



Season Two Episode Six – released July 2022

With Em Stroud – Podcaster, author, speaker, performer and Clown

*Thrive through laughter and authenticity*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Hello again, and welcome to 'Doing the Opposite Business Disruptors,' the podcast where you get to meet incredible leaders who have swum against the tide, thrown out the rule book, changed the rules and adapted the way their sector does business. I'm Jeff Dewing and I'm founder and CEO of Cloudfm, a facilities management business, where we thrive on taking risk so our clients don't have to.*

*Today, I'm really excited to let you know, we're gonna meet someone called Emma Stroud. Emma is a podcaster, an author, a speaker, and a clown. Yes. You heard correct. A clown.*

*Em began in theatre and formed her own theatre company, Abandon Theatre. And went on to perform numerous shows around the country. This is where she established her love of improvisation. Em then felt she needed to get a proper job, start a proper business because something was missing. Over the next 10 years, Em started various businesses trying to link the behaviors of theater with business and leadership. Unfortunately, most of these businesses failed. This is when she found 'da da ding' her purpose.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Her company Truth Works has now gone on to become a big hit internationally, where she has successfully created the power of linking happiness, playfulness and improvisation with business success. She's written a great book called 'Lessons from a Clown', which incidentally is a great read. So for me, having met Emma previously and after being exposed to one of her talks, she really does take you on an incredible journey. But the driver of her impacting message is the five lessons of a clown, which are be seen, be kind, be present, be accepting, and of course be playful which taken together, had the incredible potential to shift the way you live your life.*

*Welcome Em and thank you so much for joining me today and true to your purpose. I'm really banking on having some fun. So hello Em*

**Emma Stroud:**

<Laugh> Hello, Jeff. Thanks for having me. I mean, no pressure there. Just make sure that you are fun just said before recording, 'better be fun!'

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Basic concept, right. Okay. So, Em, listen, I'm gonna start off with trying to sort of get under the skin of a few things, peel the layers back. And what I wanna ask you is during the start of your working life, which was predominantly theatre, I guess, and then the theatre company that you actually then created and you went through that process of sort of understanding the theatre world and doing all the things, gaining all that knowledge and experience. And then I read, which I found really interesting. You've had this idea that said, 'look, I've I've, I've got, I've gotta get a proper job. You know, I've got I've, I've got a launch, a proper business', and you then went on to launch various businesses. During that period, what, what would you say predominantly were the lessons that you'd learned in that journey? And more importantly when was it and what was it that flicked that made you then really understand what you felt your purpose was?*

**Emma Stroud:**

I think it <laugh>, there were quite a few moments along that sort of pathway. And I think one of the, one of the main ones was, you know, that real sort of thinking of like, yeah, okay, I've got to be sensible and I've gotta be serious and I need to be a grown up. So I've always, I've always had this sort of battle, I guess, internally about business versus performing because my, my dad was an

entrepreneur. And so he'd already sort of shown me that you could do stuff in a, perhaps a different way or a non-conventional way, but because he died when I was 10, I sort of saw that. And then, and then I had sort of this sort of my first sort of 10 years of kind of exploring 'what do I wanna do'? And I was meant to go and do business studies, right.

**Emma Stroud:**

That was what I was meant to do. And then I snuck in theatre as like my last option. And then as I sort of started to explore both the theatre world and the business world, I went fully into both of them. So I had a theatre company who said, did Edinburgh festival, was fairly successful was an actor that actually worked. So therefore doing quite well <laugh> yeah, always good. You know, admittedly, some of it was touring old people's homes, but it was still work. It was still touring. I might have done an entire show of Mother Goose to an entirely sleeping audience, but that's a whole other story for another time.

And, and then, and then I sort of was like, 'oh, but I'm really interested in the business world'. And part of my fear at that point in my sort of mid-twenties, well, the business, world's not gonna take me seriously.

