

**SWR:** All right. Today on Songwriting Routines. I got Kate Schutt and I'm really pumped and excited, because I've been waiting to do this interview for gosh, a month.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SWR:** Let's start with introductions. Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, how you got into music and why you choose that career path.

**Kate Schutt:** Sure. Well, first of all I just have to say I'm super excited to be here. Thank you so much for asking me, I'm so grateful. I always love talking about song writing, because for me it's been just such a wild ride. I'm still learning how to do it, so I love talking about it, so thank you for having me.

My name's Kate Schutt and I have, how did I get into song writing? Well, I wrote my first song when I was about 12 years old. I was in a band with four other boys. One day we had band practice every weekend and one day we just decided to write our own song. We were doing all classic rock songs and we thought why don't we write our own song. We looked up at the walls of this garage, literally that we practiced in every weekend, and there was this really funny poster, kind of an illustration of, and it had this guy sitting in a house. We thought why don't we write a song about that guy in the poster and so we did, in that afternoon.

All together, we collaboratively wrote it, and that was my first song. It as super easy and fun, and it was called 'Old Man Winslow'. I can still sing it to you. It has a really good chorus actually. Then kind of fast forward from there, I've just been always a hobby musician I would say, but always had bands. In high school, then always took lessons, I didn't always practice, but I always took lessons on guitar and piano. Not a lot of practicing, but a lot of lessons and a lot of playing in bands and learning tunes.

How I actually ended up making music like the center piece of my life is that, it was always there, but then I was really into visual arts. I know at one point I kind of just decided like would I be, would I regret not following the path of music a little more seriously? There's a lot to that story, but I said yeah, I would really work at it, and so I actually left Harvard University, where I was studying and went to Berklee College of Music for two years. Then came back to Harvard and then went back to Berklee and finished both, but that's basically it. I came to a cross roads and just decided that I wanted to really pursue music much more seriously.

**SWR:** Yeah, that's a tough decision to make.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, my parents weren't too pleased when I told them I was going to drop out of Harvard to go to a music school for two years. I literally heard the telephone hit the ground. This was before cell phones.

**SWR:** You finished both, that's pretty amazing.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah.

**SWR:** Maybe, I know we were going to talk about mindsets, but I feel like we should just talk about it now.

**Kate Schutt:** Sure.

**SWR:** I mean, you actually finished both, I mean, what kind of person does that right? Like they make a decision, say, "Okay, I'm going to be a musician, but I started this thing and I'm just going to finish it and I'm going to continue being a musician."

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah.

**SWR:** What is your mindset as a musician?

**Kate Schutt:** Well, I think mindsets like probably the most important thing, and I'm constantly working on it, because you can have motivation and you can have will power. Those things fade and they come in and out and we use them up. They're kind of like a muscle that fatigues. I think having a mindset is like a philosophy towards life right, like it's a way of thinking about thinking.

Over the years, I've developed a kind of mindset around songwriting. That's called something, that's actually kind of what I've been working on most recently as I've decided to just, I don't know, improve my songwriting, improve my experience of songwriting. To be very honest with you, songwriting, even though as I said it's something I did kind of effortlessly as an 11 year old, as I got older and started writing my own music and creating albums, it became harder and harder for me.

The blank page was a terrifying experience, not so much because I didn't know what to say, it was more like I didn't ... Every time I approached it, I didn't know that I, it's like I forgot that I had ever written a song before. Like I would have temporary amnesia and think I didn't know how to do it, even though I had all this proof that I had and could. I needed to develop some resources for myself. I could tell you about a few of my song writing.

**SWR:** That would be great.

**Kate Schutt:** Then mindsets, if you think that might be helpful?

**SWR:** Yes, I do believe it will be.

**Kate Schutt:** Okay, I mean it's this sort of upper level stuff and we're just jumping in, but you're an upper level guy and I think your listeners will probably really get

something out of this, that's a little more than like oh I start with the lyrics first, or I start with the melody first. That's kind of songwriting 101, and I'd like to go, jump up to like songwriting 301, basically.

