

## Taking a Break from Social Media with Shannon Craig-Morphew

Hello and welcome to Down To Art. I'm your host Kristy Gordon, and today I'm chatting with the amazing artist Shannon Craig, about taking a break from social media. So welcome Shannon. It's so good to have you. Hi Kristy. Thanks for having me. I'm really excited to be on the show today. I'm really excited to talk to you, especially about this topic.

So Shannon is, I know, and so Shannon is well known for her energetic and linear style of paintings, which she's exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions. And she actually currently has two solo shows coming up at the lock gallery in both Toronto and Calgary that opens on May 14th. Her work is in private, public, and corporate collections throughout Canada, the United States,

the UK, and Ireland. And I am just so excited to be talking to you about this today, Shannon, about your experience with putting down the phone and social media. And it's something that I've been working on too. So when did this start for you? Like when did you start thinking about cutting back your use of technology? Well, I noticed like as Covid kind of progressed that I was using it more,

like I was kind of leaning on it when I was stressed out, when I was bored. I didn't have the normal human interactions that I was used to. So I was trying to find some way of, I guess, compensating for that. And also just thinking, well, I don't have anything else to do. I might as well see what people are up to.

Yeah, it kind of was a bit of a slippery slope, you know, because, and I guess the, the first, it's kind of silly, but the first time I realized I was using it too much was cuz I was, I didn't wanna have a shower because the shower, I can't have my phone in the shower. If I'm in a bath, I can watch, I can watch videos in the bath. I was like, this is just weird. Like, I have to do something about this. And also I was like having to fall asleep to listen to podcasts. That's the only way I could fall asleep. And then in the car, like, it just found its way into every aspect of my life.

And like my kids are talking to me. I was kinda like noticing that I'm not paying attention to what they're saying all the time, or my husband or anybody. Yeah. You know what I mean? So it's, yeah, it was kind of obvious. Yeah. Well and good for you too. Like Yeah, it's totally infiltrated my life too.

And I think it gets in the way of like my relationships and just like everything like, and I, I like what you said too about how it kind of stemming out of like not having like normal interactions with people. Cuz I think that like, that depth of interaction when we're like actually interacting with people in real life, it leaves like, yeah.

Like kind of a big hole. And then it's like this social media stuff though, it, it never actually hits the spot. This is what my theory is. And so it just, no, You're right. It's all these things. Yeah.

Yeah. It's like, I mean, okay, so what happened at first, cuz the problem too is if you're addicted to something and if something's so ingrained in your life,

you don't see the changes it makes your life like, it becomes kinda insidious in the way that you don't know. So it sort of was like, okay, I'm gonna do an experiment where I take it away completely. Like cold Turkey, no music, no podcast, no video, like nothing. So basically no multitasking. So like I'm doing one thing and if I'm painting,

I'm just painting. If I am talking to someone, I'm just talking to someone if I'm, and just to kind of see what happened as an experiment to see how if I would change my habits, you know?

Yeah. Whether it would be the same. And it was, I was like eye-opening. What happened after a week, actually after an hour of stopping it.

Totally. So stopping it, I noticed, right? Yeah. Cause I just kept picking it up. Like I picked up, picked up my phone, picked up my phone, but I wasn't doing anything with it. Oh my gosh. I mean, it's almost incredible though that you were even able to like put it down all, all of it down for a week.

Oh, it was, but I was serious about it. I was serious and like I was gonna do this. The funniest thing though was like, so I was like, I was kind of like, I'd find myself on my phone, I wouldn't even know how I picked it up. Like I'd be just at social media and I was like, well how did this happen?

I wasn't even aware of it. Yeah. And then I got bored and I started calling, I guess on day three I started calling people cuz oh my gosh, I'm so bored. There's nothing to do. And then, so I called my aunt and I swear she was like, is everything okay? How are your parents? Everybody I called was like,

is there an emergency? Like, there's something wrong. Like, she calls me at nine o'clock in the morning cause that's my breakfast time and I'm bored. I wanna talk to someone. B breakfast. She's like, is your, are your parents okay? Are you okay? Is your kids okay? Everything's fine, everything's great. Like, how are you doing?

What's going on? Anything in the news? You know what I mean? Like, Totally like, no, this is a normal conversation. Yeah. I'm just normal. I'm just calling cuz I care and I want to talk to you. It's like no one hears that. Right? Totally. Yeah. It, it is, it's like weird now to just like phone someone like,

especially not to like, oh, text first. And then, you know, just phoning them outta the blue. Oh, there's something wrong if you're calling somebody. Like, and most of the time I call my friends, they won't pick up, they will not pick up the phone. Yeah. But then I'll text and I get a reply right away,

like, Hey, how's it going? I'm like, what? Totally. Yeah. But like, but how did you, like, oh, by the way, I can totally relate to the thing where my hands, just like, if I try and stay off Instagram, I'll sometimes find myself just on Instagram and I've put the app far, like four pages over into a little like box in my phone.

Like, but still my, my thumb knows where to find it. And Sudden, oh, that's so weird. I Can't even believe it. Like, how did I even open Instagram? You're possessed. It's so weird. It's craziness. It's so weird. And I start and I'm scrolling and I'm like, what do I, oh, and that's the other thing I noticed too,

is that like, I'm not enjoying this. No. Like, cause you're spending hours on something. Like what, what are you getting for your time? Yeah. Like when you spend time on something, what are you getting in return for your time? Totally. And it becomes pretty obvious. Like, are you getting happiness from the time on social media?