**Emma Stroud:**

If I say I do comedy. And if I say I'm an actor, because they're gonna have that perception, that acting is pretending, which it's not, because acting really is the portrayal of truth and you have to really know yourself to be a really good actor. And so for a few years I was like, right, must go into the business world. And I started wearing like a business suit and I started sort of dare I say it kind of conforming into that role that I thought the audience wanted me to be. And then I had a couple of businesses that failed. I had a business that did quite well and I just suddenly started to realize sort of, I don't know, my mid thirties, I was like 'this isn't making me happy' because I was playing the role of just a business owner. And I was like, when I've grown my business and sold it, then I'll do what I'm meant to do.

**Emma Stroud:**

And I suddenly was like, you know what, that's not life. And so I started again, then I did my first one woman show just off the west end. And it went really well. And suddenly it was like, actually I'm bang in the middle and I don't wanna play in just one. And why do I have to? And actually it was

society. It was my fear that was holding me kind of to carry on doing that. And actually the reality was, was like, the world needs me to be me. So I have ended up now being me. And now I'm talking to you on this <laugh> as me!

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Which is great. This is great. And that's an interesting journey cause obviously purpose is a big subject it's it seems, you know, I know five years ago, it's all a bit American 'what's your purpose' and all this sort of stuff. Yeah. But, but in reality it is really, really meaningful and but it's tough. It's, it's really, really tough and you've gotta go through some life experiences. Haven't you really to understand what you think your purpose is? You can't wake up at 18 years old and sort of on your first job and go, 'oh, I know my purpose.' Well, we don't, we've gotta go through a bit of life experience to feel what we like and what we don't like. So, Em, now that we've sort of moved forward to the point of which you understand your purpose. Yeah. We now try and understand how you felt your life, the playfulness, the clowning around, if that's a good enough term, and how that links to be able to influence sort of business success and leadership. And, and when did you sort of make that connection?*

**Emma Stroud:**

I think it - like any good process. It did happen over a period of years and I, and I really practice what I preach. Right? So I have a business coach, I've got a business mentor, so I've got a team around me that make me Em Stroud and we were starting to explore. 'Right. Okay. What really does make me tick? And I was leaving my, a business partner that I've been working with for 15 years. And so it was sort of 'okay, where am I? And it just started to become really clear that actually what I love to do is I love making people laugh because actually when you make people laugh, it's just a beautiful, joyful thing. And everybody feels good, but I didn't just want to make people laugh because as much as I love doing comedy, for me, it doesn't have quite enough weightiness.

**Emma Stroud:**

So then I was like, but actually I really wanna make people think. And so by making people think, how can I get them to do both of those things? And so then the play came into it. And so it was sort of, I sort of went, 'oh, I think my purpose is to make people laugh, think and play'. Right. I think that is. And then I was like, but I've got to do that because otherwise I'm just somebody going, 'you

should do these things'. And if I'm not doing it myself, then there's a, there's a disconnect. And then there isn't a genuineness. And so within my own journey, about five years ago, I sort of reconnected with clowning. I dunno, how many of your guests have said that they've reconnected with clowning, but I did. <Laugh> so I'd done some clowning when I was about 18/19.

**Emma Stroud:**

x'd gone over to Italy and I've studied Comedia Del Arte and and yeah, about five years ago I was like, right, I'm gonna go and do a clowning course. And honestly, I was terrified because I was surrounded by all these professionals that had played in that world a lot more than I had. And then as I did it, all of these pieces of me across the business world and the performing world kind of made sense. Right. And then from that moment, it was like, yeah, 'I'm a clown as well as a coach and a writer. And it's what a gift and it's a craft, you know?'

