



# EPISODE 105

## Open House

### TRANSCRIPT

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*Intro: Hi everyone and welcome to The Enchant Me Podcast. I'm Kim Selby and I'll be your host as we go looking for creative inspiration every day life. In each episode, we'll talk about a quick one or two hour excursion we go on that's meant to feed our creative spirit and refill our reservoir of internal inspiration. Our excursions are based on the concept of the 'artist date', one of the tools in "The Artist's Way", a book by Julia Cameron that's a great book to read if you're looking to bring more creativity into your life no matter what form you find it. So let's get started.*

Hi everybody and welcome to episode 105 of *The Enchant Me Podcast*. I'm Kim Selby and I just want to say thanks for being here and taking a listen. This week's artist date is a little bit out of the norm of some of the other excursions I've gone on and have planned, but it was something - that when I became aware of it, knew I had to do. When I learned about this opportunity - although I'm not really sure opportunity is the exact right word - I hadn't really thought about this as an artist date. But the more I thought about it, I began to see it in this light. It would certainly be something to do that would get me going in one way or the other. And the more I thought about doing it, the more I realized that this would definitely be a chance to be inspired in one way or another. Although how I wouldn't know until it was done.

I'm a member of a handful of local neighborhood Facebook groups and one afternoon, while scrolling through, an image appeared that stopped my scrolling in my tracks. It seemed at the same time completely out of place on my phone's screen to the point of feeling jarring and obtrusive, but immediately familiar in a "this photo just pinged my lizard brain" sort of way. I blinked a couple of times as my present-day brain processed the photo.

The posting was a real estate listing and open house advertisement for the house that I grew up in. Well, spent part of my time growing up in. Without turning this episode into a therapy session, let's just say that I categorize my childhood days in two ways: "before the move" and "after the move". I classify my before the move life as an idyllic. We lived in a small, but not too small town outside of Philadelphia, where everyone seemed to know each other and you knew not only your neighbors, you knew your around the corner and across town neighbors. The town had a very strong sense of community and I was an extremely happy and well-adjusted kid.

Then the proverbial hammer fell and I learned that we were moving. So, during the summer between 7th and 8th grades, the house in my beloved and quintessential small town was sold and packed up, and I was dragged kicking and screaming - quite literally at times - into my new life.

Although we moved less that twenty miles away, it may have been 2,000. We moved from PA to NJ, and although both towns are considered suburbs of Philadelphia, they were worlds apart. My new town was bigger, more sprawling, more like a small city than the leafy burg that I had called home for almost all of my about to turn 13 years. The house was bigger, the yard was bigger, my new school was bigger, everything was bigger.

Suffice it to say that I went practically overnight from being a happy-go-lucky, on-top-of-the-world kid to being an inconsolable, resentful and angry teen. That summer was, and in some ways still is, a defining moment. I hated my life, I hated everyone around me for ruining my life and I hated that house, no matter how big and nice and new it was. And now it was for sale and staring back at me through my phone. Inviting me or maybe daring me - to come to its Open House.



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I need to pause a second and mention that all this went down more than thirty years ago. I eventually regained my sense of self, or whatever that turns into in middle school and high school. I made my way though, well, slogged my way through is probably more accurate, but I made it.

I really only lived full-time in that house for five years. But those five years loomed large. I couldn't wait to graduate high school. Once I left for college, I think I only lived there again full-time during the summer after freshman year. The university I attended was only fifty miles away, so it was easy to go back and forth while living close to campus during the following summers. In the grand scheme of things, five years is not that long.

So, why did I want to do this? Truth be told, I would have done it regardless if I had used it as an artist date. But the idea that I could find some kind of creative inspiration by doing this was intriguing. And as much as I had held on the bad memories of that time, when I thought about it, I was also able to recall some good ones. Especially ones in which I was occupying my time with something creative. Taking improv and theater classes at school, participating in summer theater programs, designing hundreds of my own MTV logos and practicing drawing the Van Halen "VH" over and over again until I got it right. Covering the walls of my bedroom with Interview magazine covers, Absolut vodka ads and detailed photo collages of Rob Lowe. Listening to Madonna and Pink Floyd late into the night on my Walkman while I lay in bed wishing to return to my old life.

The ironic detail of this situation, one that a better storyteller may have saved for Act Three of this particular tale, is the fact that I currently live less than a mile away - .7 miles to be exact. No matter how badly I recall living in that house, and how much I longed to finish high school and make my escape, I can right now easily walk to it in twenty or so minutes. Ride my bike in ten, drive in three.