No. Are you really getting educated? Like maybe a little bit like, you know, there's all these things you can examine in your own life. Like Yeah. I mean it's different for everybody though. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. But actually that's like really true. So I did like 12, I managed to get 12 days recently of only checking my text messages twice a day and only going on Instagram we a day. Wow. Because I was trying to find a balance. Like some of it I do need to still do. So I didn't wanna just cut it out completely. But like with that boundary around it, it was like very, very limited. And so I got like 12 days. I was like counting. But then I like slipped just like a few days ago and I cannot get back.

Like I totally can't get back. But what I did notice is that when I would check on those 12 days that I was doing this and I was only checking like texts twice a day and Instagram once a day for the five minutes that I was on Instagram, where the like 10 minutes that I was answering texts or whatever, I would have like a lot of anxiety.

Like it would feel negative. Yeah. Like, so the hit that I was like, the hit that I was like expect, hoping all day long. I would look forward to like this check on Instagram all day long. But then like that five minutes, it was always pretty much like, almost always, it just made me feel worse. It actually,

I know almost never even made me feel better. Yeah. Yeah. It's weird. Like since, since I stopped using social media and stuff, I don't have any, there's less like, apprehension when I see people now. Like I'll even stalk people on the street. Like if I see a friend, like if I'm dropping my kids off, I'll see them.

Like I'll block ahead, I'll scoot faster to catch up with them. Yeah. Like you're like, what's Up? What's going on? People? Yeah. Yeah. Like I'm like, oh my gosh, there's a person, like they have a lot more meaning when it's like it's, they're important. Like that social interaction's important. Like, I mean,

I'm misaligned with how society is now, so I'm maybe a little more chatty than I should be. A little bit more like I Before, but I don't, I saw you recently, you were very nice to talk to. I was so happy. See Kristy, I was like, what is going on? That's the thing, right? It's like, oh my gosh, this person is super more important now. Yeah. Like conversations are more interesting now. Yeah. I mean, I swear some of them like try to drive to work now to, but I think, you know, I think it's, I think it's a good thing. I brought up a lot more friendships. I've carried on a lot more friendships and I,

I still text and stuff like, but it has to be with somebody, you know, and not just like, like kind of looking at their Instagram. Well, I mean, yeah. It's nice to see what people are up to on Instagram though. Yeah. You Know, it's nice to see. I know. Up to on Facebook. Yeah.

So actually that's like the next question. Like how do you find the balance? Like, you know, like of how of, because I feel like there's ways that we kind of almost have to like use like technology we Don't have. Okay, well we Like almost kind do and then, or you don't, This is the Yeah, yeah. No,

but this is the difference though, is if you're addicted to something. Okay. So yeah. Technology is addictive. It changes your brain. This is a sign I actually looked some stuff up, so it's like, oh cool. Every time you look at something, I think most people know this. You get like a dopamine release. Yeah. Like a happy hormone release when you click on something.

Totally. So it's basically like changing your brain to sort of want this, this fast little fix. Yeah. And they did studies where it actually lowers your gray matter in your brain. Oh. The same amount as a drug addict would have their gray matter and or somebody who's like an, like a, a gambling addict. Oh yeah, they did.

They did like brain scans. And someone who high use of social media was the same as like a drug addict basically. Whoa. And that's, yeah, That's all. Yeah. It surprised me. But it does surprise me. So we lose gray matter in the brain. Is that What it Yeah, it's partly due to like neuroplasticity. Like, cuz I mean,

about 10 years ago they didn't know that there was something called, they thought your brain developed as a child. And it basically kind of stayed that way. Oh. But now they realize, I think you did even a podcast neuroplastic. I did. Yeah. Yeah. But actually we didn't get into this type of thing so much. That's interesting. Yeah.

So what happens your brain via the, the like what's your, oh, it's like the inputs you're giving your brain, it changes via those inputs. So it's like that's how you learn new sports if you're meditating, that's how you, you kind grow more ma like gray matter by meditating, by doing physical activity and stuff like that. Oh. So your brain kind of adjusts to what you give it. And if you're just giving it this constant low dopamine response for passive passively taking in information, like that's how your brain starts rewiring itself around that. You know? So it's scary. Yeah. I mean they're still researching like a lot of these studies, they're still sort of starting out. They need a lot more data, but a lot of it's showing kind of some scary stuff.

Wow. I saw the Netflix documentary, I think, what was it called? Social that one. Oh, I haven't seen that yet. I should, I wish I like, I should have written the name down. I'll probably like insert it in when I reed the podcast. Type in like YouTube. Like our Netflix or like brain development or No,

It, yeah, there was like a whole one like about social media On Oh, was there? Oh, I'm gonna watch that. Yeah, it was really good. Oh, I forget what it's called. I know, it's funny though, to be like, yeah, I mean to be like, I haven't been watching Netflix for a little while, but I don't think Netflix is a big addictive problem for me. But like, I just was trying to like cut out like a bunch of things all at once. Yeah. Like my whole thing was that, so I looked up how long to change an addiction. So if you're addicted something, oh, how long does it take to quit that addiction?

Long term? Yes. And sadly it was three months. It was 90 Days. Oh. Oh. So if I'm, so if I'm going to, if I'm actually gonna rewire my brain so it's not addicted anymore to this kind of thing and I need a real, to have a really good understanding of how I'm gonna use it going forward, I decided I'd go 90 days without it.

That's amazing. Have you done 90 days now? Yeah, but like, there's the Johnny Depp Amber Heard trial. I know, it's so bad. But that broke me a little bit. I was like, I watched one video where I'm like, oh my gosh, did that really happen? Ugh, I haven't been following that. But that's interesting.