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah. So, and again, we've met before and I was lucky enough to be a recipient of one of your talks in your journeys, which we'll talk about in a minute, but it, it is, it sort of takes you out your comfort zone, you think, 'well, is, is this how it's supposed to be?' Because we're, we're stereotyped into, you know, businesses stiff up a lip, wear a suit tie and stuff like that. And and it's about breaking down those barriers. And I guess you could summarize the whole thing. It's actually about vulnerability and how do you get people to show their vulnerability? It's very difficult to say, 'show me your vulnerability'. But if you take 'em on a, on a journey that you took us on, suddenly it becomes a lot easier to, to talk about and show and participate in, in the vulnerable process.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*So I found that fascinating. So now you've, you've made that connection. You've realized that you are, you are right smack bang in the middle of acting clowning and business. And you are now on your journey or have been on your journey for a while now of, of actually linking the two and, and exposing that principle and process to the business world or the leadership world in different guises. Yep. So now just sort of try and explain to me how you're in that environment, you're walking into a stage or, or an area of which you're about to address an audience. How do you take them on that journey? And more importantly is how do they find and react to you? How do you gauge that and how do you respond to that? Because you've got an ultimate objective, you've gotta get them*

to the place you wanna get them to, but clearly there's gonna be different types of audiences. How do you do that?

**Emma Stroud:**

Yeah, I think when I'm faced with a different type of audience, and this has been, you know, my journey I've spoken from in front of 4/500 accountants, 4/500 lawyers, 4/500 doctors entrepreneurs, I, and quite often I'm brought in as the curve ball. It's like, you know, you've, you've got the serious business leaders that will talk about financials and marketing and sales processes, and then you've got, 'oh, but we've got Em for a bit of light relief'. <Laugh> and actually the stuff that I talk about is actually the hardest, cuz we can all learn systems, we can all learn processes. And actually the stuff that I'm talking about is who people really are and how do we show up as people? And so the way that I do it is that I'm always come from a place of, look, 'this has been the stuff that I've seen, that I've felt as Em Stroud.

**Emma Stroud:**

Here are some stories. Here are some stories about other people that I've shared this stuff with, take the stuff that works with you and the stuff that it doesn't work for you - just ignore'. So I'm not attached to any of it, but because, and I guess there's that sort of element. And this does come from the clowning side of it all. You know, a lot of my work, it all comes from a point of kindness. And I realize when you go, 'oh, here's Em the clown or here's Em Stroud the comedian', there's already an expectation and there's already fear. And so for me, it's my job to kind of go look, I'm a human and I'm sharing this stuff and I hope it lands. But the thing is, is that you will be at a very different place in your life because you are an accountant or a lawyer and I can't be you.

**Emma Stroud:**

But what I can hopefully do is just share some stuff in some magic that might just help you think in a different way. And when you do that, plus you've made everybody laugh a bit. And that's the key thing. Because when you make people laugh, they relax. As soon as they relax and they get out of their heads because I get them playing. As soon as you play, suddenly you are human and you are no longer a lawyer or a doctor. You are a person. And for me, you know, I've stood up in front of the places and been like, 'There's so many proper grownups and here's me the clown'. Woo. But the

thing is, is that everybody is a human and we all have something to share and we all can learn from one another, you know?

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And that's, and again, it was fascinating again. And I'm referring back to obviously when we met a few weeks ago, but you talk about the lawyers and the accountants. They've all got young children. They've all gone through that journey when they go home, they play right. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> Why don't they play at work? Why is this, this divide? It's like, you walk into two different sort of spheres, don't you? And you think, why are you doing that? And in reality, when you take someone on a journey, as you have done many times, there's that sudden realization - it's like when you said, I hope some of it lands one. One of the stuff that lands is that yeah, we're all, we're all wired to behave in a certain way because of society. And as a business, it's like, 'no, you must be in half eight.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*You must leave at 5:30, you must be smart. And you mustn't giggle and laugh and joke and horse around you. You have to do your job because that's what we pay you for. And, and that's tended to be the life of the last 50 years. COVID has helped bash a brick through that to a certain extent. And then also leadership has, has taken a step through, you know, insights from, you know, people like yourselves and the Simon Sineks tried to get you to say guys, and I've always had this view that there is no such thing as work life balance. There is just life, right. And how you choose to live your life is what will decide your fulfillment and your happiness. Right? And it's not about being disruptive for the sake of it. It's about saying, why is it we have to behave differently past 8:30 than we do before 8:30. You know what, who set that rule? And COVID has helped us break that down. And when you talk about exactly what you just said, you've got an audience of lawyers that are clearly intelligent people, but they still go home and sod about with their kids, right. Well, why can't they do that at work? If it makes you happy and it, and it changes the dynamic and it brings down people's barriers where they can be their true, authentic self. What is wrong with being successful, having a laugh and enjoying every minute of it?*

