

# ON // Changing it up

ISSUE 2 of 3

## “If it works, it’s out of date” - David Bowie

Life is (quite simply) dynamic AF.

Take the Thin White Duke, Mr. Bowie, for example. At the height of his influence he was in constant flux - every year a new persona, a new record, a new style, completely reinvented. Fresh ideas were far more important to him than perfected and refined ones. Spend too much time getting something perfect, and before you know it the world’s moved on.

Now, while the rest of us might not be that comfortable with Bowie levels of reinvention, it stands to reason that there’s far more ‘moving forward’ in our lives than there is ‘standing still’. That sometimes intoxicating, often terrifying, always-present momentum of change driving and dragging us ahead, whatever stage of life we find ourselves in.

And while we chase after that carefully planned, ‘onwards to victory’ flavour of change that we’ve looked forward to for years, every now and then it’s overtaken by the ‘sucker-punch-to-the-face’ kind of change that shows up unannounced on our doorstep like a power cut in the middle of the Tiger King finale - you know what we’re talkin’ about.

In fact, it turns out that the kind of change that defines you is usually the kind that doesn’t knock twice, the kind that punches you in the face as it rips the road map right out of your hands and sets fire to the barn of ‘steady as she goes’.

Which sounds a lot like what’s goin’ down right now.

So take a deep breath, get comfortable with not being comfortable, and dig into some of these brilliant lessons on Change 101 from a handful of our favourite people who’ve earned their stripes the hard way.

You’ve got this.

Bayly & Moore



# Talita Setyadi



**Jakarta-based T.S.** is not your typical baker. Starting out as a benchmark jazz player carting around an upright bass to shows, she gear-changed in the blink of an eye to the French food scene, becoming an award-winning pastry-chef and eventually founding a boutique chain of high-end Jakarta bakeries that'd be more at home in Paris than Asia.

@talitasetyadi  
@beaujkt

## How do you approach Change?

I try my level best to approach change with self-honesty and humility. I've learnt that change is only uncomfortable if it contradicts the stories I tell myself to soothe my ego and give an illusion of security. I've realised that it's only ever unwelcome if it exposes areas of my life that I'd long overlooked, or shortcomings I've neglected. I've had inclinations to stick with what I felt I've figured out, rather than voluntarily venturing into uncharted waters where I know challenges are bound to come up. This is where identity play and societal influences also tend to come into the picture, where I am faced with not only the image and understanding that I have about myself, but also the way that I have been conditioned to see the world around me.

The thing about change that has given me the most suffering is the initial part where I come to terms with my humanness, points at which I failed and where I lacked foresight. I'm sure many of us can relate to that wave of guilt, anxiety and shame, where everything we've accepted as "status quo" has failed to deliver predictability as advertised. Adding salt to our wounds, we find that the things that would've eased our torment are always the things we'd avoided dealing with in the first place! But I've found that once I have grieved my old self, let go of my old ways and made space for the new, accepting and embracing the great unknown as a new normal is much easier.

## What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

Embracing TECHNOLOGY. I'd always been a tactile and sensory driven sort of person. Even during my jazz degree I traded in the electric bass for the more raw and gritty nature of an upright bass. I didn't mind that it was bulky, charmingly out of tune and very inconvenient to hulk from place to place. I liked the way that it smelt, the way its hollow body reverberated and the way that the high-action strings snapped under my fingers.

**“Our heart always knows what we want and what we truly desire, it's only our minds that tell us how naive or impossible it is”.**

Fast forward to now where, as a bakery owner, I've extracted a lot of joy in designing a tasteful and comfortable place for folks to enjoy the sensory experiences of fresh-from-the-oven aromas, pastry eating, coffee drinking and people watching.

All of this was so much more pleasurable to me to conjure up in comparison to soul-isolating Zoom calls about online marketing strategies post Covid-19. Pivoting my wholesale and table service model to that of delivery, catering and subscription has been a tough challenge as we had to go back to the drawing board and figure out how to find a new flow. But the whole experience has forced me to evolve and become more adaptable to the changing times, and address all the tech issues I had been avoiding. I'm thankful because once we reach the other end of this pandemic, we'll be all the better for it.

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

At 27 I had to close my first two bakery outlets due to financial losses and had been dumped by a man I thought was going to be with for the rest of my life. The archetypal romantic love and success stories I wanted so badly to play out were stopped dead in their tracks. I was broken-hearted, miserable and up to my eyeballs in debt. I perceived them as such gigantic, colossal 'failures' of my life, and I didn't know who I was if not that "young successful hotshot" that I told myself I was. So I hit rock bottom with an identity and existential crisis of sorts. But looking back, it was such a beautiful blessing because I had literally no other option but to question every mindset and belief I had, which led to these events and rebuilding my life from the dust.