No, don't do. It's not, it's not worth it. Sorry. But that got, I'm like, I'll watch a little bit cause I'll check the news, you know, once a day. Like, so I'm not like completely oblivious to what's going on in the world. Cuz there's a lot going on in the world right now, Sadly. Yeah, that's, that's true. Yeah. I feel like that type of thing where you still have a boundary around the use, like once a day is kind of like, sort like, that sort of works for me cuz it's not compulsive then, cuz you're only checking once a day. So that seems like a kind of balance. Like Yeah. And like I'll have to check my messages on Facebook.

I like, I can't completely cut it out. Cause I don't wanna cut the people out, like the people in my life out or whatever. I know, I know. I've got like five people Have like a few people that I only use like Facebook or only use Instagram to like message, you know? And so if I like Yeah, cut those apps out,

I would be cutting those people out. Oh yeah. I know. It's true. You wouldn't like, I swear I wouldn't talk, wouldn't know what anybody was doing. Yeah, totally. So it's, it's gonna be complicated. Like when I eventually decide if I wanna include it back in my life. It's, it's a lot like smoking though, where it's like, it's so addictive that if you do a little bit, like maybe you'll be just hooked again. You know what I mean too? Like Yeah. That's what seems to be happening to me right now. Like, as I said, I had like 12 days, like a little while ago, and then the last few, like a few days ago, actually it was around my show,

like in Ottawa. Yeah. I like thought, oh, I better go on Instagram more so that I can like properly promote what's happening here. And I thought, Okay, it's your livelihood, right? Yeah, Yeah, yeah. Totally. So I thought, okay, that's like really reasonable. That's not compulsive. I should definitely do that. But then it just started a whole new like spiral of like, well, you know, the next day maybe I'll just go on. And then it's just spiraled on control and I'm like on there nonstop, but I need to get back. But it's so hard the It's A scrolling. Yeah. Yeah. It's, it's a group. They actually did it. They actually made it. So it was like those slot machines, they just, yeah. They base it off of that when they're making them great. I know some people who like change their phones to black and white so that, that it takes a little bit of like, you know, like then it's not got color and that's like slightly less. It's still I'm sure very addictive, but it's slightly less addictive. And I've like turned off all the sounds so I don't get Really, well my only friend that's decided to do it too, But No, no, but you tried Christie and like, I'm gonna keep the, most of the people I talk, their eyes glaze over and I see that they're backing away from me when I'm talking about it. And I have this zeal in this of someone who's just like starting a new fad diet.

You know what I mean? Where I'm like, it's life-changing. You gotta do this. They're like, it's Life. I like, it makes me feel very hopeful. But if only I could get it. The friends that I've like talked to, they're like, they like, they're kind of mind blown. Like, they're like, oh my God. Like I could never do that. Oh yeah. Or like, I tried for two days and I, I couldn't do it. Like, I thought I was going crazy like the first day where I was just like, my brain didn't know what to do. It didn't know what to do. I was staring at the window lock, looking at birds on the trees and I'm just like,

oh, that's really A good strategy. That's new. And I was like, oh. And I had a lava lamp too. I'd look at my lava lamp. Oh, That's actually a pretty good one. I slept a lot the first day that I started that 12 day abt. Like, you know, coming down the, but then now, like today I was planning on it, but I've already gone on Instagram like 50 times. I dunno like Oh, I know. It's so hard. Yeah. But there's a time and place for everything too. Yeah, yeah. So you would Like, oh, the funny thing. Yeah, tell me, sorry. Oh no, no, go for it. The Funny thing was like when I started painting without music or podcasts,

Oh, that seems So hard. Thing things would pop up in my head. Like, let's go out to the ballgame. Like all these weird songs that like, for no reason, I would just circle in my head. I'm like, why is this what's going on? I was gonna, I was gonna, yeah, I was gonna write it down. Like all the different things that popped up my head while I was painting. Like, it was just weird how, what would bubble up like my consciousness. That's interesting. Yeah. My brain was just trying to find something, you Know? Yeah. Oh, it seems really hard not to paint with like, something going on in the background that Yeah.

I wanna see how it changed how I painted and how my work was and my, has it changed? Yeah, I think it has really, You know. Yeah. It's, it's interesting. Like I'm more, I just wanna like, I'm more like focused on my work because it's like having a conversation with two people at the same time, but they're both talking.

Yeah. It's hard to pick up what one person's saying. So your brain, you are making your brain sort of, I mean, I'm only assuming, but you're kind of making your brain double task a bit, you know? That's true. That's true. It's really helpful to kind of hear the ways that it's kind of benefited you. Like now that you've kind of a little bit come through to the other side, or at least you're like, well on your way. Yeah. You know, I think it's motivating. Like, I think we need to You Be motivated. Yes. You get do it Christian. I wanna, I'm going maybe it feels

like such a letdown that I've already failed. Like I can't, I'll never be able to. That happens.

Yeah,

it does. Like, yeah. And, and, but it also feels a letdown that I've already gone on Instagram like 10 times or however many times today. Like, I would like to be like, oh, as of today, but even if I like start right now, I still will never have today as my first day. But I should Just, yeah. It's not about that, it's Just the way Yeah. Just be easy on yourself and when there's a time if you need it, it'll happen. You know what I mean? Yeah, Yeah. Personal, like when you start on this kind of thing, you Know? Yeah. And it does get easier. Like I remember the first day was super hard,

like the second and third day were very hard. And then by like the 12th day it was like kind of getting easier and I was really enjoying it. Like, Yeah, it can be like right now. I like, well I'm painting like I love the quiet sound. Like the quiet in my studio is like, I relish it now. I love it. Wow. But then someone will play music next door in my other, one of the other studios faces and I'll just lose my shit. Like, they're start like once started playing jazz and they started like kind of scatting to it. Oh my God. But then I'm like, no, it's okay because I, I just, my brain wants to focus on something.

