

# Podcast: Auriel Majumdar – surviving and thriving in change

## Transcript

### SPEAKERS

Hannah Mason, Jake Young, Auriel Majumdar

#### **Jake Young 00:00**

Hello Arts Marketing Festival goers and welcome to this podcast. In this one Hannah Mason talks to Auriel Majumdar. A creative coach, supervisor and consultant with more than 20 years' experience as a manager, leader, strategist and change maker. Auriel brings her calm brand of revolution to this wide-ranging conversation about surviving and thriving in change. Among other things, Auriel discusses lockdown fatigue, the value of time, the concept of the fertile void and the power of reflective practice. So here we go with Auriel and Hannah.

#### **Hannah Mason 00:36**

Hi, Auriel it's lovely to meet you.

#### **Auriel Majumdar 00:39**

Yeah, good to see you.

#### **Hannah Mason 00:40**

Can you just introduce yourself to everybody and give us a little sort of quick tour around who you are and what you do?

#### **Auriel Majumdar 00:48**

Yeah, so I'm Auriel Majumdar. I'm a creative coach, and a consultant. I do all sorts of different things I speak. Kind of talk about my opinions, which I'm really blessed to do and write a bit poetry, do a bit of training. I teach coaching at Masters level on various courses. So yeah, I'm, I'm somebody, I suppose, who works mainly in the creative sector, but helping people reflect, take stock, think about where they want to be. Yeah, so that's me, based up in Sheffield, but working all over the country, especially now, you know, now we're online and working internationally. But yeah, based up north.

#### **Hannah Mason 01:29**

I'm gonna start off where we're talking today about surviving and thriving, which couldn't be more topical, really, at the moment, given that we've gone into the second lockdown by the time the Festival comes out. Hopefully, we'll be coming out of that lockdown. But I'm gonna start by asking you a question about the blogs you wrote for CultureHive. It says that they were written in real time through

April, May and June and looked at how the new reality was affecting us. And those around us, therefore have tried and tested and practical things that we can do to get through the turmoil. Things aren't getting any easier. So what now? What next?

**Auriel Majumdar 02:06**

Great question. Yeah, I mean, so. Well, I've been wondering what next is interesting, because those were written right back in the spring. And, you know, we used to bandy around the terms. I mean, I'm saying we used to like it was so many years ago, but it was only months ago. But you know, we used to talk about the new normal. When I look back, I think, gosh, we were so naive, because we, you know, we thought it was going to be a few weeks or that we'd be out by the end of the summer. And here we are going back in again.

And so I think things I think things are different. With this lockdown, I sense a lot lower energy in myself, I really feel it. I mean, I woke up I'm very upbeat, usually and very positive. And, and in the last lockdown, I did think, you know, we can get through this we can we can make the sound stuff. But remember, at the beginning of the first lockdown, everybody was going to learn French, and we were gonna, you know, do weekly Zumbas, and we were gonna do, you know, we're going to clean out all our cupboards, maybe it's just me, but I was going to clean up my cupboards. And you know, it was all going to be great.

And I think when I reflect back on that, I think, I think we thought it was a gift of time that we were all really time poor. And this was going to be fantastic. Because we were going to be in it. And it was great. Yeah, it was gonna be awful, in terms of what was happening around us, but actually, we were given this precious gift of time. And I don't feel like that going into this one. I feel like really another one, you know, even though it's only a month, but nobody really believes it's going to be a month. So this one feels different. And what next? Who knows? I mean, I wonder. I try not to kind of look forward to the future too much in terms of anticipation, you know, predicting it. But I wonder if it's in and out now, you know, until we get a vaccine or until the virus does whatever it does and goes away.

So I found myself Googling what happened in the 1918 flu pandemic, you know, like, how did we get out of it? So that's the stuff I've been reading. I was like, Who? Who? Because there isn't much written about it either. But like, how did it end? And that's what I'm thinking forward to how does this end. But until then, I think we're going to be in and out. You know, it's all we can poke our heads out a bit out, the numbers are going up, let's withdraw. So I'm kind of mentally getting ready for that. Sorry, that was a long winded way of saying that's why I think we're going to be stuck in and then be let out and then be stuck in again.

