fear is never going away, it's just not?"

Nicholas Wilton: It's not.

Rachel Davis: It's not, nope. That's the bad news, it's just not, but how do you proceed anyway? And that's values. That's one of the keys to proceeding anyway is that.

Nicholas Wilton: Okay.

Rachel Davis: First, I want to talk a little bit about fear and why it's not ever going anywhere. It really has to do with our ... It's evolutionary. If you think about it, our far back ancestors who saw a tiger and said, "Whoa, that's a cool looking thing. It's got stripes, and look how fast it runs. It's got teeth, and wow, that's cool," they didn't make it. They didn't pass their genes on.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right.

Rachel Davis: So the ones-

Nicholas Wilton: Oh, I see, they were eaten.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, they were eaten.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, right.

Rachel Davis: Yeah exactly. The ones who made it are the ones who knew to be terrified.

Nicholas Wilton: Ah, interesting.

Rachel Davis: It's very baked into our survival to be frightened. One of the big fears that comes up maybe for everybody, but for artists in particular, is "I'm not good enough. I won't ... I'm a fraud. I suck. I won't be allowed ... I can't call myself an artist. Who do I think I am?"

Nicholas Wilton: That imposter syndrome.

Rachel Davis: Yeah. "They're going to throw me out of the tribe when they see my work. They're going to say I can't be here." If you think again, if you think evolutionarily, if you got thrown out of your tribe, you would be eaten by a tiger. If you don't have your group around you ...

Nicholas Wilton: For sure, the feeling of being on the outside, I just did this thing. It's a trail race. It's a big race, big huge event. I went and I volunteered to help on this trail. This was just last weekend.

Rachel Davis: Okay.

Nicholas Wilton: There's this big ... You work on this trail, and you're just cutting weeds all day. It's kind of ridiculous. I've run this race and I wanted to give back. It's the Western States race. It's a big deal up in Tahoe. There was this party in the night and it was all the people who go every year. There's a lot of veterans. There's a huge history with this thing. They are all drinking and telling stories, but it's all about this race. As a person who's on the outside, you're just new there.

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: This guy was telling all these stories and he was kind of drunk and everything, and he goes, "I want to see who are the greenie ... Who are the green people? Who are the newbies?" He made us stand up, and it was incredibly awkward. It was alienating. I was like, "Well, this guy clearly doesn't know how to build community." You don't want to isolate people. You don't want to make a us and them.

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: I was shocked at how bummed I ... It really bummed me out.

Rachel Davis: Correct.

Nicholas Wilton: It really was like ... I'm like, "I don't care."

Rachel Davis: Right, you have community.

Nicholas Wilton: I have a community.

Rachel Davis: Right, right.

Nicholas Wilton: But I was just really ... I didn't sleep well. I left early. I didn't ...

Rachel Davis: Wow.

Nicholas Wilton: This was just a guy who was drunk, and he wasn't using his words [crosstalk 00:12:13].

Rachel Davis: Sure.

Nicholas Wilton: But being put on the outside ... I relate to that.

Rachel Davis: Yeah.

Nicholas Wilton: Totally.

Rachel Davis: It's very primal. I think it's just baked in. That's a very primary reason it's not going anywhere. It's baked into everybody's DNA to need to belong. Also as humans, we are dependent for so long. Again, if our parents decided, "Yeah, I don't like this kid," you're not going to make it for many, many, many, years.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, yeah, right.

Rachel Davis: You really really need the powers that be to find favor with you. If they don't, you're screwed. That goes on for a very long time. There are many, many reasons that reinforce each other for us to be on guard for belonging. Again, all this stuff gets in the way of doing good art. If you've got people thinking like, "Oh my God, what if people don't like it?," all this stuff.

Nicholas Wilton: Totally, yeah, yeah.

Rachel Davis: It's just in there, and it's not going anywhere. What happens when you're terrified ... This happens whether or not you're terrified because ... If a tiger were to break into this room somehow right now, we'd both get these huge adrenaline shots. What would happen is that the blood would flee our brains and go to our extremities because not only is deliberating not helpful, it could hurt us. If we stop to think like, "Is this dangerous?", it's too late, we're dead.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, right, right.



Rachel Davis: If the blood comes, it mobilizes you. Like the grandmothers who can pick up a car when that happens, it's because of adrenaline. It's super helpful. Again, keeps you alive, but when you're afraid ... That night, I would imagine you had some little mini adrenaline thing going, that night when that guy said that. You said it was something really uncomfortable. If you paid attention to what your body was doing, it might have been ... Was it tingly? Do you remember that?

Nicholas Wilton: At first, I was like, "Oh my God, this is so embarrassing because I don't have any experience in here," and he was asking me like, "Well, what was your day like?" It was just a boring day. I didn't have anything, but then I got like, "Look jerk, bring it." I know how to talk in front of people. I'm fine in front of this [inaudible 00:14:36] campfire of 20 people. He's trying to humiliate me to make himself look better.

Rachel Davis: Got it.

Nicholas Wilton: I'll go for this. I did get ... I got a stronger case.

Rachel Davis: A stance, right.

Nicholas Wilton: But I was struck with how much it ...

Rachel Davis: How quick ...

Nicholas Wilton: It brought me down a little bit.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, and how quickly.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah.

Rachel Davis: Right. How quick.

Nicholas Wilton: I was separated. I didn't even really care if I was in that group.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: But I was like I need to go back and paint and do my thing and stay in my thing. That was just a ... They failed to bring in volunteers and make them feel part of this thing.

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: It was a huge failure.

Rachel Davis: Yes.

Nicholas Wilton: But this guy's just a trail worker. He doesn't understand how you make people ... It's community building. It's like what we're doing. That's what I do.

Rachel Davis: Well people can ... Again, that's a different topic, but you could tell people ... He did know what he was doing if he wanted to make people feel shitty.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah.

Rachel Davis: That's a quick way to do it is to ... That primal stuff.

Nicholas Wilton: But to your point, I think you're absolutely right. It's one of the biggest fears, public speaking, right?

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: Being judged, and I think dying. I think those two are the biggest-

Rachel Davis: Right. Higher. Public speaking's higher for most people than dying.

Nicholas Wilton: Most people would just die.