**Emma Stroud:**

Yeah. I mean, I couldn't agree more. And, and this is one of my sort of challenges at the moment is especially within leadership, you know, COVID has given us a gift, right? Because actually we can

challenge culture and how we're showing up at work. And these rules that were written by somebody that we don't know that 'this is how business happens'. Well, they don't actually work because there's so many challenges about mental health, about wellbeing. There's so many stats about people feeling lack of energy and the easiest and the most truthful way of shifting that is allowing people to laugh, to find the fun, to find the joy, to connect as humans. Suddenly, then your challenges with recruitment, retention, all of those things, they won't go cuz humans will always be slightly challenging, but they will go down.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah, yeah. Materially. Yeah. And again, you look at, you look at our experience alone where we've changed our entire business culture. Everyone works from home. It was always an office based organization, but it's now a home based organization, but people can go in the office, but they can only go in the office, which is which been redesigned as collaborative center. They can only go out the office with their teams or their colleagues to solve problems, be creative and have fun. That is the rule. Right? Yeah. And if you don't do those three things, then we're gonna have a problem. And it's changed everything because now people have got this freedom. They don't feel guilty for leaving early to pick the kids up, right. Because it's, it is now normal. Right? In fact, we would get upset if you weren't leaving to pick your kids up, what sort of parent are you?*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And it's, it's enabled us to change our entire dynamic and our attitude. And then of course, what then happens we've found is that the mental health and the anxiety and all the things that have been present for a long time to a great extent have evaporated because the anxiety and all that stuff was because of the constraints they had between 8:30 and 5:30. If you remove those constraints, then they're as happy as they are on a weekend when they make their own decisions. And what time they cut the grass, what time they go shopping, what time they do stuff that, and it's been, it's been transformational. And the other thing, and again, this is something that is up for debate and is a little bit con a bit controversial. And I accept that not everyone agrees. But what we have found is that with our line managers in our organization that have been managing teams with 5, 10, 15 people, whatever it may or may not be - when the pandemic first started, everyone was locked away.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*At home Everybody declared, they hated it. Right? Cause it was out the norm. Everyone was uncomfortable and then three months later, everyone said they loved it. So that was Point 1 because they'd learned to adapt. Right. And they also realized of time. I spent their family, blah, blah, blah. So it was great. But then what happens? Every line manager bar none said to us after the three or four months, I have, 'I know more about my people in the last three months. I've known about 'em in the last five years' because although it's Teams and we all prefer face to face, it's a bit of a cliché. Some do some don't some don't mind, but you get to have an intimate conversation. You get to truly know the person which you never, ever achieved by chat at the coffee machine.*

**Emma Stroud:**

Yeah. I completely agree. And it's, it's this thing, isn't it of people think, well, I've gotta put this mask on and this is now me professional. Me. And this is why so many people have, you know, fears and anxieties about presenting. Yeah. Because they put that word 'present' and then suddenly it's like, you're presenting. But if you just kind of go, I'm just talking, we all talk all the time. The pressure goes. And this whole idea about this mask of our professional selves and our personal selves, the only person that pays for that is yourself, because you're exhausted because you're putting this mask on. And I remember years ago working with some graduates and they were brilliant spiky, interesting human beings. And then they all stood up to present and I was like, where have you all gone?

**Emma Stroud:**

Cause you're not employed as a graduate because of your skill set. You're employed because of who you are. Yeah. And they were like, well, that's how our middle managers present. And I was like, but what about Em who happens to have the same name as me, the MD? And they're like, 'oh, she just talks'. And I was like, well, either carry on talking and being you, because that's why you're being employed. Or in 20 years time, you're gonna have to go on a leadership course to remember who you are. And I just think it's like, actually just by being you and allowing yourself to bring the fun, the joy and the sadness and the challenges, businesses can't help but thrive!