**Hannah Mason 04:34**

I was wondering if you have sort of tips on how to sort of when you are feeling a little bit low in energy. Is there anything that we can be doing to get over that sort of apathy?

**Auriel Majumdar 04:48**

I think be kind to yourself, I mean, this is a, I hate to be so cliched, but it is a long this is the long game. And I mean it's different for me, I'm a freelancer. So I have the luxury of being able to, you know, to shape my working day around the things I have to do. And people who are in employment don't always have that luxury. But I think if you can cut yourself some slack, I mean, this morning, I woke up, and I really just wanted to stay in bed and read a book, I mean, every bit of me wanted to do that, it doesn't help because it's dark, and it's cold, and you know, all of those things. And, and I couldn't, because I've got loads of things to do. But I did let myself get up a bit more slowly. I didn't, you know, I didn't rush and, and it's not something I would have done, you know, even a year, a year or two years ago, because I've got a very strong work ethic, it'd be like, got to get up got to get, you know, got to get out got to get to, and there was a lot of a lot of drive.

Whereas actually, now I'm thinking just kind of, you know, if I can afford to just ease into it, do that. So, so easing up on myself, I think, has helped me. So if you can let go of the short, let go of the you know, if you've got deadlines to meet, of course, you've got to try and meet those but the other stuff, like who says you've got to get up and get dressed, who says you know, who says that you have to be up by eight doing things if you don't need to. So that kind of just because the energy will come back. And luckily for me, I'm old enough to know now that things will come back again, you know, so my energy ebbs and flows, and I'm just much better at recognising where I'm at in that cycle. Rather than trying to meet me and externally kind of, you know, somebody else's idea of why should be like, so, so.

So number one, be kind, definitely. And I think, cut your cloth, you know, if, if what you if you've got some like, today, I did admin, I did loads of boring admin, because it was basically all I was up to, and then and then had a meeting in the afternoon. And by the time the meeting came around, I kind of livened up a bit, you know, so I think just, you know, do those things do useful things. I mean, I was satisfied, this sounds really daft. But I've got a really rubbish needle woman take it from me. But I've got really into like mending stuff, and I forget what the name of it is. But you know, the Japanese practice of visible mending. So it looks really beautiful. Got really interested in that idea. So I've been sewing things like darning my partner's socks. And then I've got these gloves that are their fabric, and they've got a hole in them. And then I've sat and sewed that and there's something really kind of, I don't know, if it's some fantasy of like, I don't know if, you know, make do and mend but, but it's really, it's really soothing. And so like, you know, I can see why people bake loads of banana bread and stuff. And I just think those things are nice, you know, like getting cozy and stitching something, I don't know, it feels really kind of old fashioned and slow.

And so maybe I'm saying take it, take it slow that's it. Be kind, take it slow. Wait for your energy to come back. Follow you follow your patterns. You know, get to know yourself in terms of you how you ebb and flow. Take a bath, you know, go for a walk, do those things to kind of just nourish yourself until it comes back?

**Hannah Mason 08:11**

Yeah, I think that's, I think that's really good advice. I like the description you said about being given the gift of time. And I think that we were at the beginning, it definitely felt like that. But maybe we've just kind of forgotten that. That's still part of what we've got. And maybe we don't have to push ourselves so much.

**Auriel Majumdar 08:31**

Yeah, it's been a long time, isn't it? And you know, the other thing, which I've never really, I mean, I've never experienced this changing of the seasons in the same way. And you know, up in Sheffield, it's very leafy. So in spring, it was just stunning. You know, everybody said it didn't, didn't move so clear. And we could hear the birdsong and, you know, people found real consolation in Spring, in that Spring when we, you know, when we were all locked away. And I'm wondering what the consolation of this season is, because I've just noticed the Autumn, like the colours of the trees and things in a way that I've never noticed before. And I would have said that I was quite, you know, that I hadn't noticed those things. But just the fact that I'm walking through rather than driving through all that I go for my walk every day now. Or maybe they're just more delicious. Maybe they're kind of making a you know, they've got a bigger prominence in my life. But I just think there's a kind of, there's a, there's a slowing of energy in nature anyway.

And is there some way that we can just respect that in our slowing, and not to get overly political but it's really for me, this whole experience has really shown capitalism for what it is and so for me this this question about are we allowed to slow down goes to the heart of - do we have to be productive all the time? Do we have to make a profit? Do we have, you know, all of those things so I think even for us individually, but for organisations as well. It's like What does good look like?