Rachel Davis: Yes, rather than do that. When you're adrenalized, if there's something ... If the tiger comes in, you don't even feel bad. You're just using the adrenaline to mobilize you to run to pick the car off the kid. That's what it does, but if you have a bunch of adrenaline for ... Let's do some art thing ... for putting stuff into your first show or it's the first time you're submitting to a show. You're getting closer, you're getting closer. You're thinking, "Oh my God, my stuff sucks. Who am I kidding?" It's starting to build up, you're getting more and more anxious. The feeling of adrenaline really feels crappy when there's not somebody ... When there's not a big thing to do to mobilize for, you just feel awful.

Nicholas Wilton: So that's adrenaline-

Rachel Davis: It's adrenaline like the tingling.

Nicholas Wilton: Or is that fear?

Rachel Davis: Well, that's same thing. Basically, adrenaline is ... Fear is, bodily it's what adrenaline feels like. Again, you don't notice it if it's really an adrenaline situation because it's mobilizing you, but if not, you might feel like your heart is pounding, your fingers are tingling. You might feel ... For some people-

Nicholas Wilton: You sweat.

Rachel Davis: You sweat. For some people, they feel light headed. They can't think. They might feel crazy. It's a very awful feeling. Let's say it's come to the deadline, it's coming to the deadline and you're feeling worse and worse and worse and worse and worse. You say, "Forget it. I'm not doing it. I'm not doing it." Immediately what happens is that your adrenaline comes way down, and you feel great.

Nicholas Wilton: When you say, "I'm not doing it"?

Rachel Davis: You say, "I'm not doing it." Let's say you choose not to do the ... because it feels too awful.

Nicholas Wilton: Oh, the show?

Rachel Davis: The show.

Nicholas Wilton: You go, "I'm canceling."

Rachel Davis: "I'm not doing it. Forget it. Forget it. There'll be another one. I'm not doing it. What happens initially is that you feel fantastic because you're-

Nicholas Wilton: Relief.

Rachel Davis: Huge relief and the feeling of relief versus the crappy feeling is so tremendous that it's super reinforcing to avoid what makes you uncomfortable.

Nicholas Wilton: Ah.

Rachel Davis: Super duper reinforcing.

Nicholas Wilton: But three days later, you feel like a low life because you blew it. [crosstalk 00:17:49].

Rachel Davis: Of course. Right, exactly. My point here is that people don't avoid stuff because they're lazy or stupid or don't get that they're going to feel bad in three days. They avoid stuff because they really feel awful and they want to not feel awful in that moment. They'll do anything to not feel awful. One of the ... It's not a problem I have, but one of the limitations of ... We have this little exercise we'll do later. One of the limitations of reasoning with yourself at this moment is remember, one of the things that adrenaline does is that the blood rushes from your brain and goes to your extremities.

Essentially, at that moment, your brain is like a lizard's. That's lizard brain. Lizards aren't very good at deliberating. You're not much use to yourself if you're in a very ... I'm talking high anxiety. If you're in a highly

anxious state, somebody can give you all the reasons in the world and you're not available. If you've ever been really, really anxious, your IQ plummets probably 15, 30 points.

Nicholas Wilton: God, no kidding.

Rachel Davis: It's just not available. Your frontal lobe is literally not online because there's no oxygen there. Not no oxygen, but it's depleted. You need oxygen to think in your frontal lobe, and you don't have it. All you need to is like a lizard, you need to get the hell out of there when you're frightened. That's what you do. What this means is that I'm all for if you can tell yourself snap out of it, just do it. Sometimes that works. Sometimes that's enough. Not when you're really terrified, but if you're just a little scared and somebody says, "Oh, you can do it, Nick." It's like, "That guy's an asshole. Don't worry about it."

You can probably ... Maybe in that moment you couldn't because he really touched something, but normally ... This is a silly example because you're not going to get nervous about submitting something in the art world because you're so confident there, but if it was some area where you were just a little nervous, not very nervous, then pushing yourself, nudging yourself is enough.

Nicholas Wilton: Do it anyway philosophy.

Rachel Davis: Do it anyway, exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: You know better.

Rachel Davis: Just do it, the Nike stuff. Let's just do it. Sometimes that works, and I'm all for ... I don't think you have to dig that deep if that's going to work if somebody can push you or nudge you or a best friend can say, "You were frightened last time too. Just do it. You'll be fine," you say, "You know, you're right. I'm fine. I'm cool." That's okay, but sometimes it just doesn't work. Sometimes ... I'm going to tell you this because I love this story. When I was learning some of this way of working, which is this way of surrendering ... We're not going to try to conquer fear. We're going to surrender to the fact that fear's not going away.

Nicholas Wilton: Wow.

Rachel Davis: We're going to stop wasting a whole mess of energy trying to make it go away. We're going to try to turn that energy to the art making instead because we don't want to be depleted by trying to do something we're going to fail at anyway. I was at some conference where they were introducing these concepts, and there were I'd say at 300 of us there. They were freshly minted therapists who were 28 years old, right out of

graduate school, and people in their 80s, who were still practicing. The guy running it said, "I want you to raise your hand if there's been some psychological issue that reared its head during the past month. You don't have to tell us about it. Just raise your hand." Literally every single hand in the room goes up.

Nicholas Wilton: Of course.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, of course because everybody's humans in the room. There's no aliens. Maybe aliens have issues too. I don't know. Anyway, everybody's hand goes up. He says, "Okay, now, keep your hand up if, at some point in the course of the last year, the same issue came up for you." Not a hand comes down.

Nicholas Wilton: You mean people have experienced this ... whatever their issue is.

Rachel Davis: Whatever it is.

Nicholas Wilton: Multiple times.

Rachel Davis: Whatever it is. Then he starts going to five-year increments. He says, "Okay, five years." At this point, you know where he's going. Not a single hand comes down until he gets to 30 years because then the 28 year olds weren't born yet. He keeps playing it out just so the visual is very dramatic.

Nicholas Wilton: Right. The room's not changing.

Rachel Davis: The room's not changing. He gets to 95 and then the 92-year-old doddering therapist or whatever, he lowers his hand. He says, "Okay, you're all professionals. Presumably you have some tools to deal with this stuff. What if the stuff that trips you is just going to keep tripping you up? What if that's true?" This is pretty ... Nobody wants that to be true. Nobody comes to my office and says, "I really want to keep living with this stuff for the rest of my life." Nobody says that.