Right. So I'm like, I think I end up putting some classical music on or something. But yeah, like I was just like, I like that quiet. Like I love, I love the stillness And stuff. Actually. I love quiet too. Yeah. Yeah. Part of why I play music though all the time, like in New York is cuz there's always sound.

So I always Oh yeah. Canceling it out. Yeah. Yeah. We have to do that. And like the traffic and stuff and Yeah. And yeah, just all the sounds I need to like sooth myself with my own, my own generated sound. This is the other thing I wanna say too. I have a point about I realize it's okay to be bored.

Be bored, Bored. That's so powerful. Like, b be bored. I, well I've noticed two things during covid. One's not related to this, but one of 'em be bored and the other's be, be okay to be sad and feel bad. Do you know what I mean? Yeah, totally. It's okay to feel bad. It's okay to be bored. Like these are different states, but they're not, they don't come with nothing Positive. Yeah. That's, You know, boredom makes you kind of go out your comfort zone. It makes you do something different, you know? Yeah. Yeah. That's true. And also, like, sometimes with my boredom, cuz for some reason I find boredom really uncomfortable.

But I sometimes think about like how I'm always frantic and stressed out trying to do things that I just want to be like able to relax or whatever. And like, maybe if I wasn't feeling bored, instead I would be feeling like serene. Like in the same time, you know, like That's true. Like opening for serenity as boredom. Oh, I've never had that feeling, serenity feeling. I know. I don't remember what that feels like Neither. Yeah. Yeah. But that, that's like really, I really like that. I think like, like that kind of thought is like the type of stuff too that can open it up. So it's easier to do. Cuz when we're not like, so against feeling bored and being like,

this is like terrible. I have to do something then Yeah, you can just like sit with it and Yeah. Well Sit with, sit with it and feel like, what is boredom? What is this? What's going on right now? Yeah. And say with sadness believe in that too. Like, Like sadness has a lot of other, it has meaning,

so it means whatever you're feeling is has a deep meaning for you. And having a deep meaning for something has, is important and should never be ignored. It means like you really love

somebody or you really, it's always like the other side of a coin almost. Sadness. You can't have it without, without being bonded to something, without being happy, without, you know what I mean? Like, it's just, it's kind of, it, I think it's a, it can teach you a lot. Whoa. I know there's clinical depression and stuff like that, but I think, I think a lot of people wanna be happy all the time or be in a certain thing where I'm feeling good, I'm feeling happy, I'm feeling, but it's like, but no, that's just not, that's not what life is. You know? It's just absolutely not what life is. That's, it's A bunch of things. True. And to expect it to be like that life to expect life to be like that is like, yeah. When we get on these like crazy cycles searching for, Well that's what Instagram does and Facebook does too. It's like, I mean, I know people share a lot of grief on Facebook and a lot on Instagram, like, like losing a family member or so, but, but I think that, I think that really just honoring your feelings and emotions I think is the best place to start. You know, saying like, this is how I'm feeling. I'm just gonna sit with this. Yeah. You're gonna learn from it. You know, it's not, it doesn't feel nice, you know, people try to avoid it, but it's, it's definitely something you can change your view on, I think. Yeah. You make sadness happy. No, I'm just Kidding.

I'm just Happy time. Yeah. I dunno. And there's like a certain like surrender and release. Like when you stop fighting being sad and you're just like, oh, okay, I'm just gonna be sad for a while. Then suddenly there's just like space around it and it's like, it's okay to be sad. Like it actually kind of just opens it up just a little bit where like fighting it off is like more painful or whatever. Like Yeah. It's, it's just like, or that there's a problem. So it's like really sad. So this is a problem. This isn't normal, this isn't good. Yeah. And then you start adding thoughts and feelings around this like that it's something wrong. Totally. Instead of sitting with it and saying, sometimes it feels, sometimes crying even feels comforting sometimes.

Oh, totally. You know, loss is to do with like memory and you know, there's just, there's a lot more going on and that I think, think people realize and try to simplify. Yeah. I like totally, totally agree. And I do find that it can be like really scary to like, feel our feelings. I'm kind of like all about it.

That's like the other kick that I'm like kind of, I've been into for the last like, number of years. Yeah. But like, it's like the feelings can almost convince us that they are so scary that we can't handle them. Like some of the intense ones can feel like really scary, but when you actually start to feel it, you're, it's like, okay, this isn't like as bad as I thought. Like, but it can feel before you get to that point. Like, like it'll practically kill you. Like you totally cannot. I know, I know some that are crushing. Yeah. There's some feelings that, or the things that you've been hiding from for so long that Yeah. Like exposing it feels too.

But those are all just thoughts around it. Right. They're just a concept you've made around the feeling, but those feelings are just something you feel in your body, you know? And that's, yeah. You Know, I mean, but I also, yeah, also practice zen. Oh cool. As a zen center. Like, they've helped me through a lot of stuff too, in terms of just like living in reality, like what's going on right now basically. So, and being aware of what's happening now with, with your feelings, with your thoughts, with what's going on around you, like in this moment, not like your idea about the future of the past or anything. Whoa. That's actually like super powerful cuz that's kind of what we're left with.

If we put down all the ways that we're kind of trying to avoid life. Like with social media and stuff. Yeah, exactly. Like, I mean, like, and, and being aware of when you're using social media,

how your breath is, how your body feels. Is your tight, is your chest tighter when you're on it? You know, are you, what are you, are you registering what you're reading? You know, like they, knowing what's going on when you're doing something is very important. Oh, that's true too. Actually. I did notice that actually I get into a sort of like anxious body state when I'm on like social media, like breathing faster, like more tightness in my body.