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Coming into my own and diving deep into spirituality saved me. It was in meditation that I realised how high strung I was, and how hard I had been on myself. Now, on the other side, I am more easy going – a lot more flexible to change and a lot more balanced. I've realised that by staying in the “now” moment, I can be hyper present in my experience and not compare or try to play out a story that's not my own. It's allowed me to become more creative in my work, have more fun and to be authentic in every way!

## **How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?**

If we feel unhappy or miserable with what we do, then I'd say that's a good marker that something's got to change! Our emotions are the greatest indicators of whether we are being honest with ourselves. Our heart always knows what we want and what we truly desire, it's only our minds that tell us how naive or impossible it is. I believe we need to train ourselves to still be grounded in times of risk, uncertainties or change. Because that is when we experience the most growth and gain more emotional and mental grit to become wholly successful. I truly believe that we do not need the world to stop changing for us to feel secure, we just need to change with it.

# Lorraine Barry



**Auckland-based L.B.** started out in Northern Ireland as a journalist during The Troubles. She moved into music PR and headed for Virgin Records in London, working her magic for Ice T, Massive Attack and The Verve before helping usher The Spice Girls to global fame. Now she's shepherding the careers of some of Aotearoa's most loved musicians with a famously steady hand.

@barry\_lorraine

## How do you approach Change?

Change is life. Mine has been a series of sweeping shifts, sometimes loud and unsettling, interspersed with almost imperceptible little nudges, where the impact is barely felt until there is a cumulative effect. And then one little sentence sums it up - 'look how things have changed in the last couple of years'.

In dramatic circumstances I can challenge, mourn or embrace change. I've been known to mount a feisty head-to-head or two in my career. I've been pulled under by the weight of hurt or loss. I've celebrated positive changes that were earned. But on a day to day basis change is constant. My inner self and I chatter away non-stop. "Let's put this in context, Loraine. Focus. Think." And stopping for a moment, weighing up the options, helps me to move forward. Don't look back!

## What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

Oh this 'Covid-19' curve finds me accepting and playing by the stay indoors rule. None of us yet knows how the world will spin moving forward. So myself and Anthony Metcalf who has worked with me for the last six years, will be ready to adapt and rewrite the plans.

In the meantime I have a routine. I dress for work and am early to my desk – I have Th'Dudes and Avandale Bowling Club album releases (the vinyl is in lock-down). Th'Dudes' tour is rescheduled and there are singles from two new artists to my roster- Milly Tabak and The Miltones then Team Dynamite.

Dave Dobbyn, Tom Scott and Nomad are in writing mode. After lunch I have a long list of chores around the house. Unfortunately it is not possible to do these because I skip to the later-scheduled 'me' time on the sofa with a book or Netflix. Oh and Robert Fripp and Toyah dancing on YouTube. In between there are 17 meals a day.

**“But some things never change...  
Music will always be with us – just  
the mode of transport will change”.**

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

Two things. The small seaside town I grew up in was my world until I was 24. Then I took the absolutely-never-anticipated step to suddenly move to London.. and I felt alive. I spent many years working for Virgin Records, travelling to work with artists and to our companies all over the globe. My eyes were wide open in foreign lands. "Travel' is still the dominant section of my bookshelves.

Then 18 years ago I followed my heart to New Zealand. I'm a very fortunate immigrant – I managed to reinvent my career, I live up in the bush in the most stunning of countries, I have a small but caring circle of new friends. But I wasn't prepared

for the homesickness that never quite leaves or how far I am from family in Northern Ireland. Never take for granted family and friends.

## How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?

Change can give you an edge. A fresh look at things can be really motivating. I'm conscious of the need to regularly review the plan for my artists' careers. Responsibility sits quite heavily on my shoulders; I need to be alert to new opportunities. I think the 'reality check' is the best tool in my kit.

In music, the 'old thing' is regularly being ditched. I remember my cream and red bakelite record player that sat next to Dad's; then my shiny red Walkman for the mix tapes I recorded from the chart countdown; the vinyl of my teens – I still have the Stones' Beggars Banquet album my uncle left behind at our house; the Carpenters on a 4-track player in a boyfriend's car; the massive CD collection I sold at Portobello market before leaving for NZ. And now here we are with downloads gone and streaming ruling. When I went to work for Virgin there were still telex machines, then fax, intranet, suitcase-sized mobile phones, internet, conference calls.

But some things never change. Music is about connection – it makes us move or sparks a memory and just playing a song can connect us to a range of emotions. Music will always be with us – just the mode of transport will change.