It's a very hard sell that we're not getting rid of it. One of the things I'd like to invite people to do, and we'll do it when we do the exercise, is what are the things that you have been doing to avoid the things ... Like say for me, I'm doing this story and these portraits. What if I want to do big figurative work that's colorful and great and I'm resisting it? Why am I resisting it? I have a set of questions here like, "Is it that I'm ... There's a lot of categories you can go through. It might be that you're ... This is very lingo-y so we're not going to keep it in there, but you're fused with your thoughts. Maybe you have some ... I have some thought that says, "You'll never make the transition to big," or, "You don't know how to handle your paper. Who are you kidding?" For the most part.

I actually don't believe those thoughts at this point. I actually do have enough distance from them. That's what we're going to try to do. We're not going to get rid of the fear, but we want to have a couple of degrees of separation from it. We don't want to be fused with these beliefs.

Nicholas Wilton: I understand. [crosstalk 00:23:56].

Rachel Davis: I have that. Fuse is bad. In this lingo-

Nicholas Wilton: Right, fuse means it's just wrapped around your legs and you're-

Rachel Davis: Exactly. Exactly. There's no distance. There's no daylight. There's not a centimeter between you and that belief. I have centimeters between it now, so I get that. If you had told me five months ago that I could be doing these, I would have said, "That's ridiculous." I know that with practice I can do stuff. That's not what's tripping me up on this one.

The second one was avoidance of discomfort. That's the big one. I don't want to ... This is like fear means fusion. These are the things that get in your way. Fusion ... It's so counterintuitive. Sometimes psychology stuff is not ... Excessive goals. Maybe your goal is too big. You have too big a goal like if I were to say, "Tomorrow, I'll have a solo show of all my big work," that's ridiculous. That might keep me frozen and fearful to start if I had an excessive goal. A big one is avoidance of discomfort. When I start doing that work that I'm avoiding, it's going to be uncomfortable because it's not going to look good yet.

Nicholas Wilton: Totally. Inherent in just the whole art process is change.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: That has to be there.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. If you don't ... I hate feeling incompetent. I don't anybody who likes feeling incompetent, but that's one of the ways I know I want to be an artist because it matters to me so much that I'll put up with stuff I can't stand because my value is to be an artist and be a good artist and pursue that.

Nicholas Wilton: I see.

Rachel Davis: I'll put up with stuff. I'm having trouble with this one because I really care about the art being beautiful and figurative work. It's harder to hide when it's not working.

Nicholas Wilton: You can see it.

Rachel Davis: Right, exactly, and I don't want to feel that way. I think that's it for me, but I'm not positive. I think that's what it is. People will do anything, just about.

Nicholas Wilton: Just to avoid it.

Rachel Davis: Just to avoid it. It could be ... I don't know if you have things that you will ... Big goals that you have in art that you're not doing. Your book [inaudible 00:26:09].

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, probably around the book more.

Rachel Davis: Okay.

Nicholas Wilton: The book is more challenging for me. I've miscued a couple of times with the direction of it and feel like, "This is harder than I thought," or, "Why can't it be as easy as ... I write, speak and paint pictures. That's what I do, and here I am trying to do something that I feel like I've done before, but it's a different form. I'm not as confident in that. Did one iteration and now I'm doing another. It's like, "Oh my God. This is harder."

Rachel Davis: Do you avoid it?

Nicholas Wilton: I need to clear the decks to do it, but painting, if I have half an hour between this interview and the next thing, I'll go paint. I probably wouldn't take on that harder thing because I have this hallucination that I need a lot of space. I need to be in a cabin and have endless days to work this out. I think that's probably the most honest answer I can come with. I think there's resistance there.

Rachel Davis: Probably underneath that ... Why you feel you need all those things? We know you don't really need all those things.

Nicholas Wilton: I feel like I need to solve it, and I haven't solved it in my opinion and my agent. We haven't ... It's like, "Nah, that's not quite right." "Really?" "Try this again. Ah, that's not right either." It's like, "What?" Blah, blah, blah. Okay.

Rachel Davis: Okay. See what I mean. Doesn't feel great to feel that way, to feel that sea and ...

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah.

Rachel Davis: It's a crappy feeling. You'll tell yourself something. You could say, "We really haven't figured it out, so I can't do something in half an hour."

Nicholas Wilton: Exactly. There's tons of other cool stuff to do, so I'll do that. It's all things I need to do.

Rachel Davis: What you would say to somebody I think who was making the same argument about painting like, "I can't paint until I have the right studio. I can't paint [crosstalk 00:28:08].

Nicholas Wilton: It's BS, yeah.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Start, start.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. That's what you would say to that person.

Nicholas Wilton: You just iterate. You just start. Even 20 minutes, you'll feel better, but I haven't worked on this now because I was moving, because I had to do the interview, because I had to do this. It grows and it's ... It's not even that big of a deal, but it is. It's like the unattended fear grows. The less you do, the less you do. The more you do, the more you do.

Rachel Davis: That would be an example for you. I knew we weren't going to get an art thing out of you.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, and right now it's more just like, "Oh, my God, which way I want to go with it?"

Rachel Davis: Right, and again, none of us want to be at sea. We want to be like the competent person that everybody looks up to, all those things.

Nicholas Wilton: There might be some things like do we ... What else do we want to do with Art2Life? Then should we do X?" Like, "Whoa, that's pretty scary. That's a big deal." There's things like that that I haven't yet done that I want to do.

Rachel Davis: Usually what I find ... I don't have to analyze you here, but usually when you keep asking a question ... This is another really good thing to do is to say, "And then what would happen? And what might be the problem with that? What might be the problem with that?" Just keep asking.

Nicholas Wilton: Right until you get down to the ...

Rachel Davis: Yeah, what's really underneath it. I think fundamentally underneath all that stuff is that basic, "I won't be loved. I'll be thrown out." Usually if you keep digging long enough, that's where you find yourself even the things that look suspiciously legitimate. I'm not saying there aren't legitimate excuses for things. There are.



Nicholas Wilton: Absolutely.

Rachel Davis: There are, but there are the things ... You usually know the difference between resistance and real problems. For example, sometimes you might watch Netflix because it's been a really tense day and you just need to unwind. That's not resistance. Sometimes you're watching Netflix because you can't bear to write or you can't bear to paint because that would make you feel incompetent or crappy. You want to pay a lot of attention to ... You just want to pay a lot of attention. What's the difference?