We talked about will power versus mindset, basically, your listeners probably are familiar with this idea of growth mindset, of having the mindset that you can grow and learn and become a better person versus a fixed mindset. That's kind of like the given in this conversation, that I come from a belief that of a growth mindset, that you can improve with practice. That's kind of the basis. I basically have 14 mindsets that I've identified.

**SWR:** Wow.

**Kate Schutt:** You're ready?

**SWR:** Yeah, I am totally ready.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, all right. I'll go through them pretty quickly and if there's one you want to stop on and talk about more that you feel is an Aha moment for you or like, "Oh yeah, I do that and this is my version of it," I'd be really super interested to know about it. I don't want to just be like a talking head about this.

The very first one is called let yourself off the hook. I have this mindset as the first for a reason. If you feel like every time you sit down to write a song, you have to write the great American song, if that's your mindset, then you'll just become frustrated and too precious about everything. I think the number one mindset is, it's just a song.

Perfect is the enemy of done. What you want to do as a song writer is try to write a lot of songs, a lot, a lot of songs. If you have this mindset, that every time you sit down it's got to be as great as your favorite song, whatever song you think is the most perfect example of a great song, then you'll just be scared and anxious. Mindset number one is just let yourself off the hook. It's a song, write a song, write all sorts of songs. You want to just write good songs, bad songs, mediocre songs, just let yourself off the hook. I'm just going to write a song, that's mindset number one.

Mindset number two kind of goes hand in hand with that, it's be playful. Come from the attitude of playfulness and experimentation. I think that's really important, because think of some of the greatest songs ever written, like the Beatles 'Ob-la-di Ob-la-da' or like 'Lady Marmalade', like 'Giuchie, Giuchie, ya dada', those are playful songs. Or even jazz standards, like it's wonderful like S apostrophe wonderful.

This is a playful attitude towards language in music. Some of our, I mean when we're free and playful and goofing around, our ideas come from this other place. We're free to say things we might not normally say. I think if you just

approach songwriting from a playful place, even serious songwriting, even when you're writing a sad song, like if you could just free yourself up to be experimental, you'll get, you'll get somewhere where you won't get when you're more serious. What do you think about those two so far?

**SWR:** I actually love the first one, just being able to be stress free right, not to have to put so much pressure on your art to actually be able to make something. I mean you have to feel, or you have to ... I guess it's the concept of the shitty first draft, right, maybe got to write a lot of shitty first drafts. Right, and those are your first 100 songs are all shitty.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, exactly and just coming from this place of like, it's just a song. It's not the constitution you're writing. It's a song, it's three and a half minutes of pleasure.

**SWR:** I think there's this thing that Elizabeth Gilberts says right, not to stress your creativity out. It shouldn't be the one thing that's going to feed you and help you survive, you've got to go do something else. Go find another job right, you'd have to just write or whatever it is that you do.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, totally. Yeah, so let yourself off the hook, be playful, those are one and two. Number three is be optimistic. Actually this is kind of a new one I'm working on and I added it in really recently, after reading a great book about practicing. I'm always trying to become a better practicer of my instrument, and this book, one of his like main tenets is be optimistic about your practice and your playing.

I decided to like in cooperate it into my mindset about songwriting. What that means is, the key to writing great songs is to believe that you can write great songs, right? That you have within you the ability to write a great song, whatever that means for you. If you look at like what you're trying to do as a songwriter and you don't think you can get there, well, then this is going to be struggle every time you sit down.

You just want to be, you want to have an optimistic outlook on the process and the practice of songwriting. That whatever you want to do, if maybe today you sit down to write a song and you don't get there, just be optimistic that if you sit down a few more days in a row, you will get there. Sounds really basic, but this is what we're talking about. We're talking about mindsets, ways of looking at the process of songwriting. That's number three.

Number four is go step by step. This is like again, pretty basic. If you let yourself off the hook, if you are optimistic, if you're playful, then that just let's you be calm and go step by step in the songwriting process. Write. However you start a song, which is different for everybody and it's different for me almost every time I sit down, just do that part.

When that part's done, let's say you start with writing the chorus, write a great chorus. If that part's done, then go try to write the first verse. Then when that's done, go write the second verse. Don't worry that you need to have the best chorus ever written. Just go step by step in whatever your process is and trust your process. That's number four. Number five is originality is overrated. I saw you smile when I said that.