Like Yeah. Like I'm almost always like, yeah, that's just like how my body is when I'm on it. Yeah. This kind of rushing, I don't know. Yeah. Yeah. It's weird. I find I have a shower breathing. Yeah. I don't breathe as deeply. And yeah. It's, it's, and there's a lot of information, like how is your Brett brain even taking in the information that you're, you're looking at too? Like, are you It's true. I don't know. It's, it's like, instead of like, what I want, this is all ambitious Shannon, but like No, It's amazing. So, but it's, but if I wanna like learn something, I should take something and learn it from the beginning to end.

Like I should research something. Yeah. Instead of just getting a tiny snippet for a minute that goes by, or even a second. You know what I mean? Yeah. Like, maybe it's better to, to unpack something more and and find out more about it. Yeah. That's like really true. And I think that it kind of also goes back a little bit to what I'm noticing with like, social media or, or even like texting, but all of the ways that like, I think all of the ways that things can be addictive is because it's actually not really fulfilling us. Like it's not actually nourishing, you know? Yeah. And so like when we just like have actually nourishing real interactions with people, like, then we're fulfilled afterwards and it could be hard, like sometimes it's like, like it doesn't have to be like ama like pleasant all believe all the time, but just something that's like really real or whatever. Yeah. It's like nourishing and, and then it doesn't leave that like addictive craving, but like with social media, so maybe even with like the research piece if we're trying to find information, but it's never very much if we were just getting little snippets from like,

It's not, yeah. Oh, another thing I noticed too, where it's like, okay, you know how if you have a diet, the high and fat high in sugar, high and salt, right? It changes your taste buds and what you want. So basically ruins your taste buds for vegetables, for fruit. Yeah. This is something I made up too.

This is another, but I'm thinking like when you have that much content, just scrolling through. Yeah. It makes your regular life maybe not as interesting, you know, like Yeah. Maybe If you Have all these famous authors, you can see their quotes for hours a day. Is your neighbor or your kid is it they're gonna, it's a lot for them to compete with.

Right. Totally. Your time. Actually, I'm remembering now on like maybe the first day that I started that like 12 day abstinence that I'm totally gonna get back to. Oh Yes. I was like, I'd gotten through like the most of the whole day or whatever and it was like 7:00 PM and I was like, oh, what am I gonna do for the last like three hours or so before I fall asleep?

Like, how will I ever get through this? And I just had no idea. So I got like a big blanket. I have like a big fire escape in New York. Oh It's so cute. And I have a lawn chair on there. So I just got a big blanket and like went out and laid on my lawn chair on my sort of fire escape deck. And it turned out the moon was like right in front of my face and it was like the most relaxing experience of my life. And I never would've gone out there if I had been like looking at social media all the, you know, the whole night or whatever. And so like, yeah, it was like so beautiful and magical and it like nature too.



Like we, we get to reconnect to nature and stuff. Oh yeah. Like all the projects. That's what I found after like five days all the projects that I wanted to do. You know, there's projects you wanna do for years. Yeah. They end up in your basement. Like they were all getting dragged out. Like my pianos Out. Yeah.

I got into like, I found this crossword puzzle book. I was just like, I was like finding a gold gold bar in my found puzzle book. I was never been so happy in my life and stuff. It was like a gift from heaven. I was like, this is hour. And then I got my plants growing for the spring, so I'm all say about summer,

so I go plant my little tomatoes dud side. So I started this year year. So all these things I wanted to do. Oh, a hundred percent. I I did it. I've been doing yoga, I'm doing Yeah. Lots of things Also. That's actually so true. I noticed that too. Like I, I used to be like, oh,

I have no time. There's no time in the world. But then when I like started to put it all down, I was like, there's like so much time. Like No I Ever, and so like anything that I would wanna do that can like fill up some time would be like totally doable. And that's from boredom. That's boredom, right.

You get boredom and it's, your brain just switches to something else where it's like, you know, I, maybe I'll write a story or I'm gonna, oh, I started reading Dune. I've been putting off reading Dune for like a year, but now I've been, I'm, I'm over halfway done Dune. Cause I wanna watch the movie, but I didn't wanna not read the book first,

so. Oh yeah. It's a, that's been fun. That's Like amazing. That's a, this is like really inspiring I think. Like remembering what like the vision here is like the vision isn't to be bored out of my mind for the rest of my life. Of My life. The vision is to like be able to do the things that are actually meaningful to my life that are actually normal.

Oh yeah. Yeah. Oh, I lost weight too. I lost weight. My skin cleared up. What else happened? Wow. Yeah. But exercise, I'm not laying around cuz when you're laying around there's nothing to do. That's True. Yeah. I'm not sitting on my chair. So basically I'm walking a lot more. I'm seeing friends. I'm much a billion times happier.

Yeah. I was too for my 12 days. Oh, you'll do it again Chris. Yeah, I'll, I'm gonna start right now. Yeah, it's gonna be, but I need to remind you too, cuz it's easy to slip back honestly. Like even with all the things I've learned, you know? Yeah, yeah. It happened really rapidly for me. Like it was just like that one day, but then the next day I was like, whoa, this is really spiraling. You know, You're like, oh no. I had it happen a couple times too where I'm like, I'm scrolling on it, I'm like, what am I doing? Like this isn't, yeah, it's fine. Just, just this one time.

It's okay. Yeah. It's that one time that makes it turn into like all the time. Yeah. You just have to have rules. Like really, I mean it's like a diet dieting, right. If it's something you need occasionally, you know, like occasionally I have to eat food, so it's hard to diet. Exactly. Yeah. It's totally like That.

You can't live without, I don't think, I think it'd be very hard to live completely without social media right now. Oh, totally. Just like independent artists, you know? So yeah, Instagram's like a really important like part of my art career at this point. But going on there once a day, like totally is all I need to do it.