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel Davis: [crosstalk 00:30:24]. One of the problems I think maybe people have because you are so confident and possible in the art stuff and so much of the process that you teach is about joy and is about play, what I could imagine ... I don't know that this goes on for people, but I imagine it does for some people. The people who don't play that easily, what I think they might end up thinking is like, "Who was I kidding that I thought I could play?" It's the spiral that gets going. Again, you feel like maybe like, "115 people posted on Facebook that they're having such joy and they're letting go and it's so amazing. What's the matter with me?"

Nicholas Wilton: I think that's it. I think one of the most beneficial things is when someone has the nerve to post what's really going on.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Because there's about 50 people that feel the same way.

Rachel Davis: I'm not following so much on Facebook this year, but I know last year when anybody would post that, it would get incredible hits.

Nicholas Wilton: Totally, yeah.

Rachel Davis: Because people feel ... Again, you're the leader of the group. You're the father of the group. You're joyful and you will say. You will say that you struggle. You will say things like that. I don't know if people believe it because you tend to be ... I'm not saying you should change your personality, but I just don't know how credible it is that ... There was something that you did in one of the ... There was some story you told about freezing while you were ... The public speaking story.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right, right.

Rachel Davis: That was a great story because you were actually ...

Nicholas Wilton: That was the most humiliating thing I've ever experienced.

Rachel Davis: Why is it people love that? People love that the other person's humiliated because then you don't feel so, "What's wrong with me for being ..."

Nicholas Wilton: It's like, "Oh yeah."

Rachel Davis: Exactly. If the dad can stumble and fall and get up to live another day, I can too. I think that's an important thing to remember again, that, "How out of the group am I?" That can really paralyze people. I don't know who helped me with this. This is one of the things that's great about Art2Life and the academy and all of that is that you've got this community of people who you don't feel ... Again, we've established that you need to feel like you're part of a community.

If you are brave enough to say, "I'm struggling. I'm having a hard time, somebody's going to help you and somebody's going to say I felt that way too. That's going to reduce your fear and isolation. It's going to make it more likely that you can continue with this vulnerable endeavor where you're ... If you're going to be better, you have to ... You have to suck at stuff if you're going to do better because you can't get there without going through, "I suck at stuff." Nobody wants to so it's this total catch 22.

This was probably the first or second or third show that I submitted things to. I said or somebody else said ... I got rejected from a show. Somebody else said ... They just totally reframed the language. They said what they say is, "My work wasn't accepted this time." The things about that reframe, it's super powerful. It's that personal, permanent, pervasive. I think those are the three Ps you don't want to do like, "I got rejected." It's like, "It's not me." It's like, "I do not equal my work. It's work that I made, and there'll be a next time. It was this show, and maybe they'll-

Nicholas Wilton: Totally. That day of the week, that ...

Rachel Davis: Right, exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: That judge.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Juror.

Rachel Davis: I couldn't have ... If you had told me ... At this point, I'd probably be in ... I've had my work rejected. I've had my work not accepted probably half

of the time. Half of the time it does. Maybe a little bit less. Who knows. I've submitted these three, which I think are very strong, to a couple of shows that it didn't get into. I was like, "Huh, that kind of sucks." Literally within 20 minutes, I was like, "Next." I never would have thought that was possible.

Nicholas Wilton: To overcome that and just keep coming.

Rachel Davis: Yeah, I wasn't happy. The point of the reframing the language is not to be Pollyanna and say it doesn't matter. It's not that at all.

Nicholas Wilton: It's both in a way.

Rachel Davis: How do you mean?

Nicholas Wilton: To hold the space of, "Yeah, it doesn't feel so good," but the other side is like, "I'm making this work and I'm excited about this work." It's like both truths.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Instead of trying to get rid of one, I eradicate that.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Hold the duality of it.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. That's what all this is about. It's like, "How do you proceed in the direction of what matters to you in the face of these fears and issues that will never go away?" How do you do that? That's what we're trying to do. One of the things you and I talked about this when we first discussed this talk was this concept of ... It's called creative hopelessness. I love the ... First of all, I love the phrase because it has the word creative in it and because it holds the duality like, "How could hopelessness be creative?" It's when you drop that you're going to get rid of stuff. You cry uncle, "I'm never getting rid of the stuff that I hate and I'm never getting rid of it." I'm not going to try. I'm done trying.

We can go over what are some of the ways people try, what are some of the things you do to not feel what you're going to feel anyway? If you stop trying, how much energy does that release for you to do your work? If you're no longer watching Netflix for 10 hours or crying, rehashing the story or looking at other things on Pinterest for 15 hours and saying, "I suck" ... If you're not doing that, you could be working. You really could. It doesn't mean that you will only feel good when you work because you stop doing that. You could do two things at once.

You can feel kind of crappy and work at the same time. You can easily feel very crappy and be in your life at the same time. That's what we're heading for is doing that. Some of it involves stopping long enough to know what the feeling is. What does it feel like for you in your body when you're feeling ... For some people, it's they feel crazy. They feel like they're losing their mind. You don't have to be hallucinating. Shouldn't feel that way. Everything's a continuum anyway, but you could feel like I can't think straight. I can't formulate a sentence. You feel stupid because you are stupid when you're really afraid, remember, because the blood's there.

You can't form a sentence in the same way, but you can feel like you're losing your mind. That's a very common anxious thing or it might be, again, you're very dry mouth. You might have ... For some people, they might feel it in their jaw. For many people, they feel it in their chest, a tightening in their chest. There's all sorts of different ways, but it's important to figure out what's mine. I know this is what it looks like for me when I'm frightened or when I'm avoiding. This is what it looks like for me.

This is what I tend to do ... And we're going to map this out. We're going to do a little exercise that everybody can take home with them. I'll have stuff on a PDF. What are your top seven things that you do when you're avoiding something? When you're avoiding yourself essentially, when you're avoiding a bad feeling, what do you do? Maybe you don't sleep.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, or you take a bath or you go for a run or you go out for dinner.

Rachel Davis: Those are very healthy. Or you do drugs or you look at Pinterest or you ... There's a whole list of things.