**SWR:** I do love that one.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, originality is overrated. There's no, in the history of art and I'm talking about all art forms, dance, visual art, everything, everything we can think of. Every art form we can think of, it's not really originality, it's somebody taking something and incorporating it in to what they do and putting their own spin on it.

If you sit down to think you have to write, you want to write this amazing new kind of pop song, go for it. You'll probably have a better bet, better time of it if you just think like, "Oh, I loved how the Beatles did that. I'm going to do that, I'm going to learn, I'm going to figure what that is and then do my own version of it."

In the jazz world there's this idea of imitate, assimilate, innovate. That's like a three word thing in the jazz world, imitate, assimilate, innovate. Imitate, literally imitate, you learn to play the vocabulary of jazz by actually transcribing and playing what other people are playing. Then when you do that, you naturally sort of put yourself into it or you try. You can also try to like okay, if this person did that, maybe I'll go, I'll do this thing differently. They go down, I'm going to go up and then you innovate, that's the last thing. This idea of like originality is overrated, that all artists in some way combinatory, it's combing other things.

**SWR:** I love it, because that's what we want for yourself a magical original moment of our, I don't know. You just don't put your stuff out there, because you don't think it's original enough.

**Kate Schutt:** Exactly, right you can get very boxed in if you think like, "Oh, this isn't good enough, it's not new enough." I mean and if you're a student of music, you know that music, especially pop music goes in waves of popularity. Now, 2018, we hear or we've seen over the last five years like half decade, the resurgence of the sounds of the 80s. It's going to be so great, 20 years from now or 30 years from now we're going to be having another resurgence of the 80s, again, probably. That is number, I don't know where we're at now, five? Yeah, I think we're at five, yeah.

Number six is create anywhere, anytime, okay. Create meaning write songs anywhere and anytime. I used to think for a long time that I needed to be in a certain place at home with all my songwriting stuff around me in order to write a song. I had to have my recording device and have a cup of tea placed just so

and have all my stuff. It had to look like this in the amount of time, had to be like four hours of uninterrupted time. That is just not realistic, frankly. Right, do you agree with me?

**SWR:** I love it. I'm always looking for this part of the lifestyle. what is it? Does she get up at five in the morning and take her coffee at six? Then she's done writing at nine. She's in the studio at 12 recording and then she's in bed by five, but seriously, not really.

**Kate Schutt:** Not really. If you think that there's some magical moment or system or magical set of the conditions in your environment, in which in these that you create a song, and you get ... I mean I'm all for striving to create those. I'm not saying don't try to create that, I'm just saying, be realistic because life, shit happens. If you're working another job, you have another job.

The times that we have to create are never, rarely ever are they perfect. If you just establish the mindset, remember these are all mindsets. I create, I write songs anywhere and everywhere. Then when 15 minutes opens up in your schedule and you think, "Oh I can sit down and work on that verse or I couldn't, then you just do. For me this has really been, I have developed this ability to do that through having the mindset first. Through really convincing myself like, I have said to myself over and over sort of as an affirmation.

I write songs anywhere and everywhere. Now, literally when something like that happens, like I'm supposed to go somewhere and I have like 15 minutes before hand. I would think, "Oh I could sit down and work on that verse or work on just coming up with a musical idea," my old self would be like, "There's not enough time." Now I'm like that's all the time I have, I'm going to do it.

**SWR:** Yeah.

**Kate Schutt:** That's a really important one for me. Now that being said, that's number six. Number seven is, create a room of your own, a room of one zone to use the Virginia Wolf idea. I know I just finished telling you to like learn how to write anytime and anyplace, and its true. Otherwise you're kind of wasting time.

Also, I'd like to say that environment matters a lot. This sounds like a contradiction, but I want them to work kind of hand in hand. We're just starting to understand how much environment plays a role in like who we become. There's a lot of behavioral science that's coming out about that, and there's a great book called 'Mindless Eating', which is sort of like all about that, which you could read that book through the lens of anything. Any habit in your life and get some really big insights.