Like as far as like the business requirements, like Yeah. And also like when you're baking content, you're not on there, you're making content and you can put on your social media. So really only need to be on there to kind of check what people have said about it if they need to correspond. So it's not that it wouldn't be that bad.

No. Yeah. It really doesn't like require me to be on there that much. And if anything, maybe with all the endless amounts of extra time I have, I would be able to like create more content. Oh yeah, yeah. I wanna do it too. But I'm one of those people when I post something, I hate it. I hate myself for it.

Do you know, I mean like, I'll post something on there on Instagram, I'll be like, oh, should I have done that? Like, what have I done? Oh, that's, it's Like so hard. Like, yeah, I've like felt that before too. And it's hard when it's anything related to our work too, because like then like yeah, it just feels so vulnerable, like, Oh my goodness. Yeah. It's so funny. I've been trying to experiment a bit more of my work too. So I put up there and I'm like, oh, what are you gonna say? And then every, any like negative comment, you just take it too much. You know, like Yeah. Yeah.

I, I like totally get that. Yeah, I definitely like was, I was sometimes posting stuff when I was experimenting and then after a while it was like breaking my heart. This was like a few years ago and I think I stopped actually even going on there for like a whole year just cuz it was like, oh Really? Yeah. And actually that was also like my Instagram account wasn't functioning well. So that was the other thing is that like I would see all these other artists who had, like, they had worked the algorithm so they had like a big following or whatever, but I at that time like didn't, so I would like post something and like nobody would like it. And I'd see all my friends with like so many thousands of likes and then I would wouldn't understand that the algorithm like against me.

And so then I would just be like, oh, like people actually don't like my work. Like, I didn't understand, it wasn't even about that. It was about the algorithm, you know? Yeah. I don't know anything, but I haven't figured that out either. Like, I'm not on Instagram enough, but I did try. I have,

I'm a good amount of followers, but yeah, I'm not really, yeah. I haven't figured out either, but Yeah, I know what you mean. Where it's like you post something and it's like, oh, no one's looking at it. Totally. And check on like two minutes later. Yeah, Yeah. Or post something that's like more personal,

like more about me and no one likes it. I'm like totally, I post. It's just like not to do with me. And then they're like, oh, they like it. Yeah. Like why guys? Yeah. That's the stuff that can be like, kind of like paint, like kind of hit a little too close. Oh, I know.

Yeah. But I'm gonna try to be better. I'm just, I'm gonna try, I'm trying, I am trying to get more followers in Instagram and stuff, just so like what I share something, it's just reaches more people, you know? Yeah, totally. Yeah. I like that also. It's like less disheartening. Yeah, I know. It's true.

It's Working better. You're just like, oh, they like it. But that's what makes addictive to where it's like, oh, I got so many likes. I got so Many. Oh, for sure. Yeah. Totally Tell about it. Yeah. No, that's true. But I have to also save my mom and my dad and my brothers have a really good, through me cutting social media. Cause they have to answer 'em with my phone every day. Like I call every one of them every Day. Oh, that's like important. Yeah. I have people that I actually call too, and I'm like so grateful that I do because I don't know, I almost feel like nobody calls anyone anymore. So I'm like,

I know. So My poor mom, Your mom Must has to answer. My mom has to answer. My brothers have to answer. You know what I mean? Yeah. But they, they, they're very really supportive of me and my husband too, so, Yeah. Yeah. That's, that's very cool. What other ways can you think of that Zen?

Like maybe like, helps you with all of this or? Oh, well Put my life in a huge amount of time. I've been, it's the white wins, white wind Zen Center in Ottawa. And I've been going there for the past six years and they've taught me a ton of stuff. They've been instrumental in my quality of life right now. Yeah.

I mean it's more just, just to remind you to live your life as it's happening and not, you know, make stories up about things. People like to exaggerate stuff in their minds and just, just to live, you know, in that way. And they, they're constantly supporting me and it's, it's a great environment. So That sounds really cool.

I have done a little bit of like Buddhist meditation and stuff, but I want to do, I think that would be a really cool thing for me to maybe also start getting into more, you know, as I Oh yeah. I think as you put down one thing, it is a good idea to find something else that you kind of put in like Yeah,

no, it's true. Yeah. I think meditation would be an excellent thing to do instead of doing videos. Cuz again, it's building that brain, that gray matter and it's helping your brain, you know, rewire. It's like, yeah, because it's like, it's like, think about a road like neuroplasticity works as if, like you think about a trail on a forest.

So if you make a new path, it's pretty narrow, but the more you walk down the path that kind of wider the path gets and easier to follow. It's like that. And then if you're not on a path for a, a long time, it kind, it'll grow over. Yeah. You Know, that's kind of how your brain works with neuroplasticity.

So if you're sitting and practicing your, your training zen like with my you practice n training, then I'm creating my, my brain's getting used to that way of thinking, like feeling my hands, my feet, the air, the smells. You know, it's, it's opening my, my awareness out to what's happening around me and in my body and stuff.

So it's like the opposite of when you're, you know, what, you know that feeling when you're like looking at a screen, all you're noticing is that screen and, and that feeling of that dopamine. You know what I mean? So, yeah. It's very different. That's, that's really cool. So when you like meditate, how long do you meditate for?