What if you said to your staff, go at the pace, you need to you know, here are the goals that we need to achieve together. But actually, you can decide how and when. And we trust people to do that. I mean, it's interesting, isn't it organisationally, where, where organisations have had kind of classic turn up in the office, and we judge you by whether you're there or not, and whether you look busy, that's been turned on its head by this whole lockdown experience, because we've had to now judge or judge people, not by whether they're on the end of a Zoom, but what they're actually doing and how they're contributing. So I'm, I'm kind of hopeful that we might, you know, there might be something more profound going on here, where we're outcome focused, rather than kind of output focused or activity focused. That's the one I'm hoping for. That's what I hope.

**Hannah Mason 10:46**

Yeah, I think you're right. I think that I think that some organisations will just naturally be a little bit more like that. Now, maybe within the creative sector as well, because obviously, we all have the sort of creative goals and outputs that we're trying to achieve. Maybe it's a case of having a really sort of different perspective on how we get there. You were talking, we were talking before we started about being time rich, I wondered if we could talk about that a little bit.

**Auriel Majumdar 11:13**

Yeah, so I, so I, well, one of the benefits of lockdown is suddenly being able to access stuff that we haven't been able to access before. So somebody sent me a link to a lecture from a professor at Harvard. And she was she was doing a lecture on her research around the correlation between time and happiness. And I thought, actually, this is really relaxing, because nobody will expect me to talk or do anything, I can just sit and listen for an hour. I thought that'd be nice. That'd be a real treat. So I logged on. And she was talking about two different mindsets that came up in her research one, which is

money focused. So when presented with an opportunity or an ask, do you focus on the money, the financial benefits of that? Or do you focus on the time benefits of that, and she wasn't making a judgment that money is bad, and times good. She was just noticing the different behaviours.

So a time focus would be get asked to do something and you think, have I got the time to do it? Is it something that I'd enjoy? Does it take away from other things I could do you know, that to look after myself, and which I found fascinating, because even though I'm not particularly motivated by money, I do run my own business. So I do you know, if gigs come in, I tend to go, Well, that would be nice. That's another amount of money in the pot. You know, we're all thinking about that about when the work might dry up, or, you know, we need to take the opportunities, opportunities while we can. And it really made me stop and think if, because what she's saying is, if you think of your time as an asset, in the same way that you think of your, your finances, as an asset, you would spend it more wisely. And she noticed that in the research that they, the people who've got a time focus, when they respond to things are happier by and large, but also earned more, which just blew my tiny mind, you know, that that could be possible.

And so, um, and then, you know, obviously, things flow out of that, like saying no, which we, well, maybe I'm just extrapolating from me, but I've been very bad at saying no, for lots of different reasons. And I was thinking, yeah, this is so interesting this, because you said before time, when we were talking before time, as this is elastic quality now, which I've really, I really resonate with. And so if time is more of an, you know, a kind of elastic resource, maybe we can be more creative about our time, you know, more, because I was thinking, organisationally, when we were talking about outcomes, you know, being more creative in the way we work together. That's one of the things that lockdowns done for me is, is because I work lots and lots with different individuals.

And I noticed that the individual experience is much more maybe because we just see the little square in front of us. But people, you know, when you go into an office is there's a danger that you just become part of that culture, and you just kind of, you know, faceless, or, you know, you just kind of cog in the wheel. I mean, at its worst, but there's kind of an anonymity in that. Whereas I think, a face on a screen, you know, in this fascination we've got with all what's that behind her, and there's your cat and all of that kind of stuff.

And so maybe there's an opportunity there to be, to be more individualized in the sense of what am I personally bringing into this? And I think our use of our own time is really important in that, you know, that's part of that individuality, you know, is it doesn't suit me, you know, to be working with my toddler on my lap, or would it be better to do when she's in bed or you know, all of those sorts of questions. But it but it takes I mean, it's a big leap, isn't it? It takes organisations to be very mature and trusting, and encouraging to be able to respond to that. But maybe that's the new normal, maybe organisational stop, you know, being like little mini machines that have to have kind of coal going in the fire, maybe there'll be different. Who knows, but I think we can, you know, I think we could, together we can think and work, work that out, are quite revolutionary in my old age actually, this has made me more revolutionary.