Nicholas Wilton: You kick your dog.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. There's a whole list of things you do to make yourself feel better. Again, all these things work in the short term and don't work in the long term. I want people to have an incredible amount of acceptance for themselves, which is really hard to do. What I find is that the stuff that people will tolerate from themselves in terms of bad self talk, it's stunning the things you'll put up with from yourself that you would never put up with from somebody else or that if somebody you like ... If somebody was talking to one of your girls ... Maybe not you, but the way you sometimes talk to yourself. You would be in their face. You'd be kicking them out of the house. You'd never do it. Then somehow it's like people feel very free to talk trash to themselves. Very, very free to do that.

Nicholas Wilton: There's self-depreciating humor. "That's better than I could ever do anyway," or, "I'm not a good writer, but ...

Rachel Davis: Right, right.

Nicholas Wilton: You just [crosstalk 00:39:26].

Rachel Davis: "And I can't be. I'll never be a good writer. Who I am kidding?" I'd say this sort of stuff. You'd say that to yourself, whereas if somebody else ... If somebody were to say it to one of your daughters, you would be all over the ways that's, A, simply not true.

Nicholas Wilton: "Knock it off."

Rachel Davis: You'd say, "Knock it off." If that was enough for them, fabulous. That's quick. If they didn't, you would try to talk them out of it, but it doesn't somehow work to talk yourself out of stuff. If you were to flip it, if you were to say something like ... Say you say about yourself as an artist, "I'm not really an artist. I suck. Who am I kidding? I'll never be an artist." This is a stupid endeavor. It was a waste of time and money. Why did I rent the studio? I can't believe I did that. Forget it. It's never going to work." You might believe that. It would feel like, "It's true. I'm not ... I haven't sold any ... Whatever. You'd think of a way to say that that's true."

Nicholas Wilton: Justified just by those actions.

Rachel Davis: Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah.

Rachel Davis: But if you flipped it, if you were to say, "I'm the most amazing artist who ever lived. I'll always be great. People will always buy me," you would recognize that as grandiosity. You would shut yourself up, but the negative grandiosity of the trash talk you do for yourself ...

Nicholas Wilton: You're fine.

Rachel Davis: You're fine with that. People don't think twice about how off that is. Again, I think it's because old fear threats are like, "You would die." There's a thing in ...

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, I see.

Rachel Davis: What is it called? Have you ever heard of John Gottman? Ever heard of him?

Nicholas Wilton: Yes, Gottman [crosstalk 00:40:57].

Rachel Davis: Right, the marital guy. What he says, and it's really true, he says that for a relationship to survive, you need to have like five good things for every one bad thing because the bad things weigh that much more.

Nicholas Wilton: Because we prioritize them.

Rachel Davis: Correct. We prioritize them back to that existential threat because the existential threats could kill us where it's like, "If somebody says you're amazing. You're a great painter," that's lovely, but it's not going to keep you alive.

Nicholas Wilton: I break it into two kinds of fear. There's the bear chasing you fear, which we don't really have many of these in our day to day, but there's all the other kind of fear, which is harmless fear.

Rachel Davis: Right, but it's fear.

Nicholas Wilton: But it's fear. Understanding that it's not going to ...

Rachel Davis: Understanding the difference and-

Nicholas Wilton: Maybe you can't fix it based on that, but I feel like if you understand it like, "Oh, there it is again," it kind of discharges it a little bit.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. Exactly. Again, I think many times it can. What I'm going for is ... There's this wonderful quote. I don't know who to attribute it to. The distance between heaven and hell is a quarter of an inch. You're looking for that quarter of an inch where you don't quite believe it, where you say like, "This isn't ... It feels true, but it's not true. A feeling is not a fact. I can feel this and go on." You're looking for just that little bit of distance. That's what you're looking for. It's possible to find it or, again, if you pay attention, if you meditate, for example, the instruction when you meditate is to pay attention to your breathing. It's impossible. You try to pay attention to your breathing. The next thing you know ...

Nicholas Wilton: [crosstalk 00:42:33].

Rachel Davis: Exactly, but then you bring your mind back to it. You just keep going back. You just keep going back. Okay, Nick. We're going to do this matrix tool I was telling you about.

Nicholas Wilton: Okay. Is that what this is called? The Matrix?

Rachel Davis: It's called the ACT Matrix. ACT is something called Acceptance Commitment Therapy. Basically, this whole thing we've been talking

about, accepting the fact that there are certain things you're never going to change. That's the acceptance part of it. What I love about this therapy is that even if you can't, you can still move towards what matters to you. You don't have to get hung up on it basically. It's like if you can change it, fabulous. We'll try that. I always try that. I always try, "Let's see if we can do it." One of the things I'll be demonstrating here is there's usually a whole host of behaviors people have been doing for decades that have not worked.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right, right.

Rachel Davis: Then it's like, "Okay, cry uncle and remember what's important." That's what we're going to flesh out. This is called the ACT Matrix. Believe it or not, some geeky guys within this theory of therapy did name it after the Matrix, the movie the Matrix. What it has to do with the Matrix, I have no idea. I'm not a Matrix person, so I don't know. Anyway, it is a grid. It's a quadrant. We've got the horizontal axis and the vertical axis.

Nicholas Wilton: Oops.

Rachel Davis: The right side, you're going to write the word towards. The whole right side of this quadrant is where we're hoping to go. Then we've got the away axis, which is the stuff that pulls us away from where we want to go. That's that axis. Then we've got the top and the bottom. I'm going to put that little camera here. Sorry. A little camera. Oh man, I may have to have you write the camera. This is supposed to be ... It looks nothing like a camera. Basically, everything above this line is what you can see.

Nicholas Wilton: Oh, maybe put an eyeball.

Rachel Davis: There you go. What you can see. It might be see, think, hear ... This is the five senses on top. Think of this ...

Nicholas Wilton: Everything you can see.

Rachel Davis: Think of this like it's your skin. This is everything internal, your internal hopes, dreams, thoughts, values. Your internal gunk that gets in the way. Then over here is the behavior.

Nicholas Wilton: Is this only seen to you? Do you know about the stuff underneath or is this in the subconscious?

Rachel Davis: It could be. If it's unconscious, you can't tell me yet, but with either therapy or journaling or a bunch of other ways, you might discover it. This is stuff that you maybe don't tell people, but you know you're struggling with. We always start and it's like again the Art2Life stuff that you do, which is we start with values. We start with the bottom-right

quadrant, which is your ... Again, this is internal underneath this, and this is external. If I could have drawn a little old time movie camera, that helps. That's a cue that everything over here is what you can see, touch, feel, the behavior, everything else.