The night before the open house, I laid in bed thinking about what it would be like to walk up that driveway again and open the front door. My parents sold it in 1993 and if I do math right now, that turns out to be 25 years ago. A quarter of a century. That number alone is shocking. Although in some way, that number seems fitting for a return. "25 years later, formerly angry girl returns to the place that was the focus of her anger." Will she cry? Has she softened? Will she strike a match and burn it down? Tune in next week to find out..."

I was feeling a bit anxious, and I did know that I was creating a drama inside my head - possibly where one need not exist. Where will I park? Do any of the old neighbors still live there? Would they recognize me if they did? Will the real estate agent know I was there to snoop and not to buy? The only person I had told about the open house was my sister, but she was not able to go. I hesitated to tell my parents, who, although they may have been interested to see it, had sold it because of divorce, not because of desire to do so.

The next morning I still felt the same sense of anxiety, and even entertained the thought of not going, but I knew I would regret it if I bailed. Even though the house was so close to where I lived, I never really had a need to pass it. In fact, when, on the few occasions I did, it was almost as if there was an invisible barrier that I had to puncture to get close. I could drive or walk freely around its perimeter streets, but if I go too close, an invisible force pushed me towards another route like two opposite ends of magnets trying to connect.

So, that Sunday morning, I went about my normal Sunday routine until it was time to leave, got in my car, and then decided I had four more errands to run before I headed over to the house. I was resisting.



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There is a book by Steven Pressfield called *“Do the Work! Overcome Resistance and Get Out of Your Own Way,”* that deals with why we seem to get stuck when trying to accomplish something. Pressfield categorizes resistance as: Invisible, Insidious, Impersonal, Infallible and Universal. It’s a quick read and can be helpful to anyone trying to get motivated to start and finish something. Here’s a quick quote from the book:

*“Resistance cannot be seen, heard, touched, or smelled. But it can be felt. We experience it as an energy field radiating from a work-in-potential. Resistance is a repelling force. It’s negative. Its aim is to shove us away, distract us, prevent us from doing our work.*

*Rule of thumb: The more important a call or action is to our soul’s evolution, the more Resistance we will feel toward pursuing it.”\**

*Some of the ways he defines resistance fear, self-doubt, procrastination, addiction, distraction, timidity, ego and narcissism, self-loathing, perfectionism. That’s a tough crowd and I was in full-blown resistance mode at the moment.*

I allowed myself to go on one errand and then I knew that it was basically now or never time. The open house only had a two hour window. I didn’t want to get there right when it started, but I didn’t want to get there too late either. I wanted to hit it right in the middle and hopefully blend in with a crowd that would keep the real estate agent otherwise occupied.

I decided that if I was going to fully immerse myself into this experience, I was going to drive the route home through the neighborhood that I used to take. As I turned from the main street into the development, it was if my car went into autopilot. I felt my body fall into the same position as I took the turns around the tree-lined streets. Passed the school bus stops that were on the route I rode before getting my drivers license, remembering who got on where and passing by homes of classmates and neighbors I babysat for. I had infiltrated the bubble, and there was no going back.

The house was on a cul-de-sac consisting of six homes and ours was the second on the right as you entered, so once I turned onto the Court as it was called, there was no way to just pass it by without having to make a u-turn.

I parked in front of the house next door - the one closest to the adjoining street - and sat there for a minute. My stomach had a small knot, and I knew the longer I sat in the car, the longer it would take to get out. I felt self-conscious for some reason and wished I had a something more than a pair of sunglasses to render me invisible. It was the strangest feeling to be on that street again, parked in front of the house that represented all of my teenage angst, rage and fears. I was afraid that I was getting emotional, so I blinked back the hotness of the tears I was starting to feel and got out of the car.

I walked past the mailbox at the end of the property onto the driveway and the memories started to flow. I had promised myself that I whatever feeling I felt I was going to let come. I was hoping in some way that visiting this house, would allow me to finally exorcise any leftover negative feelings I had about it. Now, I must pause and remind everyone again that all of this happened a long time ago, I am currently firmly esconsed in my forties, but in my family, my level of unhappiness at that time became family canon.



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The house for the most part looked the same. Same color siding, different color shutters. The wooden fence surrounding the back and side yard was gone, and that surprised me because one of the great parts of that house was the private and tree-shaded yard. Now the yard was open and the landscaping well-kept.

The front door may have been the same, but I can't say for sure. Although from the feel of the doorhandle and the placement and shape of the door knocker, I might place a bet that it was. Because this was an open house, I felt no need to knock, so just as if I was entering when it was still mine, I simply opened the door and stepped into the foyer.