Back to songwriting, it would be great. I would love it if everybody listening created a corner of their room or a place where they do sit down and do their songwriting. In that place, they have the perfect cup of tea, they have the

pencils they love, they have the journals they like to write in or whatever their system for capturing their song is. It's all right there, so that when they do have that magical four hours to sit down and write a song, they go to that place and it calls forth from their being the song writer personality.

That to me is really important as well. It's like giving yourself permission to be this person, this songwriter.

**SWR:** Yeah, there's some sort of, I did the same. I would never practice right, and I sort of have like a guitar stand in the living room, but a beat up guitar, right?

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, of course.

**SWR:** Well, its close by, I have whole music, but I still have a beat up nylon string guitar that's kind of right by the couch kind of leaning on to it, that totally makes sense.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, and I also think, I don't know about you and you can tell me maybe. For me, I like to have a place where, if I shut the door, I feel as though no one can hear me. For me that's really good in terms of songwriting, and as I'm working on melodies and trying things out, out loud, I like that illusion. Closing the door creates this illusion, that no one can hear me and I'm sort of in my own little protected space. I don't know if that's true for you, but that really is helpful for me in songwriting.

**SWR:** I don't think I've pursued it as much as I should

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, and everybody is different. I mean I'll say that and at the same time I've learned how to write songs in the middle of a kitchen with a friend nearby. That took me a little while, it was hard to do that. Okay, a little recap. Number one, let yourself off the hook. Number two, be playful. Number three, be optimistic. Number four, go step by step. Number five, originality is overrated. Number six, create anywhere at anytime. Number seven, create in a room of your own.

Number eight, be persistent. When you're writing a song and it's not going well, the easiest to do is to give up. That's sort of simple, but it's pretty profound statement. The easiest thing to do is to not finish a song, and so this idea of be persistent is finding a way, right, change something that's not working. Get creative, try something new. Just whatever you do, don't give up. Use ingenuity to keep yourself working on the song.

Persistence is about experimenting until you find a way and then continuing on. To me that's really, really important, because quitting or giving up on that song idea, is the easiest thing to do. Does that make sense?

**SWR:** Yeah, it's a lot easy just to walk away.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, and sometimes that's a deliberate choice. Sometimes we need to put songs away for a certain period of time, that's what I call marinate or percolate. Time is actually one of your best tools as a songwriter. It allows you, time passing let's you see a song more critically and allows you to find maybe the word that you couldn't find when you were in the midst of creating it. Or it allows you that critical distance you need to identify, whether like is that chorus really working or is it sort of lame? Or oh I actually do need a bridge.

Sometimes, a little trick I do is, I don't often write bridges at the time that I write a song. I write, however I write a song, it turns out to be a verse chorus, verse chorus, chorus let's say song. I'll have a hunch that the song needs a bridge, but I will deliberately not write it, right then. I'll let the song settle for a while, I'll play it, maybe play it live, but whatever just play it, but don't write the bridge.

Then later, maybe a week or two later if I have the time, I'll be like, oh yeah, the song really needs a bridge. It needs to go somewhere and come back, and then I'll write the bridge. I feel like that technique, if you have the time, really helps you see, A, if the song needs it. B, if it does, what does it need exactly, what kind of bridge? If there's lyrics in that bridge, what those lyrics need to be. We're going on a kind of bit of a tangent here, like a deep dive tangent, but I don't know if you're familiar with the songwriter Steve Seskin?

**SWR:** Yes I am.

**Kate Schutt:** Did you take a course with him, did you go to a master class with him?

**SWR:** I went to, yeah, I went to a class at a conference here at West Coast singer songwriters.

**Kate Schutt:** Oh yeah, I think you and I talked right after I had done one and you had just done one. We were like, what? He is so great.

**SWR:** He's amazing.

**Kate Schutt:** He's amazing. I mean besides writing some ridiculous songs, I learned from him, he let me off the hook about writing bridges. He was like only write a bridge to a song if the song really needs it. If it doesn't, then it doesn't need a bridge. I raised myself in this old school like every song needs a bridge kind of thing.