**Hannah Mason 15:25**

Somebody said the other day, something about poetic anarchy, which I quite liked there. Like there's an expression because it's a revolutionary, but in a very, you're very calm in the way that you're, you're being revolutionary.

**Auriel Majumdar 15:38**

Yeah. And it's very focused it it's, I mean, I was a proper red hot revolutionary when I was young, you know, I did believe in, in overturning and, and I, and I thought, you know, I thought that that was the way but um, you know, as I get as I get older, I was reading, there was an interview in the paper yesterday with Chuck D from Public Enemy. And he said any, so I'm coming up to 60. I'm not quite 60 yet, in a year or so. And he, he said, anybody 60 or over, our job is not to lead our job is to give advice and wise counsel. I thought yeah Chuck D go, I'm there with you. And so I'm a bit like that. That's the calmness because I don't have to pick up my you know, my tools, I can advise and give counsel, so maybe that's why I'm calm. And other people can do the kind of you know, go out and help the argy bargy.

**Hannah Mason 16:33**

And we will just be in the background to mentoring.

**Auriel Majumdar 16:37**

Absolutely.

**Hannah Mason 16:38**

You in your blog, on the CultureHive website, you spoke about the fertile void. And you've spoken about them being places in between spaces, not just places of grief and loss, but also places of creative possibility. So I wondered how we sort of move on from being in a state of grief and loss with respecting that and then look towards finding spaces for creative possibility.

**Auriel Majumdar 17:06**

Yeah, so the fertile void is this concept from Gestalt psychology. And the reason I love it is because it, they talk about the fertile void being well, it's the word isn't it fertile and void, so fertile, implying full and rich, as you say, full of possibility, and the void is the emptiness. When I work with artists they particularly resonate with that is that liminal space that in between thing, and I wonder if there's a sort of passage of time again, so.

So almost, there's a processing so it's a bit like the grief curve of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross is the same idea. So initially, after an event, so like the lockdown, you have this sort of shell shockness, so there's a kind of numbness initially, like a bit of denial, and then you go down into anger, despair, you know, you kind of hit rock bottom, and then there comes a, you know, if you allow yourself to stay in that and then naturally over time, she would Kübler-Ross says that your energy comes back up, and you start thinking about possibilities. So I've done quite a bit of academic work on this, and I'm thinking there's, there's definitely a passage of time in there. So you can't rush it, you know, it's almost like you have to go through the pain of, I can't believe we're in lockdown again, argh, you know, like, I was going to go away from my birthday, we were going to go up to the Lake District, it was going to be gorgeous. It's my

daughter's 18. Next week, you know, so there's a sort of, there are losses and of course, minor trivial little losses, relative to other people's much bigger losses, you know, like loss of income or loss of stability, or, you know, all of those.

But I think you have to, for me, you have to process those first, for the good stuff to come. Because once you can, and you can't rush that it is what it is. But for me, if you sat, try and suppress those losses, or you're dealing with them, they come back up to bite you. So dealing with the you know, the rubbish, that's landed on your plate, allowing yourself to go through that, whatever that is. Then what will happen and I see this happen all the time with the creatives I work with, you sort of kind of have enough of it and then you had lifts up, and then you're looking around going okay, so what next?

And I think there's some things you can do in that space, once you've allowed yourself and giving yourself the space. I think, you know, it's all those things that we ask ourselves anyway, what supports creativity? Well, we know, we know lots of things that support creativity is that gift of time again, you know, dedicated time to stay with whatever questions you're asking of the world of your practice, to support to reflect I mean, we were talking about listening before when we started this conversation properly. And I think having people around who will listen and pay attention really close attention to you without judgment.

So we need that space where we're not judging where we're not judging ourselves, and we're not being judged. So creating the conditions, I mean, that's why I'm so in love with coaching, and mentoring as a as a practice, because it just creates those conditions that says, if you could think anything, what would it be? and listens with right, really palpable curiosity to the answer. So I think, you know, if we can do that for ourselves and each other, that's where the fertile void is space. So you never know, I mean, the next four weeks, could be a fertile void, but it takes a certain gentleness and lightness of holding that so you can't go into it with fear. Because, you know, we all know fear is the enemy and can comparison, you know, what they seem to be doing so much better.