# Michael Busse



New York-based M.B. is one half of a semi-insane/genius photography duo (alongside the mighty Chellise), does double-duty as indie hip-hop supremo Fritz Cook, and knows a thing or two about hustling in New York City to make magic happen. Having shifted halfway across the USA from Arizona to Brooklyn to follow their dreams, they've recently ditched the NYC koolaid for an upstate hideout.

@mrfritzcook  
@chellisemichaelphotography

## How do you approach Change?

Big change I can do. I find it easy to adapt to (most of the time). Things like getting kicked out of where we live and needing to find a new home, family deaths, or economic crashes. The change that is inflicted upon me is easy for me to write off as out of my control. I've always been a big fan of the phrase, "It happened for a reason". Countless times, something seemingly 'bad' on the surface of a moment turns out to be a beautiful blessing in disguise. Because of these observations, I've gained a large trust/faith in what I'm dealt. I'm able to discount the magnitude of the change that has come, therefore submitting to the complexities in my ignorance of how hard I'll need to work to maintain through it. I just do it. That doesn't mean I don't feel pain, or loss or confusion or grievances. But I'm quick to accept my new surroundings or circumstances.

Phrase #2: Imagine a 92-year-old Jewish man from the south side of Chicago, we'll call him "Uncle Joe", washing his dry hands in the air of some invisible hardship he has to go through and saying the words, "It is, what it is". Those words, and the way he said them, will ripple within me for the ages. There's so much acceptance in the phrase. When you say it, you're bathing in the responsibility you have to take on, and simultaneously brushing off the bitching and moaning that can come along with big change. Being upset about the complexities that change presents will only shine light on how hard that change will be for you and those around you, thus

creating your story of what that change means for you, and eventually that becomes your reality. That's big change. But small change, fuck. I'm working on that one.

**“Comfort is not the enemy.  
Comfort provides a safe place for  
us to explore and connect with  
the unknown”.**

## What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

When change is not inflicted upon me with a tidal wave of passion-bending results, I can have a pretty tough time with the change that I am personally responsible for making. For example, I can feel pretty deflated with a creative endeavor if I've put a lot of time into a project and something's not "working" about it. If I need to change how I view a piece I've been working on in a certain way, my openness to building a new process for my next steps has been hard for me in the past. Internally, I would kick and scream about how much effort I've put in already. I felt that this amount of effort should be enough and that attitude would prevent me from lifting another finger in attempts to find a new path to

completion. This is a change my ego would not allow. One in which I was responsible for the change to occur. The way I've been combating this is through completion exercises and observation. Rather than being wrapped up in the ecstasy of beginning a project time and time again (and not finishing often), I would place limitations on myself and only allow my time to go towards projects I've already started. Through this, I'm able to see what parts of the process are similar and how they differ from starting something. What does it feel like to pick something back up? To initiate change? What do I have to bring out of myself in order to see this through? Does it feel more exciting or less exciting? Can I learn to expect what it might feel like the more I do it? Can those expectations help curb my need to feel the sweet nectar of a beginning when I'm in the middle? This process has helped minimise the time I've spent kicking and screaming about having to change something myself. Learning to make quicker decisions about how to continue has been my golden ticket. It's a muscle that's worth working on.

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

I've been into hippy shit for a long time. Hippy shit mixed with a strong yearning for practicality. My dad was a new-ager and had me meet with a TM teacher at age 4 to get my first mantra and walking routine. I've always gone in and out of practice at different points of my life, and simultaneously carried lots

of resentment and respect for what is now a multi-billion dollar industry called “mindfulness”. In this lifetime, I’ve had some amazing a-ha moments, but shit really started adding up for me when I went to Utah a few years ago to meet with my friend’s wife who does energy work. She did a 4 hour clearing on my last night in town and I felt light as a feather after. More importantly, she gave me a way of protecting myself from other people’s energies and emotions. I was able to see a confidence around my own gifts and allow the voices in my head that I had muted for so long, to finally be heard. My wife had the chance to have a session with her a month or two later and it completely changed our relationship. We always got along well and had good communication, but to be able to add this aspect of spiritual awareness to the language we used around one another switched up how we did everything. How we started our day. How we ran our business. How we talked about big change. How we talked about small change. It wasn’t just one session that changed us either. It was a million small steps that we had each taken that somehow added up to give us the strength needed to make a semi-commitment to leaning toward a daily meditation practice. We often put so much pressure on ourselves to change and create new habits that it debilitates our efforts and exhausts us before we even get started. And willpower is too finicky to trust. It took the help of an energy healer, mixed with my past experiences, mixed with the current support of my wife and my inner yearnings to make a special sauce, that gave me the desire to continue on this routine. This change in my daily activities hasn’t made the stresses of life go away, but it has made big and small changes more manageable. It’s made the curveballs thrown at us daily, monthly, yearly make less of a blow. It’s made me quicker to think of solutions, rather than fester on problems. And that’s kind of it, right? Change has the power