**Kate Schutt:** I'm thankful for Steve Seskin teaching me that lesson. All right that was number eight, that was a long dive into be persistent. Number nine, we're getting there, getting close, is write finished songs. I said this at some point earlier, but anyone can start a song, but not everyone can finish a song. Finishing is a skill. It's its own separate skill and it's different from starting, it's a different skill from starting. It's different from the art of revising and it's different from the art of like the middle.

Finishing takes concentration, it takes pushing through obstacles. It takes evaluating what you need to do to finish and also it takes evaluating and knowing what is, what constitutes being finished. It's not always clear and this is true in any art form. I think I've learned the lesson the most, this is probably the lesson I transferred from being a visual artist, because it's very tricky. When is a painting finished? When exactly is a painting finished?

Knowing how to suss that out has helped me to be okay and to figure out when a song is finished. I mean some people will say a song is finished when the red light goes on and you have to record it, but that's not always the key. I have recorded songs that I still don't think are finished, but they were finished enough. I've also not recorded songs that aren't finished and have left them years sitting in a drawer, because I don't think they're finished yet.

That's all to say, writing finished songs needs to be your goal as a songwriter. There's also things you learn from finishing a shitty song, that you will never learn if you don't finish this shitty song.

**SWR:** It's true.

**Kate Schutt:** Do you have thoughts about that? I'd be curious to know what your thoughts about that is, are.

**SWR:** I think I have trouble actually finishing right. I've always been the person to start. It would be almost amazing to pair myself up with someone who can actually finish.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, pair yourself up with the person known as yourself and finish a song.

**SWR:** That doesn't work all the time, but I did talk with someone and they do believe in that. If they start something, but they're really hardcore. If they started something, they're going to finish it right there and then. They're not going to wait, even if it's a shitty first draft or whatever it is, they are going to finish that song before they put their paper and pen down. I thought that was a cool mindset to have. I need to work on that.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah. We all do man, I did too. This reason this became a mindset of mine is because I needed to work on it also. I have a giant folder of starts and middles, middles and starts. I realized that I didn't have a giant folder of finished. I realized I had a good, I still do paint and I have a good teacher. I was working on some paintings and she was lecturing the class in this workshop. She said, "You must finish paintings in order to learn the lesson that they have to teach you." That's that.

Now, I want to say I'm not like this person that thinks like every song needs to be finished. There are definitely some songs that probably don't need to be finished. Especially if you're under a deadline or something like that, but you

need to finish more than you're currently finishing. Let's have that as the rule of thumb. Everybody, I'm saying that, when I say that you, that's the royal you like I need to do that as well.

**SWR:**

It's, the average must go up.

**Kate Schutt:**

Yeah, exactly. The average must go up correctly, correct. Okay, number nine, number 10? Closing in on it here. Need to develop a thick skin. If you're going to write a song and you're going to put it out into the world in any shape or form, putting out into the world in any shape or form, you need to be prepared.

Number one, for the world to ignore it, which is very likely. Number two, for the world to criticize it, which is also very likely, but that's a little better than ignoring it, because at least it means someone listened to it. Sound pretty depressing, but if you stop and think about it, it is depressing. Don't stop and think about it, just keep going. Just write a finished song and move on. Develop your thick skin.

This is just a huge, huge learning curve for me. In the beginning I thought, I would be upset if friends of mine didn't listen to my albums and stuff like that, but you know what, most friends don't listen to my albums. They're busy listening to other albums and rather than get upset about that now I just don't care. I'm just very happy if anybody knows anything about any nano second of a song of mine and I write to finish songs. I write for myself. Developing a thick skin and just writing for yourself in a way of keeping going, moving on.

Okay, number 11. We'll do a little recap here soon. There's always an exception to the rule. This means that like, what you're doing, songwriting routines is such a great thing. Everybody has their own routines. I have my own routine. Take it and use and try to get something from it, but just know that like for every, if I say, I would never say this. Let's say for example like, oh I always start writing from the, I always write a chorus first. Let's say I say that, which is not what I would say, but let's say I say that.

You can go out and find a million people who didn't, who wrote a song not starting at the chorus. There's always an exception to the song writing rule. It's just the nature of art, creativity is creativity. People get to the finished product in every way imaginable. To me that's a really liberating idea and it means you can always find a way to the end. That's number 11. We're doing a little recap.