And they've got some great ideas, and I'm still here is kind of grappling with my losses. I think that you know, what do they say comparison is the thief of joy. And I really believe that, it's like, if you if you can kind of stay in your lane in terms of just you know, honoring your own experience, and respecting that. And not doing that, looking across to see what somebody else is doing in their lane. I think that's a really healthy thing. And that and that creative curiosity that people have, you know, what, what is this like, interrogate your own experience a bit. I mean, I, I was talking to a designer the other day, and she was very, very distraught, she was upset because her, she said her creativity had flown. And normally, she's one of those people that just has zillions of ideas. And she wasn't having lots of ideas. And she said, my works got tiny, and she was describing these miniatures that she was making.

And then so we just sat and talked about the miniatures. And I said, well, that maybe that's what your work needs to be. And, and you can see, as soon as she was given permission for it to be okay, for that, you know, she stopped comparing it to work she'd been doing, and saw it for what it was, she was able to appreciate the beauty in it. And it was teaching us something it was telling us something about, about what was happening for her. And I really loved that. And I think that's kind of fertile void work is, you know, things can be miniature, it could be as big as you from you know, only your front room or

your city or wherever you sit in, you know, whatever it is, that could be the world right now, for you. And that's okay. Because, because how faith that eventually it will be more than that, you know, things will happen, but you can't, but you can't rush it.

And I suppose what I'm saying is be patient, which makes me laugh, because I'm not very patient at all. But um, but I'm cultivating it, you know, that kind of like, I think there's a real paradox about having agency in a in a time when we have no agency, you know, we can't control this thing. And you can't, you can't fight a virus you can, you know, systemically you can but as an individual, being strong doesn't get you anywhere. But I think being reflective might get us somewhere, you know, thinking about things and having staying true and thinking about what it is that we really want and being authentic, those things might help us. I don't know if that's too fanciful?

**Hannah Mason 23:19**

No, I don't think so at all, I think I think now is the time where we need to be fanciful. Yeah, why not? And we need to, like you say give ourselves permission to do the things that that we don't always give ourself permission to do.

**Auriel Majumdar 23:34**

I want to take the word guilty away from the word pleasure. You know, if it's like, pleasure, pleasure, there's a real purity in pleasure. You know, I watched I watched I hate to say it, but I watched Strictly Come Dancing on Saturday. And it was pure pleasure. And I cry. I always cry because I just love to see people practicing something and loving it and having a go, you know, there's something so gorgeous in that about the human spirit. And I you know, and plus, it's sequins and glitter, and just you know, and so as soon as the announcement had been made, I just sat for Strictly and I just thoroughly enjoyed it, and it lifted my spirits, like going for a walk in the Autumn leaves really lifts my spirits and those those aren't guilty pleasures.

You know. I've got a secret stash of chocolate I hide from my daughter. And sometimes I'll eat Hey, you know what, I'll have a bar of chocolate in the middle of the day. It's like I'm not I don't know. I'm just really enjoying pleasures more than I've done it, I suppose because I'm paying more attention to them. Like oh, this is really nice. This is really delicious. And that's yeah, that's where I'm at is like let's let's enjoy pleasures rather than feeling guilty about them.

**Hannah Mason 24:45**

Yeah, I absolutely agree. It's like It's like, just having uninterrupted space to do those things to notice things that I suppose the noise of life before all this getting in the way and maybe stopping us from really noticing the Autumn leaves, noticing the taste of chocolate, just in the sequins on Strictly I have to admit, I enjoyed Strictly as well. It's great, because everything is so, there's not much to sort of hold on to that's kind of normal in inverted commas. Yeah. And something that's typically it's like, it's Autumn. It's cold strictly is on the telly. Yeah, everything is fine. So yeah, I enjoyed it, too. And you're right guilty and pleasures need to be separated, definitely.