We start in the bottom right quadrant. The question you're answering here ... The questions you're answering here, it could be broad. We're going to zero in on your art practice, but when I'm doing this with my clients in general, I might just say, "Who or what is important to you and how do you want to show up in the world?" Now what do you want to do, but how do you want to be?" I happen to know for you that you really care about transmitting ideas to people and connecting to people.

It might be my family matters to me. It might be health matters to me. It's super important that this is not what you think you ought to feel, how you ought to feel, but it's what you do feel. What really deeply matters to you as an artist. What kind of an artist do you want to be? Why do you make art? What's important about it for you?

Nicholas Wilton: I like the journey, the reminder of transformation.

Rachel Davis: Journey, transformation.

Nicholas Wilton: Oddly, I like the collective journey, being part of that.

Rachel Davis: What do you mean there? Tell me more.

Nicholas Wilton: When I make art, it is solitary, but I frame it and think about it in terms of who else can I share this with? I want to share it with my posse.

Rachel Davis: I'm going to write community matters to you.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, community, right. The artists that are out there. I really like the thing of making art and then sharing what I'm learning. It gives me confidence and then also I feel like there's more momentum to what I'm doing when it's part of a bigger ... I feel more connected. I like the connection. I like connecting to people. I think that's what it is.

Rachel Davis: Okay. We might be able to distill this if we want. I don't see any reason to distill it, but if you wanted to, you might say, "Connection matters to me as an artist."

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right, right.

Rachel Davis: And journeying. Is there something? This is plenty and great. Is there something about your actual work that you might want to say? What do



you want to transmit in your work? This is important and there's no doing this wrong or trying to give-

- Nicholas Wilton: I want to transmit the feeling of my aliveness and the chronicle of a growing sensitivity to life that is shown in my art. It's poetry almost. That feels like that is I think a worthwhile pursuit. It's very much the pursuit.
- Rachel Davis: Great. The question here ... What matters? What deeply matters? What matters to me as an artist? That's the big question for this one. This is the way you do. You always start here. It's important to know again what your north star is.
- Nicholas Wilton: Of course, right, this is my north star.
- Rachel Davis: If you don't know that, you're going to lose your way.
- Nicholas Wilton: This is the inspiration board. This is the desire board.
- Rachel Davis: Correct. When you're doing this, you want ... If somebody says something like, "I want to make pretty pictures, you'd want to ask more questions to yourself about that."
- Nicholas Wilton: Yes, sure, sure.
- Rachel Davis: That's okay, but like, "Why do I like making pretty pictures? Because it makes me feel connected to the world around me." You want to make this meatier in that. Otherwise, it's just going to not do much for you. You always go in this order, one, two, three, four. I like to refer to this one as the logic free zone, the bottom one, because this is what's all the internal crap, gunk, issues that gets in the way of you showing up this way to the extent that you get in your own way this way.
- Nicholas Wilton: I'm not chasing my art as much as I could because I'm so involved with community and making online programs and working that out. I could get further in it if I was just focused on that. What am I ... Fear of missing out, like, "I want to ...
- Rachel Davis: Oh great.
- Nicholas Wilton: It's really important for me to push my art along. Right now, because of my move and everything, it's been a couple of weeks and I feel very anxious about like, "I need to make some art." I feel like an imposter. If I'm not making art, that's what I'm supposed to be doing.
- Rachel Davis: Is the FOMO ... Is the fear of missing out because you want to do all these other things that you ... Because that makes you feel-

Nicholas Wilton: I just want to make sure that I'm moving the art and contributing something substantial. I know that that's not possible just occasionally doing paintings.

Rachel Davis: Let's segue to the book that you want to write that you're finding reasons not to write.

Nicholas Wilton: Yes, that's a good one.

Rachel Davis: What are some other fears like maybe I can't write, maybe I don't have something important to say? Maybe I'm not good enough. That's the stuff that shows up here is stuff that it's ... Again, it's logic free zone. It keeps coming back. It's the old crapola.

Nicholas Wilton: This opportunity and what I am doing in my programs and courses and in Art2Life that I feel like I have a responsibility. I'm the guy to explain this whole thing. The book form of it for the larger audience is challenging for me. It's like, "Oh my God, maybe I won't do this."

Rachel Davis: Maybe you can't.

Nicholas Wilton: Maybe I can't. Maybe I won't. Maybe it won't be good enough to cut the muster. I know I can self publish a book. It's not that, but it's like to really do ... I want to do an amazing book.

Rachel Davis: Got it.

Nicholas Wilton: It has yet to happen.

Rachel Davis: "Maybe it won't be good enough. I want to do an amazing book, and maybe I'm an imposter in the amazing department." Whatever.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, yeah. [crosstalk 00:51:59].

Rachel Davis: Sometimes it might be perfectionism. [crosstalk 00:52:02] amazing book.

Nicholas Wilton: I feel very happy with what happens in a workshop. It's amazing. For many reasons, the book needs to do the same thing on a larger scale and I don't know how to do that yet.

Rachel Davis: Again, you don't have to go there if you don't feel like it, but I'm going to encourage people to do this. If it's not amazing, then what?

Nicholas Wilton: With my agent, she's experienced a workshop and she's like, "This needs to be a book." I'm showing her my ideas and how I'm presenting this, and she's like, "Yeah, that doesn't have the juice. It's not the same."

Doesn't have the juice." She won't waste her time. It's not like she's brutal, but we're not messing around here. This has got to be a really great contribution.

Rachel Davis: Okay, has to be amazing. See, [crosstalk 00:52:52].

Nicholas Wilton: If it doesn't happen, I guess it's a bummer, but it's not ...

Rachel Davis: You'll be okay?

Nicholas Wilton: Oh yeah.

Rachel Davis: What deeply matters to me as an artist, the old gunk and the logic-free zone, stuff that gets in the way of me showing art this way in the way of showing up. Again, I can write this up in a more coherent way. "Of showing up." Again, this is the world that everybody can see. One of the metaphors they gave when they were teaching this to us was in terms of fishing, that you take the bait. Apparently, the people who did this matrix lived in a place where there's a lot of catch and release fishing. The places where catch and release fishing happens, the fish have learned not to fight when they ... They've learned that they're going to be thrown back. If they take the bait, they don't fight.