Well, I sit for about half, like half an hour a day. Wow. So I'll sit in the morning about nine 30. Yeah. And then we also do, like, when the Zen center's open, we'll do like two day meditation sittings, like we'll do Wow. Although they'll call it meditation, but they, it's more like sittings. So we sit for zaen for half an hour and they take a little break and half an hour throughout the day. Oh. And they have the best vegetarian food you'll ever eat in Ottawa. Really? Oh my gosh. Their food. They're cooked. They're incredibly, they make incredible meals. Oh wow. Oh, I have to go there next time. And I'm in Ottawa and I'm totally, we Have to sit, it's hard to get the meals. You have to sit,

sit, Sit, work for it, Need to become a student. They have the accepted as a student. So it's, it's the hardest meal to get necessarily in Ottawa history, but it's definitely worth it. That sounds so amazing though. So as you're standing for half an hour, you're just bringing your awareness back to like your hands and your feet and the present and like,

that's really cool. Is there any other Way? Yeah, your breath. Your breath. Yeah. Yeah, your breath. Well, what's hard, like, I, I can't, it's the best is to have a zen teacher to teach you. Really? Yeah. Yeah. I mean it's so, because they can, you can talk to them cuz they also have practice interviews where you sit with the teacher and when you're talking to 'em,

they can see how you're talking and they can kinda remind you of your practice when you're sitting with them. It's just, it definitely helps with your wow. Practice to have a teacher. Like, we

have a sensei, you have a, you know, there's different levels too of like students Yep. And stuff. Wow. Yeah. Yeah. Go for it.

That's so cool that you've been doing that. How long have You been New York for? Oh, well six years at this, this place. But I did study Korean Zen in Toronto. Wow. At the Toronto Zen Center. Yeah. They're, they're great too. I like the simplicity of this training though. And the, the consistency too. Yeah.

Yeah. Consistency is really big. Like, like you say, you know, even with me slipping on the social media, it's like, I don't know, like we don't have to do everything perfectly. We just kind of have to be consistent about like Well that's what they're saying too. Like they're, you're not trying, when you're sitting Suzanne, like you're not trying to create a state.

Like, so I'm not trying to make a feeling of happy feeling like, oh, now I'm sitting and I feel it really great. They're just No, just see what's going on. Like what the thoughts come up. Yeah.

The thoughts go, you know, your breath, what's going on. It's basically like not try to hold onto anything or create anything or,

yeah. Which is nicer than trying to maintain a state of feeling a certain way. That's hard. You can't do that anyway. Yeah, yeah. No, that's totally true. That's like some, yeah. Some meditations, you'll try to visualize something or you'll try to, this is different than that. You stare at a wall where you sit and that's a little,

it's, I like that though, cuz it definitely reflects how you live the rest of your life and how you practice the rest of your day. Yeah, that's, that's neat. I've like, I've done a little bit of that type of thing and I've found now Christy's gonna be a zen Buddhist too. Yeah, Definitely. Like let's do it all,

let's put down social media and start doing like your meditation. It's nothing. Yeah, yeah. Zen's about, I love zen, but then I start talking about it, it, you know, and it's like, people usually usually glaze over. They're Like, I dunno, I, yeah, I'm definitely not, also, I am just really struck by how nice of a tie in it is.

I didn't know that the Zen Buddhist, like meditation was gonna come up. But I think that ties in so nicely to like kind of put, it's like, it is kind of almost the, a little bit like the opposite of like what we do on social media. Yeah. Oh yeah. It's, well it made, it made it me capable of seeing how it affected me.

That's the other thing. I think you're right cuz I was really struck by like your awareness around like, and I haven't really seen you for many years, but now it all makes sense. So Yeah. Well you need to know like, and also when you're talking to people too, to see how what you're saying makes them, like how they look when you're talking to them.

Like, are they, do they look tense? Do they look bored? Do they wanna walk away? Like it's good to know what's going on and not be in your own head all the time. Yeah, actually that's like totally true. The, the truth will set you free kind of a thing. Like, Oh, the not interrupting. I, I like to interrupt cuz my brain is a way that I just wanna say what I'm thinking so forget. But interrupting a zen is not, not something you're supposed to do. So I, I'm better about that. Trying to be better. I think I might be a bit of an interrupter too. I have noticed on this podcast that I'm an overs responder and a lot of the time I like edit out a lot of my responses so that people can hear what the speaker is saying instead of just briefly respond.

Well, have you noticed when you're talking to someone, if their timing's off, like, so when you start, they start, have you notice that sometimes I talk to some People may, maybe sometimes that's, that's true. Or There's oral. Have that with some people Sometimes be like really long gaps. Like where it's like, oh my god, is someone gonna say something?

Yeah. Well I noticed with Johnny Depp and the Amber heard like, he talks so slowly, he's like talks like that's not that I want you to watch it. I'm not saying Anyone watch it. It's like, it's like a train wreck anyway. Wow. Yeah that is, that is the other type, the type that talks so slowly that I'm like,

come on, come on. Like What do you Johnny Depp? I can't believe how he talks so slowly. Wow. But yeah, I definitely have like encountered, encountered that. I think I might feel a little patient, I'm a fast talker so I start to lose the thread of what they're getting at if they're talking too slow. Oh my family's like that too.

They have no attention. So if I talk as slow as like Johnny Depp, my family would be gone be outta the room, my next sentence would abandon. Yeah. Yeah. I guess. Yeah. But I guess actually coming back to the social media thing, like have you found that your like attention span is more focused or whatever, like since You've put down Oh, hugely. Yeah. Yeah. Because they did also like, cuz I'm gonna make my, I did educate myself with the science before I go on with you, so, yep, yep. People did perform worse on cognitive tests. People who are addicted to social media. Yeah. And especially the ability to multitask and their attention. So, which makes sense.