**Auriel Majumdar 25:40**

Yeah, definitely. Well, definitely around food for sure. But I think that, you know, we talk about the new normal. I kind of think this is it, you know, this is a this that's that whole question of surviving and thriving is, is about living. I know, it doesn't rhyme. But the question for me isn't how we survive it. So in that first lockdown, it was how are we going to get through this? That was my question how we're going to get through this? And this one feels like how, how do we live? Now things are like this. You know, what, what's meaningful for us what so I don't it's so it's, I don't want to do another waiting thing, like the next four weeks up for me a really precious four weeks that, you know, the like the last four weeks were like the four weeks, I'll be after that, that their time they're important things, you know that it's not something to be got through. So I don't want too much as I want to stay in bed or read a book. I don't want to wish it away.

I want to live in it. And I want to be really present and really focused. And I want to, you know, spend my time wisely as the professor said, and enjoy myself, not without any kind of enjoy myself as much as I can, under the circumstances, I want it to just be real and true. And being confined to home doesn't feel like it's going to stop me. I mean, that's the privilege of an older woman who's a freelancer. So, and I really get that that isn't the same for everybody. So for my son who's 21, he's a musician, all his gigs got cancelled. You know, he was he was on the verge of doing something really exciting and just got a booking agent. And, you know, life was looking great. And things have just stopped for him. I get that's really, really tough for younger people.

So I think there's a different question there is like how, I mean, for him, he's still making music, he can't stop making music. And it luckily for him, he can make it through his laptop, and he's got his desk set up and stuff. So he can do that. And, but, you know, if you're out there, if you practice is theatre, or performance, or any of those things, and those things have stopped, how, how, what does living mean? And for me, you know, like Chuck D, I want to support people as they think their way through that. And, you know, and find a new way to be not, how do you just get through this? You know, how do we just kind of limp through until it's all right, again, it's like actually, what, what, what could be for those people like what possibilities are there? Because I think it's a dark place if we just go into waiting mode.

**Hannah Mason 28:32**

Yeah, it's also kind of a, I find it a bit darj, the idea that we can get back to where we were, you know, there, there are lots of people that are hoping we can get back to where we were. And I think, if where we were was so great, I don't think this would have had the impact that it did, you know, maybe where we were wasn't, yeah, where we should be. And so, you know, I think I think it's it is exciting, that that the idea that there's possibility that there's something new we can create together.

**Auriel Majumdar 29:05**

I think where we were got us to where we are now, you know, I mean, if you look at the kind of big picture, you know, animal husbandry practices, and all of those things got us to where we are now. And I yeah, I'm excited. I wonder if it's an opportunity to look at things afresh. And it's back to that revolutionary question, but, you know, but if so, the things that are getting in the way, certainly for anybody involved in a creative endeavour, that means being with around people, those things are

difficult. We're not having gigs, we're not having, you know, we're not having conferences, we're not having in person, we're not having those things.

But they will come back that's the other thing I want to say is, I lived through the 70s and the 80s. You know, as I was in my 20s in the 80s, and it was very, very dark. And we got through it and there were some amazing things that happened because creativity flourishes in dark times. So I, with my hand on my heart, I believe we will get through this, and we will flourish again, I'm absolutely, I'm just convinced of it. But this is an opportunity to think about how we want it to be. And that's, you know, that's for young people to do. And really, you know, it's for people like me to make space, and encourage and do whatever I can to support that. And it's for younger people, younger than me, to come with the energy and the enthusiasm and the new vision and the, you know, the anger about what's happening to our climate and all of those things.

So together we can we can we could make some a future that's different. That that I mean, I really believe in that. I think this time, the times are changing, they really are.

**Hannah Mason 30:53**

Yeah, yeah, that's brilliant. It leads me to a quote that you put in your blog, which I loved from the poet Arundhati Roy, "another world isn't only possible, she is on her way, on a quiet day, I can hear her breathing", which I just think is absolutely beautiful.

**Auriel Majumdar 31:13**

Yeah, she's my Bengali sister. And my heritage is, I'm half Bengali. And she's, she's from the same place in India that my family were from. So partly, I've just wanted to get her in anyway. But that's isn't that beautiful. I mean, it's it, I think it's that same spirit of what I was saying that, you know, she, that utter belief, you know, things good things can be around the corner for us. But we have to still ourselves, so that we can hear it.

And, and for me, that's, that's hearing ourselves. So that so what I was saying before about being kind and, and respecting our energy changes, or you know, all of that stuff, our creative urge, fanning the flame. That's a quietening of ourselves, so that we are not scared to hear what's going on for us. And then there's a kind of bigger, there's a bigger listening, a commitment to reflecting, I've been doing loads of workshops for different organisations through lockdown, through the whole pandemic about well, it always comes back to reflective practice, you know, it's very grand term, but this idea of just kind of learning from what we're doing.