This is part of what we're going to try to do. We're going to try to not fight. When you get hooked, we just want you as soon as possible recognize that you're hooked and you're still going to get on the boat. You're going to be a little bruised, but if you fought for 45 minutes, you're going to be worse. What we want you to do is recognize it as quickly as possible and not fight.

What does it look like when you take the bait, when the fear of inadequacy or the fear of not being good enough or, "Maybe I can't figure out how to put the juice into this book," what happens? What happens in the world in terms of do you do everything, but write? That kind of stuff. What are some of the behaviors that show up when you're biting that hook?

Nicholas Wilton: Maybe I compensate in other areas that are low hanging fruit to make myself and others perceive me to be adequate.

Rachel Davis: Got it.

Nicholas Wilton: To compensate.

Rachel Davis: It's compensating other areas. Deal with low hanging fruit. You want to be as specific as possible when you're doing this again because this is going to be a visual too. You're going to have your whole map of what

you're doing and not doing so that when you see yourself, those low hanging fruit might be ... Again, some of them might be work that if you weren't using it in the service of avoiding wouldn't be ... It'd be fine. You'll know because you're paying attention. I forgot.

Nicholas Wilton: I think maybe another one might be disconnect, go radio silent.

Rachel Davis: I forgot something super important. Nick, noticing ... In the center of whatever grid that you're making is ... This is your grid. This is Nick noticing what's happening. Your position in this ... I'll walk people through at the end ... is that you're paying attention. There's no right or wrong here. This is called the meditation for people who won't meditate. You're just paying attention to how you roll. Are you moving away from what you want towards what you want or away. When you bite the away stuff, what does it look like? Or you notice the away stuff and maybe when you're noticing, you're more likely to be able to make a choice like, "Okay, I'm vulnerable right now because that inadequacy feeling is coming up. I'm vulnerable to doing that."

Nicholas Wilton: Right, so another one would be saying yes to things just because they're offered because it's an inclusion like, "Hey Nick, do you want to go hang out." I'm like, "Yeah." Actually, I don't, but I do because someone wanted me to go hang out.

Rachel Davis: Got it. Got it. That makes you feel adequate and wanted.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, but the discernment is not ...

Rachel Davis: Right. Exactly.

Nicholas Wilton: It's not dialed in because I've forgotten where I'm trying to head.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. That's why it was super important to put that in the center.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, yeah, yeah, correct.

Rachel Davis: Usually when I'm doing it, I do the circle first because that's the most important. Again, it could be anything. For some people, it could be Pinterest watching, all the things that you do to not ... It could be TV. Could be working. For me, I'm having some interesting abstract time because I'm avoiding doing figurative. Again, usually I wouldn't see that as ... But again, contextually because I know what I'm avoiding, that for me is an away move. It's away from what I want to be doing. It's all context driven. There's nothing inherently bad about saying yes to people.

Then on this one, the question here is what does it look like when I take the bait, whatever the metaphor is. Here is what does it look like when I'm living ... What do those behaviors look like? Again, you want as details as you can so you could say, "Ah, okay." When you're at the end of the day, I ask people to, again, take a screenshot of it because everybody loses it. As you go through ... If you're actually doing it and taking a look at it three, four, five times a week and just saying ... You're just checking in with yourself. Where have I been living? Where have I been hanging out. Then you'll start to, "Whoa, that was ... I didn't recognize that that was a me move. I did not recognize that, but it totally was."

Nicholas Wilton: This is [crosstalk 00:58:05]. You'll just keep doing it.

Rachel Davis: Exactly. You want to be noticing not a machine, but really getting discernment. That's a good word. It's a discernment noticing machine. What does it look like when you're on the road? Why does the book matter?

Nicholas Wilton: I feel like it becomes a much bigger conversation. I was always making art in my bedroom or in the side room. The idea ... The cool thing about Art2Life and what I've discovered is that there's a bigger relationship to art to life making. That's a bigger question, one that I'm still learning about. It's like, "If I can ... That's what this book is about. It's about the art of life. It isn't for a painter to learn how to paint. It has that, but it's on the skinny branches of reaching out further. I don't think that content's been part out, so I feel like it's the big uncharted. It's the bigger question it's challenging. I think it is the most ... It possibly could be the most helpful thing I could ever do in my life for many, many, many people. We're not artists.

Rachel Davis: Let's think. The why for the book is what we're answering. Why book? Why book? It's to reach way more people in a deeply, meaningful way. What would it look like if you were on the road to making this ultimate connection through the book? What would we be seeing you do?

Nicholas Wilton: Not stress.

Rachel Davis: How do you mean?

Nicholas Wilton: I would have space in my life.

Rachel Davis: You wouldn't be packing in so much.

Nicholas Wilton: Yes, yes, yes.

Rachel Davis: Spaciousness, not so tightly scheduled?

Nicholas Wilton: Yes, right, right, right. In a heightened state of joy. I think I have to be it to write it.

Rachel Davis: Ah, okay. And the joy would look like what?

Nicholas Wilton: The joy that you feel when you've taken the day and you've gone on a hike and there's this beautiful day and you ... The joy coming from the awareness that you have infinite possibilities. It's not a cup half full. It's a cup ... Your cup actually is overflowing and that you can provide so much ... There's so much.

Rachel Davis: Okay, now I want to get a little bit more granular about it.

Nicholas Wilton: Okay.

Rachel Davis: What would you be actually doing to make that book happen?

Nicholas Wilton: I would be setting time aside.

Rachel Davis: What kind of time?

Nicholas Wilton: Hours, uninterrupted time. Morning times. Protected times.

Rachel Davis: I've set protected time aside. I would suggest to you-

Nicholas Wilton: Time by myself.

Rachel Davis: I would suggest to you if I were working with you that exactly what you say in Art2Life. Don't say you have to have five hours to do art.

Nicholas Wilton: Right, right.

Rachel Davis: I would say forget the many hours sacred business. Apply what you know to this. We need for you, when you look at this grid, to be able to look at it and say, "Huh. I'm still not doing it."

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah. Saying yes to things. I'm going to have to say no to some things.

Rachel Davis: Absolutely. Then you're going to have to think, "What if they don't include me anymore." [crosstalk 01:01:33].

Nicholas Wilton: I like saying yes to those. I have a lot of things I want to say yes to.