to give you either a sense of accomplishment for being able to handle it and move through, or it can trap you in a circle of indecision that is relentless in its grip. Now, this has been my experience and something that has worked for me. Everyone finds their ease of mind somewhere or another and it doesn’t necessarily have to be in a meditation practice. It’s in the morning cup of coffee. It’s available outside every window you look. It’s at the gym. It’s in nature. It’s in an activity. It’s in your bed before you go to sleep. It’s when you sleep. There are so many opportunities for us to connect and allow our focus to drift back and forth between inside and outside our bodies.

## **How do you know when it’s time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?**

When Side B of the record starts making that gentle pop sound signifying the last line of that side of grooves? When the knife gets dull? When something that has worked in the past doesn’t work any longer? When something that has worked in the past doesn’t excite you any longer? When you start daydreaming during a process that has worked in the past? What I will not say is “when things get comfortable”. Comfort is not the enemy. Comfort provides a safe place for us to explore and connect with the unknown. The unknown can be scary, so why not approach new things from a comfortable place? Would it then be repetition that we need to have a conversation with? If we’re only doing the same set of things over and over in the exact same way? I’d call that boring, not comfortable. I was listening to this incredible interview between Rick Rubin and Andre 3000 of Outkast, and Andre was telling a story about how he was up on stage at some show performing to thousands of people. He was sweating, moving to the music, rapping his ass off. To anyone outside of himself, he looked IN it. But he

said, at one point during the show, all he could think about was what he was going to eat that night. Hahaha. I love that his muscle memory had built up night after night to a point of being able to perform his duties to the utmost, but inside, he was able to meander around in his thoughts and dream a little. He said in the interview that he was a little freaked out by the experience, but I see it as a way for us to invite change. If you begin something by performing an act you’re comfortable with, you are engaged in an activity that you know well. This gives your mind freedom to explore and think about how to build on what you are doing. David Byrne rides his bike around the city with a voice recorder in order to write lyrics. He feels better when his body is engaged in a familiar activity and says this opens his mind up to allow new kinds of words and thoughts to enter. In essence, if we hit a roadblock (or a big fat slice of change), sometimes finding a place of comfort and doing a little less can help significantly rather than trying to bulldoze your way through. When we’re in a place of comfort and start observing what the obstacle looks like, sounds like, feels like, smells like, it can serve such an incredible purpose. If we slow down and look at what haunts us, we can know exactly what we’re dealing with. Rather than having it be the monster in our head whose existence we deny, we can have the power of knowing the truth. If we know what something IS, that acts as a form of acceptance. Gaining acceptance of what plagues us might breed the question, “how do I want to interact with this?” This question breeds choices. Choices breed decisions. Decision gives us CHANGE.

Change is the only thing that’s constant. We may as well spend some time learning what the consistency of change feels like to us as individuals and how we move through it.

# Nick Ciffone



Los Angeles-based N.C. is just your average run-o-the-mill Emmy-nominated advertising genius with a slew of brilliant campaigns under his belt, for a host of brands that probably own a slice of your heart, from a who's who of the world's great agencies. He's currently plying his rare skill at Media Arts Lab for the good people of Apple and embracing every ounce of change he can.

@nickciffone  
@tbwamal

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## How do you approach Change?

In the words of the great philosopher - The Hulk, circa the 2012 indy flick Avengers, "That's my secret Cap. I'm always angry".

Humans are in a constant state of change. My beard gets longer every morning. My property value goes up and down. Some dude eats a bat for lunch and now we all live indoors. Change is inevitable. Life is change.

I approach change by submitting to it. I do not create change. Change creates me.

## What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

I think the reason people find change difficult is because they create this illusion that they can control it, that they have the ability to keep things the same way. Maybe that's why people have so many different forms of "insurance".

I try, emphasis on try, to live in a constant state of uncertainty. I have goals yes, but each day I wake up willing to take on anything that comes. A new inspiration to write or re-write about. A new dish to try. A new person to talk to. A new thing to do at my job. A new job. A new place to live. A new — wait, Trump got elected president? The planet is burning? All my friends just had babies. My uncle died. Should we have a baby? If it happens I guess.

I am constantly expecting life to shift, which I 100% know it will, and as a result I look at newness and difference not as things I need to learn how to live with, but as things that can fuel new perspectives, new opportunities, and new thoughts.