And, and for me, I think you can do it in really effortless ways. You know, you can do it five minutes, at the end of the day, you can do it while you're walking the dog, you can do it, you know, while you're out in the garden, but just making that commitment to saying, Okay, how did things go? What did I like? What didn't I like, what worked? What didn't? Is is, you know, we, if we all develop that, if that was cultural, if that was a cultural norm, to ask that of ourselves and ask that of each other. How was that for you? What, what, what would you like to do? Again, from that, I think things would just be transformed. Because we'd be, you know, we wouldn't be driven by, I don't know, getting the latest telly

or the, you know, whatever people are driven by these days a new phone. Or we wouldn't that would be in the mix.

But there would be lots of other things in the mix. Because people would go, Well, actually, I want time to go and kick the leaves up, or I want, you know, like people or some people are really missing concerts and gigs. Now you know, how important it is to when you know, when things are opened up again? How are you going to honor that for yourself? What are you going to go with, it's going to give you really great pleasure. Like me, I'm absolutely desperately missing the cinema. And I nearly went on Saturday and then a bottled out in the end. But you know, I'm how much am I going to enjoy going to the cinema when we can go and I will really love it. And that would be a new, you know, that would be a new kind of enjoyment that I haven't had before. I really, really value it.

So yeah, it's a funny paradox, isn't it? It's a funny contradiction between being kind of almost hibernating in terms of energy, lowering the energy, just feeling a bit kind of reflective, but also being very optimistic about possibility.

**Hannah Mason 34:11**

That's great. Thank you. Is there anything that you think I should ask you? Is there any, are there any questions? I haven't asked you. Is there any topic that we haven't talked through, that you think is missing?

**Auriel Majumdar 34:25**

I suppose. That's such a good question. I guess if I were me, well, if I wanted to challenge me, I'd go what do you think about our new dark days or, you know, what's your worst fear? Because it's because I'm really conscious as I talk that it sounds very easy and effortless. Just get to know yourself, you know, just relax into it. It's all going to be fine. Is all very well, but you know, what, what do I worry about? I mean, it's probably I don't know if that's a dark note to end on. But you know, where's the grit? in that? You know, where are the snags? Or the drawbacks to that?

**Hannah Mason 35:07**

So where are the snags? Or the drawbacks?

**Auriel Majumdar 35:09**

Yeah, what are the snags? Such a great question I asked myself that. The answer? I mean, I think it's, I think it takes, it takes commitment, real. So individually, you have to let go of a lot of things that service. So you have to let go of fear. And these and these dark thoughts can service, you know, feeling frightened or avoiding things serves us because we don't have to change. So, it takes real guts to be kind, it takes guts to, to decide that you're going to be a reflective practitioner and work out what that means, you know, takes guts to be optimistic.

So those are big acts of bravery for people, and I don't think culturally, we, we recognise that because we like to be busy, busy and mindless, and you know, just get on with things. And I think so I wonder where the support is, for people to do that. That's why I do stuff like this, because I want to talk about what I think in the hope that it supports other people to think what they think. And then I think as a, as a

country. You know, sometimes I think, in my most in my dark moments, I think I'm just deluding myself, you know, I might just be kind of living in some utopian pipe dream, that it's all going to be great. And we're all going to be you know, sitting with flowers in our hair. And maybe I should be out there doing a bit more, and kind of agitating a bit more. So that's, you know, in my dark moments, I think, really, honestly, or real really come on you just daydreaming, but I keep coming back to it. And so that, that tells me that there's something in it for me. And I've committed I've committed you know, I've committed my whole professional life to helping people reflect and they tell me it helps. You know, all of the people that I've made space for tell that that helps.

**Hannah Mason** 37:13

Yeah, well, I'm sure it is helped loads of people listening to our podcast today. So thank you so much.

**Auriel Majumdar** 37:22

Yeah, it's been a real pleasure. Thank you.

**Hannah Mason** 37:24

I think I could listen to you forever, really,

**Auriel Majumdar** 37:27

It's the calming voice. I feel completely Zen now.