Oh, Interesting. Also about dopamine. I think I've heard that like, oh, I don't remember exactly what I heard, but like it was something like with the social media, yeah we get lots of dopamine but then maybe we're actually getting less do like it can actually, oh I don't know what exactly require more. So if you kind of put down everything and almost do a dopamine fast where you're not getting any dopamine,

then littler things in daily life will make dopamine, you know, for you naturally. And maybe that's what the problem is with the first few days when we put down social media is that we're not getting the dopamine from, you know, from the social media. But we're also not getting it from the little things in life that alike. Eventually you're giving us dopamine.

Yeah, No, that makes sense. It's like if you drink coffee, like I heard that when you drink coffee you get that really good rush in the morning of coffee, but after that your body adjusts to having it so when you don't have coffee you feel like crap. But when you have it, you're basically normal. Like before You start. Yeah.

So you're right. So if you're getting constant dopamine, so if you take it away, you're actually gonna be lower in dopamine. Yeah, Absolutely. And and then have to rebuild it. Ah, That's interesting. Yeah. That is interesting. It's probably useful to kind of like know some of the science so that, I don't know, I think it does support us as we're like putting something down. It's hard To all the science degrees. Yeah. It's, it's like, I think it's also hard to just put something down cuz it also has that element of seeming like, well it's not that big of a deal. Like, you know. Yeah. Like to just check Instagram or whatever. It just doesn't seem like I could just check it once,

it's not a big deal. But then it spirals and then it's nonstop and I don't know. But that's, that's like the problem is it, it doesn't like, yeah. It just doesn't seem like that big of a deal to just check it once but then it never is that it like goes into my whole life. Yeah. Like if you can check it once you're not,

if you're like, I can't scroll down it, so I'll just check my messages. Yeah. See if I ever have a notification of a message. But yeah, I cannot scroll. Cause if I start scrolling it's like it's the end. But I do want your listeners like, hi listeners. I do want you listeners to try to put down, just try for a day and just to see how it changes your life.

Maybe try for a week or a year. No, it's kidding. You know? Yeah. Just to see like it's, cuz it's personal. Like some people I've talked to say, well I don't, I don't use my phone, I don't go on social media. So they don't, this doesn't even affect them. Do you know what I mean? So it just, everyone's different. Right. So some people will be like, it's not a big deal. I, I don't have a problem. You know what I mean? So Right. But you can really find out how big the problem is when you try and put it down God, a real big problem. Really big problem. Yeah, me too.

This is like so timely for me. Can you think of anything else that you wanna like add? I feel like this has been super interesting. I think we've covered a lot of it. Yeah, no, I think hopefully it'll have people think about what they're doing a little differently and maybe improve their lives. But I think a society, I'm afraid our society's gonna change because of this addiction and social media.

Yeah. But you know, it maybe it'll just become so normal it won't even be noticeable anymore either. Cuz you know, as like, I think when, when printed words were coming out, they said that would be a problem for people. Oh, psychologically. Oh. So like, I know I'm kind of going against what I was saying before,

but like before books were handwritten and when they're invented the printing press, that's when they're able to make books affordable and for the masses. And there was a big outcry that this was gonna ruin society. Really? Yeah. So it was like, oh my goodness, this people rereading. You know? So it's like, it's like you're taking in information.

So, so the world's going to change. We can't do anything about it. But like, knowing where your limits are and, and what you need to change and how you use like the, the different media use is important I think per other individual. Yeah, I, I think so too. I think especially when it starts to like affect our mood and affect the way we feel about ourselves or other people and yeah, it is like, it takes a little bit of work to find like what our limits would be cuz nobody else is out there imposing them on us. Yeah. Like think like how happy are people right now? Like how happy is society? How connected are is society, do you know what I mean? Like, it just seems from all the studies that people feel less fulfilled,

less satisfied, less happy. And you know, and you gotta look at like how people are spending their time and, you know. Yeah, yeah. Totally. Yeah, that's, it's like really good to be thinking about this and this has been such an interesting topic in conversation with you and I'm actually like so motivated right now, so hopefully I'll get new day one starting right now, so, Oh yeah. And then if you get bored you can text me. Oh yeah, that's good. Yeah, that's good. I'll like, I have an accountability partner that's actually excellent. Yeah. Oh yeah, I can text me if you get bored. Kristy, cuz that was my number one thing is having people to, to bug like to text and stuff to,

Aw, yeah. Maybe Like, how's it going? What's up? Yeah. Oh my God. You can call me anytime. Yeah, you can call me. Do you have my phone number? We'll have to make sure we have phone numbers. Yeah, Yeah. We'll make sure we can, I know, it's so funny. I just like message you all the time.

Yeah, yeah, totally. So where can people find out? Oh, go on. Oh, sorry. Yeah, so it's, I'm Shannon Craig morph on Instagram. Sweet. So s h a n n o n. Yeah. You can add it to, to Shannon Craig morph on Instagram and Shannon Craig on Facebook. But you're not gonna see a lot of new updates,

although I should try. Cause I have a, I have a show coming up, so I need, I should probably start advertising that instead Too, so. Yeah, totally. And then your website is also Shannon, Craig Morph and I'll include a link to that. Yeah, yeah. Thanks, Kristy. Yeah, yeah, my pleasure. Well, it's so good to talk to you Shani, and thank you so much for all the amazing thoughts around this and yeah, I can't wait to talk to you soon. Okay, thanks a lot. Take care. Take care. Bye bye. I Hope you've enjoyed this episode of Down To Art, and if you're interested in any of my classes or seeing my paintings, you can check out my work at [KristyGordon.com](http://KristyGordon.com) or look at the online classes I have at [KristyGordoncourses.com](http://KristyGordoncourses.com) where you can learn about my online art mentoring program as well as the different streamed online classes that I have. If you've never taken any of my classes, I would suggest you start with the self-portrait class. So thank you for joining us today.