**Jeff Dewing:**

*No, of course, of course. And it be because it's back to authenticity, it's back to trust. It's back to all those things that happen and the realization, 'oh my God, they're normal. They're an MD they're achievers, yep, but they're just normal. Yeah. You know, they have the same challenges I have with my kids and they have the same changes I have with my wife and they have the same challenges', you know, so, and I guess as well, the other thing is, is that ability you know, people think it's a, a, again, perhaps some people think it's not authentic, but whenever you are talking to somebody, whether it be a presentation or even on a one-to-one, the power of storytelling and storytelling, isn't about great. 'How do I learn how to tell a story?' No, you don't, you just share experiences of your life. Right. And no one knows that experience better than you do. And what tends to happen is they under people underestimate how interesting other people find it. Therefore, why not use it? Why not take on that journey? And if you can link the stories to whatever message you're trying to get across, then it's just a thousand times more powerful, right?*

**Emma Stroud:**

Because the stories are the human parts. Yeah. And the stories are our truth, whereas sort of facts and figures can be challenged on an intellectual level. But if you tell a story and you tell a story about your customer or your client, and you're telling it to a new one, they're gonna find their own truth. Whereas you went, 'here's some facts and figures', then you've got rid of the human side. Yeah. And everybody, we are all storytellers. And I think lots of people put this kind of, ah, but I'm not because I haven't climbed Mount Kilimanjaro <laugh> and it's like, it's fine. If you've not climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, it's like your story of the fact that you've got four kids and two dogs and how you're juggling that while also you've just been promoted. That is a story that has weight for everybody. You know, we don't have to have done amazing things.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*No, of course. And again, you'll be in an audience and you'll pick on people. You'll see people you'll have conversation with people before or after. And if you have a colleague or a friend say, obviously imagine I've got colleagues and friends and you'll go at the pub and you'll have a chat. And all you actually do when you're in the pub is you'll spend all your time making each other laugh. That's what it's about. Right? And you do that through real-life storytelling. So then you sit back, go, 'well, why don't you do our work?' Because you would just bring everybody in. Yeah. Like you're*

*doing with me now. Yeah. So, and you sit and go, why is it we're back to this, this, you know, element of confidence, how we are wired and the key is break it down: be disruptive for the good, not for the sake of it. And, and you'll see, as you, as you've demonstrated, you know, people will thrive. And if people thrive, the business, they work in will thrive. It's a, it is a simple fact. Right. So, but you've gotta have no fear. You've gotta be courageous. Yeah. And and what's the worst can happen, right. You're not gonna get killed are you? So. Well, not unless you're in Russia or somewhere, but, but ultimately <laugh>*

**Emma Stroud:**

Yeah, it'd be, it'd be very unlucky if you were in a boardroom in Dagenham. And you're like, 'ah, I said a story', you know, that would be very unfortunate.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*<Laugh> oh, dear, dear. Anyway. right, listen, now we're gonna take you onto another one. Which is my final question:*

*With all the knowledge and experience you've had and obviously the fact that you are really out there and have no fear on, on, on bringing your message and your, your views across. If there was only one piece of advice you could give me or the listener, what one piece of advice would you give somebody that was either a budding entrepreneur or someone that was unhappy and needs to decide how to be happy? What one piece of advice would you give them where they know to change, whatever it is that they feel sad about they're gonna have to be disruptive, right? So what one piece of advice would you give somebody who really wants to solve this problem, but they're nervous, they're concerned. And they're worried?*

**Emma Stroud:**

I think for me with that, it would be 'turn everything off, turn your emails off, turn your phone off, turn the noise off and sit for 10 minutes and just breathe and sit. And that time - if you do that on a daily basis, that challenge will disappear because you will find your own answer. And the thing is, is that I truly believe everybody has their own answer for whatever challenge is going on. If they just give themselves some space to do that, and I'm talking 10 minutes. 10 minutes a day, just sit, turn everything off and just sit. And sometimes you might not even think about it. And you'll be like, I'm thinking about something else. How am I doing this? Right? How am I doing this wrong? And you'll

probably be like, why am I just sitting here for 10 minutes? Because that short clown on Jeff's podcast said it was a good idea and I don't really get it, but it will change you because actually what you're doing then is that you're giving yourself some space to hear your own wisdom.