Rachel Davis: Also, you're a fun person who enjoys people, so you want to say yes. When you're sitting by yourself, you may have to ... Again, one of the questions is what feelings are you willing to put up with in order to get here. We are never going to get rid of the fear of ... "What if I can't do

it?" That's going to probably keep showing up, but we want you to be able to do this even though that shows up.

Nicholas Wilton:

Exactly.

Rachel Davis:

It's the ultimate in connection and connection is what you're about. You're going to be setting protected times. You're going to say no to people, say no to invitations, to social invitations. That's not going to be easy for you. Anything else?

Nicholas Wilton:

Yeah, and doing less possibly for the Art2Life vision. This is Art2Life, but it's not ...

Rachel Davis:

Stepping back from this?

Nicholas Wilton:

Yes. Maybe we won't do that cool next thing that we were thinking of doing and I have to postpone.

Rachel Davis:

Back on some Art2Life vision for the book.

Nicholas Wilton:

Right.

Rachel Davis:

For the connection. It's not the book. It's what the book does. This is fine. We could go on more, but this is plenty.

Nicholas Wilton:

This is great. I get it. So you can just see ...

Rachel Davis:

Right. Screenshot. You're in the middle noticing. Again, when I give this to people, what they ... I don't know. I lost the top to this, but when I give this to people, I've started saying this now. People will come back and you'll say, "I'll didn't do it. I started doing it, but I was really bad because I was here."

Nicholas Wilton:

People fill it in.

Rachel Davis:

I do it with them in the session. I write stuff and they right stuff and they take their copy and I keep a copy. I will invite them to see it as an open document because if they're actually using it, they're going to notice more.

Nicholas Wilton:

Because I now notice that fourth square of how it should look, why does that make it possible for me to actually do that?

Rachel Davis:

Because you're going to ... Most people just, again, they don't like the uncomfortable feeling, so they'll do a lot of stuff to avoid them. They're not paying attention. If you're stopping and paying attention, you have much more of a chance of making a choice. What happens is you've a

million choices every day. If you're paying attention, if you're actually paying attention, you know every second night, I'm pulling this out of on my phone. I set a reminder on my phone and I'm checking this out. First of all, the fact that you know you're checking in with yourself, makes you more like, "I want to be good at stuff." I want to have good stuff to enjoy.

Whether or not you do, there's no way for somebody to fail this exercise except for not to do it. Anything they notice is great. If I see you in the hall and I say, "Nick, how's your grid doing," you say, "Well, Rachel, I've been doing it. I'm noticing it. I'm not making any changes," I say, "Great noticing, Nick. You're going to want to ... What tends to happen is when people are paying attention, it's not that they'll always choose like, "Oh, if I do this, I'll be further away from my goals," but that is the question you're asking. The question you're asking is, "Okay, this happened. Did that bring me closer to that connection, ultimate connection or did it take me further away?"

Nicholas Wilton: It's just being aware of your north star.

Rachel Davis: It's just being aware of your north star.

Nicholas Wilton: Or whatever [inaudible 01:04:57].

Rachel Davis: And being aware of the stuff that pulls you away from your north star.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, right.

Rachel Davis: And being compassionate. Compassion's really important. Again, if people don't have compassion for themselves, it's just really hard. There's a wonderful site by a local person. Her name is [inaudible 01:05:12] and she has selfcompassion.org. It's really good because people really struggle with that. I have resources that I can give for people.

Nicholas Wilton: Yeah, we'll share that. So people can fill this in on their own?

Rachel Davis: Totally or I can ...

Nicholas Wilton: And start to ... We'll have this in a PDF and people can-

Rachel Davis: This is the set of questions. I encourage people to pay close attention, close regular attention.

Nicholas Wilton: You're not fixing anything here. It's just an awareness thing.



Rachel Davis: It's an awareness practice. The awareness opens up the possibility for making different choices in the direction of where you want to go.

Nicholas Wilton: Fantastic.

Rachel Davis: The question is how do you get here living the life you want to live even though this is not going to go away? You get it by paying close attention, by trying to forgive yourself, by crying uncle. It's not magic. It doesn't happen right away. One of the things you can do ... This is a sub exercise. All these other things that you do, you might take all of them and say, "How do they work in the short term? How do they work?" They probably work really well in the short term. It's helpful for people to see that because people end up kicking themselves, "I can't believe I'm doing this."

You're doing it for a reason because you don't want to feel shitty. That's why you're doing it. If you keep doing that, that allows some compassion for yourself. "Okay, fine. I'm not an idiot. I'm not a loser. I'm a human struggling. It's hard. It's just hard. If I can stop, giving myself a hug and then a nudge, you're doing both. You want acceptance, empathy and a nudge.

Nicholas Wilton: Yes, okay. That's great.

Rachel Davis: You're not going to get here with just the acceptance and empathy.

Nicholas Wilton: Okay.

Rachel Davis: This is it.

Nicholas Wilton: Great. The plan is that this matrix, you can download this and start growing that awareness. I love this because it's not unrelated to art making. You become more sensitive the more you try things and the more you go out on the skinny branches of what is possible for you. This almost is for the life version of that. It'd be awesome if you did this and you can share it in the forum under the master class. Rachel'll be in there. We can keep working with this because I just think it's fantastic.

Rachel Davis: Like anything, it works best if you're deliberate about how you'll use it. If you set a reminder on your phone that four times a week ... It can be five minutes. You're just looking at it and saying, "Where have I been hanging out? Which quadrant have I been hanging out in?" Again, try to do it with no judgment or as little judgment as possible. Just say like, "That's interesting." Just have an attitude of curiosity about it. It's like, "Whoa, I did not ... Sometimes you don't realize it. "I had no idea that that was an away move." No idea, but it totally was not that I'm paying attention.

Nicholas Wilton: [crosstalk 01:08:11]. That's great.

Rachel Davis: Right.

Nicholas Wilton: Listen, thank you so much.

Rachel Davis: You're very welcome.

Nicholas Wilton: You guys, keep the questions coming. Again, you can post them all in the forum. I have a feeling that there's going to be a part two to this. I have a feeling.

Rachel Davis: Of course.

Nicholas Wilton: We'll [inaudible 01:08:24]. I love this stuff.

Rachel Davis: Great.

Nicholas Wilton: Great. Thanks again.

Rachel Davis: You're very welcome.