I could probably spend an hour on the minute details of the visit, but I am not going to. This recording alone seems like extremely self-indulgent exercise and navel-gazing in nature, so breaking down this experience room by room seems unnecessary. Perhaps there are other stories to tell about this visit in other ways. I will, however, summarize instead:

1. To no one's surprise, everything felt smaller. The kitchen, the bedrooms, even the staircase felt smaller. Why does that happen I wonder. How we fit everyone in the dining room for family celebrations? How did my parents entertain so much in the summer when the deck looked so small? Why did my sister's bedroom look so similar in size to mine, when I felt so slighted when she was awarded the bigger room?
2. Every room - from the laundry room to my old bedroom - brought back vivid, and sometimes obscure memories. The time my grandfather tipped over in his chair and brought Thanksgiving to a crashing and concerned yet hilariously funny halt. The rainbow sticker that one day appeared on the back sliding glass door that was meant to stop people from walking into it and hurting themselves. The living room where guests hid to surprise my mom when she graduated from culinary school, and where my friends and I celebrated my sweet sixteen. The backyard where I tanned, practiced soccer maneuvers against the fence and played with my beloved miniature schnauzer.
3. There is such a thing as muscle memory. From the way I drove through the neighborhood to get there, to the way you grasp a door handle, to the way you ascend a flight of stairs, or the smell of the garage, things that you don't give a second thought to, have a way of settling in deep.
4. The kitchen, although small, was where we ate dinner together every night, and where family and friends ultimately gathered during the seemingly many times my parents entertained or hosted.

The house felt happy. Like there was love in the house that came from its bones. Just the quick calculation of how many celebrations we had in that house was a revelation. To my surprise, the good memories that came flooding back seemed to outweigh the bad. And if that was the case, why has my association with that house been so bad. Well, I was miserable, that was one reason. But perhaps I had given that misery too much weight. It was becoming clear to me that for three decades I let myself identify with the bad instead of the looking for and remembering the good. Perhaps it was time to give as much, if not more weight to those memories instead.

1, Stories have power. The ones we tell each other, and the more importantly, the ones we tell ourselves. They have the power to shape lives and create energies all their own, and it's never too late to adjust their outcome. After the open house, I felt compelled to home and dig through the boxes of old photos I had to see if I could



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find any photographic evidence of that time. I knew there were photos. But what I didn't know was whether or not they captured both sides of the story.

2. Creating drama for drama's sake is a crucial part of creating something. Whether it's crafting a story, designing a building, or creating an onion volcano at a hibachi table. Some sort of conflict must be overcome. But in real life, creating drama for drama's sake doesn't always work in our favor. The drive to create our own narratives can be strong, but the real truths and histories always seem to reveal themselves, sometimes in the smallest, or least likely of places: the scratches on a banister, the smell of a garage, or the sound a set of basement steps makes when walked on.

3. Resistance is real. And the only way to push through it to do the thing that you say you so want to do. Write the story, take the class, start the business, train for the marathon. Resistance is real, and it's not going anywhere, and there is no way to fully purge it from your life. You have to constantly battle through it and ignore the mental chatter that we as humans are programmed to listen to. And, it will come back. But being aware of it is one of the ways you can continue to fight it.

4. Although your own stories can't be re-lived, they sometimes can be re-shaped and re-visited in a way that makes it easier to re-tell.

Well, if you made it this far, thanks so much for listening. I am going to refer to this episode as my "very special episode" to go along with today's trip down memory lane, and in concert with some of our other 80s references.

If you are interested in learning more about creative resistance, and ways you can combat it, I've placed a link on [theenchantmepodcast.com](http://theenchantmepodcast.com) to Steven Pressfield's website. And, against my better judgement, I have also dropped a couple of those old photos up there too.

*Outro: So that's it for this episode of The Enchant Me Podcast. Please join us next time as we again go looking for creative inspiration in every day life. Don't forget, you can always visit us at [theenchantmepodcast.com](http://theenchantmepodcast.com). You can follow us on Twitter @theenchantmepod, or on Instagram @theenchantmepodcast. The Enchant Me Podcast is produced by Kim Selby and Storm Your Brain, LLC. Thanks again for listening. We hope to see you again on the next episode of The Enchant Me Podcast.*

To listen to this episode, visit [www.theenchantmepodcast.com/105](http://www.theenchantmepodcast.com/105).

\* Pressfield, Steven: "Do the Work! Overcome Resistance and Get Out of Your Own Way".