**Emma Stroud:**

And the thing is is that you are your wisest ally. You are your wisest confidante. But the thing is, is that we always kind of, we're told we've gotta seek other people. We've gotta seek other ideas. And actually for me, the things that really changed for me was when I allowed myself to do that and just shut up, sit and listen. And if you do that challenges, they're still there, but they lose their power and they lose their weightiness, you know? And as soon as they do that, you can't help. but think about it from a different perspective.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And that's a really, really great answer. And the reason it's a really great answer is because it's struck a chord, which I'm gonna share with you, which is exactly what you just said. So during COVID our business struggled, massively, it fell off a cliff. It went from collecting six and a half million pound per month down to 200,000 pound a month. And I got 400 mouths to feed. So it was the most frightening thing I'd ever experienced in my life. And as the CEO, I've got an exec board saying to me, Jeff, what you gonna do? And I'm going, 'I've got no idea.' So, but what I did was two things. One was a, well, you could, you could argue it was all luck. But one of the things I did was I was lucky enough at that point to have been stuck in Portugal, right?*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*When the lockdowns occurred. And I'm in this lovely house with glorious weather, a lovely patio / veranda at the first floor level. And I watched the sun go down over the sea and all I did because I had no choice. I had nowhere to go. We couldn't go anywhere, was all locked down. So I sat out on my balcony from six o'clock every night for an hour. And it ended up a bit of a, a laughing thing because it was called 'Jeffrey time.' Right. And, and all I did was I sat on that balcony for an hour and I just watched the song go down every single night. What I didn't realize was I'd allowed my mind to be free. Right? I'd allowed myself to think about things. I never ever held myself to account to have an answer, but it gave me the freedom to just let everything go and then just think, and what it done was it energized me for every single morning.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Right? And I, I claim now and I've claimed it to a few people to, of, of a few people that have been prepared to listen. That the only reason our business got through COVID, aside from the incredible tenacity and courage of the people- park that for the moment! But if I'd have been stuck in Colchester where I live and in a grey world with nowhere to go and the frustrations of what you've felt all of your life in, in the UK, for those that have felt those frustrations I'd have been climbing the walls and have been no use to anybody. In fact, I'd have been a burden being here and experiencing what I've just shared with you meant that I woke up every single day with as much energy as I had the day before. And it just drove me and the energy was the key.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And the only way to get that energy was the ability to free your mind and reflect. And I did that every day, apart from one or two days, cuz it was pouring a rain every day for two years. And I swear to God that that was one of the key elements that enabled me through a leadership process with my team to drive this business through COVID and come out the other side driving. So your message about taking 10 minutes and breathing and giving yourself time, I think is probably the best bit of advice I've heard today and this week and this year and this decade. And I can say that because I've lived it and I've felt the power of it. And I will recommend to everybody that's anybody give yourself that time to reflect and you'll be, you'll never ever regret it.*

**Emma Stroud:**

Mm completely. And, and I think there's a, there's a bravery about choosing to do that because it's not what we're told. We're told in order to be successful, you've gotta be busy. Your life's gotta be full. You've gotta be going from one thing to another. And the more that I witness with all the leaders that I've worked with and, and also for myself, the more that I slow, everything down, the more opportunities arrive, the more I help other people slow down the better clarity, the better vision, the better decision making they have and crazily the more joy they have as well, they actually find themselves enjoying what they're doing. I don't mean to like be crazy, but you know, this thing called work, we can actually just really enjoy it. You know?