Songwriting mindsets, let yourself off the hook, be playful, be optimistic. Go step by step, remember that originality is overrated. Create anywhere anytime, create in a room of your own, be persistent, write finished songs, develop a thick skin, number 11, there's always an exception to the rule. Okay, we're in the homes stretch. Number 12, believe that you're a song idea machine. Okay?

I want you to honestly deep down believe inside yourself, that you are, you can just pump out song ideas. No matter what's going on in your world, I want you to be able to be like that's a great idea for a song and that's a great idea for a song and that's a great idea for song. I want you to generate and capture more song ideas than you could ever possibly finish.

Knowing that you have a thousand song ideas, or that you're the type of person, thousand meaning, like in quotes, like just knowing that you have lots and lots of song ideas in your back pocket, will make you feel really confident and free. It's like an abundance mentality, right? It's like, then you won't be worried about like, oh, I got to write a song. What is it going to be about? You just, oh I can think of 10 ideas to write songs about right now, this minute.

The best example for my life I have about that is, when my mom got sick, she got diagnosed with ovarian cancer. I on like within a day, went from having my life as a musician and a songwriter, to becoming somebody's primary care giver. I was so busy with her care when she first got diagnosed, because she had to have a major surgery and start really intense chemo that literally I didn't pick up my guitar for almost a year and a half.

Of course this sent me into like a mental tail spin of like, oh my God, who am I? Will I ever write a song again? This was horrible, until one day I had the realization like wait a second, I can just, this is, I could write down 10 song ideas everyday. That's something I can do when I'm sitting in the chemo suite with her for six hours while she's getting chemo. That's something I can do while we're driving around doing errands together.

I made myself write 10 song ideas everyday for over a year. I have these notebooks full of song ideas. It was a way of reminding myself and keeping myself in the game, so to speak. I want you to be a song idea machine. I want you to believe that in your core. That was number 12.

Number 13, last two, I want you to treat your song ideas really well. Meaning, I want you to have a way of capturing them and keeping them. All the ideas in the world are great, aren't really great if you can't get back to them in some way. I mean it's, I want you to know that you can do it on a, instant in a snap of the fingers, but I also want you to be developing a system that works for you, to capture those ideas.

I think my biggest struggle as a songwriter, if I had to say like what was the biggest struggle, was developing that system that works for me. I am a songwriter that does write songs, sometimes it will take me two years to finish a song. From that moment that I think of the idea to the moment that it's finished in my, whatever I call finished. I needed a way to track that whole thing, that whole process and not lose track of that idea. That took me a really long time to develop, but I've finally done it.

It was a really heart breaking and frustrating time of my life, like many years of losing ideas and everything. That's what I mean by treating your ideas really well. Treat your ideas, respect them enough to figure out how to keep them present in your life, even if you have to wait four years to write that song. Which in the case of when my mom was sick, I had ideas that I wrote down in 2013 that I didn't write until 2017, but I never lost track of that idea that whole time. Respect your ideas or treat them well, figure out a way that works for you.

Number 14, apply your ass to the chair. This is one of my all time favorites. It's, I call it AAC for short, apply your ass to the chair. It's just sheer stubbornness. It means applying your ass to the chair and keeping it there for whatever period of time you said you would work on your song. Sometimes I hit a moment in a song, when I'm writing a song, where I don't know how to write it. I don't know how to end it, I don't know how to whatever it is I'm working on, I literally don't know. I'm frustrated with it, but I just say to myself, I'm just going to apply my ass to this chair until I figure it out. To me that's just a hugely, at some point you have to engage that mindset of applying the ass to the chair. There's a great writer ...

**Kate Schutt:** Oh yeah, there's a great writer named Orhan Pamuk. He's written a number of beautiful novels, he won the Nobel prize in 2006. He said in his speech, "The writers secret is not inspiration, for it is never clear where that comes from. It is his stubbornness and his patience." That lovely Turkish saying to dig a well with a needle, seems to have been said with writers in mind. I think that's true for songwriters. Sometimes we do need to dig a well with a needle and applying your ass to the chair. What do you think of that?

