

# CHRIS'LL DEAL WITH IT

episode notes



## EP 54 - A Duality Mentality

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Prioritizing Brilliance: Navigating a World of Incredible Ideas with Author Chris Kreuter

Join us on Coldplay Culture for an enlightening conversation with Chris Kreuter, a visionary in the fields of technology and innovation. In this episode, we tackle the challenge of having an abundance of incredible ideas and the crucial task of prioritizing them. Chris imparts his

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvF0hHd1VDY>



I've been a regular guest on the Code Play Culture podcast. On a recent episode about navigating ideas, around the 39 minute mark, we touched on what it means to consider our current work the last time we would get to create.

On my last episode, #53, I unpacked the mentality of "This is the last...". On today's, I'm exploring its opposite: Looking at what creativity, and life more generally, look like with a mentality of "This is the first..."

There's a duality between first & last, birth & death, beginning & finality. The idea came to me the night after releasing Episode 53. I've been reading Rick Rubin's incredible book on creativity - [The Creative Act: A Way of Being](#). His chapter titled "What If...", which sparked this idea of flipping our ideas and projects to their opposites. Seeing what shakes out.

On my last episode, I gave thoughts to consider from a finality mentality. Today, I'm flipping them to their opposites. Approaching them with an embarking mentality:

- This is the first podcast I'll get to produce
- This is the first opportunity you'll get to pitch your product
- This is the first day after a life-changing event
- This is the first impression you'll have on someone
- This is the first workout after your strength was called upon
- This is the first time you'll enjoy a game that will become a favorite
- This is the first time you'll spend time with someone you'll come to love
- This is the first day of your life

What if there were a Latin counterpoint to *memento mori (remember death)*? *Memento nativitatis* sadly doesn't roll off the tongue. But imagine yourself *remembering birth*, or being in a state of beginning mind:

Having a childlike innocence. A lack of judgement or worry.

Children learn & grow through experimentation and play. Sure they get frustrated when they fail or things don't go their way. No different than we do, but perhaps without all the expectations & judgement we place on our learning and efforts.

┆ *Kids don't think of their efforts in terms of return on investment.*

When you're working on something, imagine it's the first time you're trying it. Don't rely on patterns, expectations, standards, or rules. Just play at it, as if discovering the act for the first time.

Is it possible to put ourselves in a mindset where we can consider a simple act, like brushing our teeth, as if we're doing it for the very first time?

We might change some element of a task or project to help generate a beginner's mindset. Perhaps the location, the medium, the stakes.

For example, instead of typing a story on a laptop, handwrite it on a beach. Or with the teeth brushing example, doing it with the opposite hand slowly with complete attention. Engaging with things in new ways can help orient you towards a growth mindset.

Worth asking: Do we need to change the experience entirely to achieve that mindset, or can we train ourselves to be more mindful of them on a regular basis?

Of all the fantastic episodes of the kids' TV show Bluey, one of my favorites is Born Yesterday (Season 3, Episode 5)

- Bluey thinks up a game for her Dad to pretend he actually was born yesterday.

- He reacts to everything from this state of non-knowing. “I’m sorry, I was born yesterday, I don’t know what a name is.”
- He’s unaware of concepts like living & non-living objects, ownership, and in one painful nut-shot moment, physics.
- The short episode ends with the girls letting their Dad stare at a leaf in the sunlight. It’s a heartfelt scene that reflects on observing things as they are, with vivid detail and focus, which can give us new perspective on the world & ourselves.

There’s been plenty said about beginner’s mind. In martial arts it’s often said that you should “empty your cup” before training, so it may be filled with knowledge, regardless of what it held before. Train as if you’re never trained before, when you were more likely in a state of complete absorption. Without experienced, practiced responses.

- What is something you do expertly now?
- Can you recall those first experiences?
- Realize just how far you’ve grown & developed in the skill or activity.
- Are there patterns you fell into that you can rethink?
- An example from the mundane: I can recall how it used to take me twenty minutes of careful attention to put in my first contact lenses as a teenager. Now I can do it in the less than a minute in the dark. Probably with one hand tied behind my back if I had to.
- These recollections can build confidence in our ability to adapt & overcome new challenges. To not get frustrated with the immediate results. Especially when we’re starting out with something.
- It’s also helpful to remember the time scale over which that growth typically happens. There are few shortcuts to mastery. It takes many repetitions of ‘doing the work’.

Lately, I’ve been wondering if it’s possible to consider both mentalities simultaneously, within the same experience. Approaching something, or a project, like I’m living it for both the first and last time.

- I can think back to many memorable experiences that at the time were novel and inspiring, yet I didn’t appreciate that it would probably be the only time I’d likely ever experience it.
- A few examples come to mind. I remember fondly in fall of 2007, stumbling upon [Keith Tyson’s sculpture installation Large Field Array](#) during a casual weekend walk through the art galleries of southern Manhattan. I had loved it, spending hours wandering through the array of square-meter, inter-related sculptures. When I got around to revisiting it a few months later, it was gone. In fact, it had only been in NYC for less than two months. In looking it up for this podcast, I found that it still exists; On an island on the eastern outskirts of Helsinki, Finland.

The lesson for me: While the photos bring back nice memories, they'll never do justice to the experience of the moment. I'm considering picking up a book published for the original installation, but I worry it'll dilute the experience. I was different then: And the work's impact was powerful, given where I was in life at the time. It had deeply personal impact on me, one that would be quite different seeing it now.

Should I take a trip to Finland to experience Keith Tyson's phenomenal work again, I would be more aware of the duality that:

- It would be a wholly new experience for a person nearly two decades removed from the first viewing.
- I'd better recognize the probability that I'd never get another chance to be in the presence of the art.

And on that note, the Chris'll Deal With It Podcast is accepting sponsorships for a Finnish Field Trip 🇫🇮



### Episode 54 Quote

Let's cap this episode off with another quote from the Stoic philosopher Seneca:

*Expectancy is the greatest impediment to living: In anticipation of tomorrow it loses today.*