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Of course. And what was that fantastic statistic you showed me? Which really was quite, quite hard hitting how many times a child smiles, you know, or laughs in a day.*

**Emma Stroud:**

Yeah. Let me try and get it right. It's a, a four year old will laugh 300 times a day. Yeah. The average 40 year old laughs. 300 times a month.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Yeah!*

**Emma Stroud:**

What are we doing? What are we doing? <Laugh>

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And that, and that, that really brings it home. Cause it's a fact. Right. And of course when you reflect on it, I mean, I, I disagree about me. I think I laugh 300 times a minute, but there you go. <Laugh> but, but the reality is, yeah, the reality is it's probably a very clear statement when you reflect on the people, you know, in work in life and whatever, and you see them being stiff upper lip doing work, you can believe that that's that's true. They only laugh when they go home. They only laugh in front of their children. Yeah. Which is, which is mad.*

*Okay. So there's one final parting statement as we wrap up. If there was only one thing, only one thing. What would you say you were most grateful for?*

**Emma Stroud:**

I'm most grateful for the fact that I went and did a 10 day silent meditation retreat. And because of doing that, I made the choice that I could be a mom.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Wow. Wow. Wow.*

**Emma Stroud :**

I mean, you've just met me, you know, everyone just listening might have just met me. You know, I'm fairly talkative. So doing 10 days of silence was quite a thing and you don't look at people either, but I am most grateful that I made the decision to do something. so out of my comfort zone, that then gave me the space for me to go. I could rewrite the rules of my childhood. So I could be a mom in a way that I wanted to be as a gay woman and in the way that I want him to thrive and be happy. Yeah. So that's what I'm most grateful for.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Well, that's, that's, that's a great story. I absolutely love that. But again, it comes back to giving yourself time to reflect again, doesn't it? Yeah. Giving you space for your own wisdom. So that's brilliant. Listen, Em, it's been a fantastic, fantastic experience to you today as it was the last time we spoke.*

*I'm truly thankful for you coming on and spending time with us today. And and I wish you the best of the future and I can't wait for us to catch up again sometime in the future.*

**Emma Stroud**

Thanks for having me, Jeff, it's been a joy.

**Jeff Dewing:**

*Well, that was Em. And a big thanks to Emma for taking the time to join me today on this podcast. And you'll see that you can have a lot of fun when you're with Emma.*

*The bit I loved, well, there's lots of bits. I loved, I love the whole concept of what she does and, and how she links stuff together with business and, and life and laughter and humanity and, and just the normal things that, that we all seem to, we all seem to have lost our way on. And I'm hoping, well, I'm seeing, I'm witnessing now through business and leadership that we're starting to behave as I believe we should have always behaved. And that is to be joyful, have fun and enjoy each other's company. But what an interesting statistic and I, and a child, a four year old child laughs 300 times a day!! Now I've got two grandchildren living with me in the moment.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*One is nine months and one is 16 months. And I absolutely believe that statistic because I see it every day and it's fantastic. But to think that a grown up or a 40 year old man or woman laughs 300 times a month – wow! Isn't that sad? So that was really, really, really interesting.*

*And of course you can always delve further into <inaudible> perhaps looking out and, and buying a book 'Lessons of a Clown', which, which is a great book. I recommend it to anybody. And you can get a bit more under the skin of, of what Emma does and the impact she has on the people she comes into contact with.*

*Do listen back to earlier episodes of my podcast during the opposite, where you are hear from various people and the call out today is David Drake who is an American Irishman.*

**Jeff Dewing:**

*And he did the opposite by basing his life, building a family and working in Brazil and an incredible story that is.*

*I'm Jeff Dewing, author of bestselling book *Doing the Opposite* and CEO of Cloudfm. Cloudfm are changing the rules of our industry and doing the opposite to create best value and experiences for our clients. If you'd like to know more, please visit our website at [cloudfmgroup.com](http://cloudfmgroup.com) or alternatively, feel free to follow us on [LinkedIn](#). You can also find out more about the podcast and my incredible guests at [podcast.cloudfmgroup.com](http://podcast.cloudfmgroup.com).*

*Finally, a big thank you to my team Nichola Crawshaw at Cloudfm, Sarah Waddington of Astute PR, Thinking Hat PR. And of course, my incredible production team What Goes On Media who have helped me launch this incredible new disruptive podcast. Thanks for listening.*