**SWR:** I love that one. I feel like I needed written down or something on the wall that has that.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, yeah, it's a good one. Actually I just noticed on my list of mindsets here, I have one more. Is it yeah, truly one more, 15. There's a bonus, bonus.

**SWR:** A bonus mindset.

**Kate Schutt:** Bonus mindset, finished can mean an hour or four hours, four months or four years. However long it takes you to finish, is what it takes. Some of the best songs I've written have taken me four years. It could seem depressing to say like oh a song took me four years to write, but it's just the truth. Sometimes that's how long it takes and it doesn't mean anything about you as a song writer if it takes you that long.

I always think to myself sometimes when I finish a song that's taken me that long, like, oh God, wow. That used to depress me, but now I just accept it. That's what it took for me to write that song. That song just took a long time and I don't compare myself. Sometimes you write a song in four hours, sometimes you write it in four minutes, sometimes you write four years.

**SWR:** I think that you should treat each, I think you sort of hit it earlier when you said, treat them kindly right and each one like a child probably takes its own way and in its own time they grow.

**Kate Schutt:** Totally, yeah. Those are the mindsets and I can put something together for your listeners, like a little, yes.

**SWR:** I'd love it. listen I know you were working on a book, is the book going to be about this?

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, the book, this is part of the introduction essentially or the setup for what I outline as my system.

**SWR:** Fantastic.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, but I can, I'll put this, I'll make a little PDF for your listeners that will be separate. It's just these mindsets. I think they need to be in a bit of a different order. I'm still playing around with that, but yeah.

**SWR:** That would be fantastic, wow. This has been, I got to say this has got to be one of my best interviews so far.

**Kate Schutt:** Well I love talking about this stuff, because the whole point is, you keep these things in mind and then like the songwriting takes care of itself. Or if you get into a pickle somehow, then you just go back to the mindset. Okay, well there's some way in which I'm not, I'm violating some of these mindsets somehow. Then you just like oh yeah, remember, remember these and then you can figure your way out and around and through.

**SWR:** Oh that's good. I love it. I mean, you're so right. I mean it's almost like common sense. We know this stuff, but when we get into the thing, we just forget everything right, we forget everything including to help ourselves.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, that's huge. I mean that's what I, when we opened this call like, I used to literally face the page and not remember that I knew how to write a song. It's like I had an aphasia and now I don't have that feeling anymore, because I think it's a lot to do with I've decided that I have these mindsets. I can do this, I'll figure a way through. I'll supply my ass to the chair if I have to. I can always just rely on that.

**SWR:** There's still much in this interview. I feel like I need to have you on at least two more times.

**Kate Schutt:** Oh yeah I feel like we need to be on for at least two more times. I mean as I said earlier, one of the big things for me was figuring out, the biggest lesson for me, was figuring out how to keep track of my ideas over time. That, I can't tell you how much heartache that caused me over the years of losing track of good

ideas and not being able to find them. Not being able to work on them, because if you can't find it, then when you set aside the time to work on the idea, then you spend the whole time looking for the idea.

Just how much time that wasted for me. Finally when I hit upon a system that works for me, it's so much, my life is so much better. Just the quality of my life as a songwriter is so much better.

**SWR:** Yeah, I just have all these questions, but I feel like maybe could stop here. I want to release this interview and all this information.

**Kate Schutt:** Sure.

**SWR:** There is one more question. Music is not the only thing, I know that.

**Kate Schutt:** Yup.

**SWR:** I know you're also helping other people, you're a life coach. Are you only helping musicians?

**Kate Schutt:** No, I help, currently I don't help, I don't coach any musicians.

**SWR:** That's interesting.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah.

**SWR:** O was going to say this applies across the board, right?

**Kate Schutt:** Definitely, I mean you could just take out the word song and put in life and these would be great mindsets for life basically.

**SWR:** I love it.

**Kate Schutt:** What's your question?

**SWR:** Tell me about that, so this is part of your mindset right? You also sort of run a business?

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, yeah no I think, I mean, think maybe let's see what your question is. Your question's probably something about what, why do I do that and what does that give me? What's the ...?

**SWR:** Yeah.

**Kate Schutt:** Why don't I just do everything for my art? Well, one is, we all have to make a living and we all have to put money in our pocket. Two is, I think that it's like a great way to as you mentioned earlier, take the pressure off your art. I mean, so

that there's ... When you're trying to do only one thing, then all the pressure is on that one thing.

If you have a number of different things going on, then just by virtue that your spreading your interests around, everything only gets one, everything only gets a slice of the pie versus the whole pie. That's really healthy I think. I love life coaching, because I love helping people. I love walking hand in hand with people as they create new things for themselves in their lives, as they see the world differently. That's just the thrill I have.

Well, this is something that I am fascinated by, it's a real privilege to do that with people, to walk that journey with them as they're making changes in their lives or growing certain aspects of their personality. It's frankly like, I get to work on things like mindset in myself as I'm working with other people. That's the role of a teacher or a mentor or a guide is, you are the best advertisement for your thing.

You have to walk the walk, and so in a way it keeps me honest. These mindsets, I can't teach them unless I've been there. Every time I talk about them, one of the reasons why it's really important for me and why I wanted to do, talk about them in this interview is like, every time you and I talk about them, I reinforce them as important to myself. As you said just a minute ago, I feel like I have to, like think of these things all the time. That's the nature of life. We learn lessons then we forget the lessons and then we have to re-learn them.

We could be depressed about that and frustrated with ourselves or we could just be like that's the nature of life. That's the way our brain works. We remember and we learn something. We use it, we forget about, something happens, we totally can't, it gets lost. We forgot that we ever learned it, then we re-learn it. That's why I love, I love life coaching, because it's like a constant relearning of life lessons.

**SWR:** Love it. Hey Kate, thanks for taking all this time. I am definitely going to be doing, I think it's going to be at least two more if not like three.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, we got a lot to talk about; I mean I'd love to share

**SWR:** it's insane.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, and I'd like to talk to you. I mean it might be fun sometime to get on the hot seat with you and say like, okay, what's a songwriting struggle you have, like a really nitty gritty one? Let's work through it. Let's talk about it.

**SWR:** That would be cool, that would be like a live workshop.

**Kate Schutt:** Workshop, yeah, like a live workshop. I mean, it's cool obviously you and I have been doing enough songwriting workshops to know that it's fun when

somebody does like a critic. The critic is sort of like after the fact. It could be fun to do like a middle fact, a critic in the middle. Like, here I am with the song, this is what I got. What are some options for going from here? This is what's holding me back right now. This is why I haven't made any progress on it. It could be everything from like this word is shitty and I just can't get over it, how bad it is. Or two, I can't find anytime to work on this song.

**SWR:** Right, or it's shitty and I just don't want to let go of it, because I love it.

**Kate Schutt:** Exactly, and it's interesting too. Or this is a shitty song and I don't even know if it's worth putting any more time into it, because one of my mentors Brent Baxter has this concept of like, he's a great songwriter. Hit songwriter and his is like, not every idea is a good idea, especially if you're writing for like pop commercial stuff. He would say, learn how to finish songs, but then once you have that skill, like don't finish every song, because you only have so much time. You only have so many pop hits that you can write and pitch to people.

**SWR:** Yeah.

**Kate Schutt:** Anyway, I know you want to end this, we can, we'll go on from here.

**SWR:** I'm trying to think, I do want to do this I even have a song in my head, all right that's for the next session

**Kate Schutt:** Okay, all right, we'll do it. I love it. It will be good. I'm scared, I'm nervous.

**SWR:** It will be great to hear a song. I'm nervous.

**Kate Schutt:** Yeah, Prasun, thanks so much man. How about I put together a little PDF and we'll put it in my Dropbox and you can send the link to your peeps for it. I just need to know, so we're doing the nitty gritty here. I just need to know when you need it by. Let me know and I'll make it.

**SWR:** Sure.

**Kate Schutt:** Okay.

**SWR:** All right.

**Kate Schutt:** Awesome man, you rock. Go write some great songs.

**SWR:** Well, then you too.

**Kate Schutt:** All right, love you.

**SWR:** Bye.

**Kate Schutt:**

Bye, bye.