**“I look at newness and difference not as things I need to learn how to live with, but as things that can fuel new perspectives, new opportunities, and new thoughts”.**

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

I had my whole life planned out in college. I knew what girl I was gonna marry (xx). I knew what city I was going to live in (Chicago). And I knew what company I was going to work for (Leo Burnett). I ended up marrying a different girl (who sat next to me on a plane five years later). I ended up living in a different city (Los Angeles). I ended up working for a different company (well a bunch of different companies). All of which were far better for me than I could have ever planned. I think these revelations exposed my lack of knowledge about myself, and opened me to the will of the universe in my life. So be it, I thought.

Change is not something to be feared but something to look forward to.

## How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?

I'm a Christian, not a Buddhist, so my knowledge of the subject is rather rudimentary, but I believe Buddha in his four noble truths cited that the cause for suffering is desiring things to be different than the way they are.

Although I try to always be open to change. I also do not seek it out. I do my best to find love in my circumstances. I don't consider that contentment - merely appreciation for life as it is in the moment. Am I guilty of buying new things and travelling to new places and wanting new work? Yes. But I don't feel that any of it is necessary for me to attain self worth.

Now you may be thinking, cool Nick, you have a beautiful wife, a loving dog named Larry, a mortgage, and a great job, easy for you to say you're 'content' with yourself. I also once was single, made eight dollars an hour, and lived out of my car (although my friend Skylar would claim this was just so I could say I lived out of my car).

I felt the same way about myself then, as I do now, along with all the different versions of me in between. Alright, I'm getting preachy. I need to go change out the garbage. I'm full up.

# Cole Roberts



Stockholm-based C.R. earned his stripes as one slice of the Nordica Photography pie, founded the benchmark 'Way Up North' conference alongside fellow supremo Jakob Granqvist, and they both recently went all in with Swedish fine-art print company Kolla. He also does a good denim outfit, can cast a dry fly in a crosswind, and knows a thing or two about cabins in the woods.

@\_coleroberts  
@nordicaphoto  
@wayupnorth  
@kolla

## How do you approach Change?

Even though I'm not particularly great at doing so, I challenge myself to initiate change to happen for me before it happens to me. My business partner, Jakob Granqvist, has always said if we don't change what we do, we'll always have what we had - and to me that's terrifying. Terrifying because without change, complacency sets in and you gently flow into a boring rhythm. As the rhythm sets in, something dramatic may be bestowed on you and bam - the rhythm is off. Then you're in a position of reacting as opposed to being part of the change you initially set in motion for yourself.

## What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

In 2015, my wife and I bought a cozy seaside cabin about an hour from where we live in the area she grew up in. I was actually in Norway when my wife checked out the cabin, placed a bid, and won the bid all in the same day - she phoned me up and said "great news...!". All I thought was, hopefully it's nice.

It was / is nice, but there was one small oversight in the equation. The previous owner was an older guy in his 80s, who was a hardcore hoarder. The deal my wife had reached was that we received a discount if we dealt with his endless array of stuff. It came with pros and cons. Cons being it has taken me years to deal with. Pros being whenever a lightbulb goes out, we know "Ol'Birgir has one laying around somewhere still".

**“Once you’ve hit that learning pinnacle where you don’t have the urge to learn more, you’re ready for change”.**

It's always been a curious thought of mine why Ol'Birgir had endless shit laying around, yet seemed to be a meticulous guy (we never met him, so he's become a character based on his stuff). The past month it's hit me why he became this hoarder.

People like Ol'Birgir have been through shit. World Wars, for example, where the actions of the world are outside your hands. So these type of people prepare, and prepare some more, and prepare again - which maybe takes shape in hoarding. They've been through a global thing.

Now we're amidst a global thing, and having three kids of my own, it's made me reflect on how I can prepare better for dramatic macro change. Maybe this is the only time it will happen in my life, but should there be a second macro change, I don't want to pretend to live in a bubble that's impenetrable. This is a new thing for many, myself included, and in a perverse way one potential positive is all our bubbles have been burst and it's unlikely we'll act complacently again.

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

Hockey was my life for much of my youth, and I moved away from home when I was 13, continuing to play at a fairly high level until I was 20. When I was 16, I was a cocky little shit playing on a team in Nanaimo, BC - the team was one of the best in the league, and to keep up with the older guys, I tried to "out arrogant" them. The hockey world is a strange place. Early in the season we traded for a new guy - Aaron Moser. When he walked into the room the first morning, he was a stud. Leather jacket, long hair, a "don't fuck with me attitude". He "out arroganted" the room, yet we all loved the guy right away. He was a leader, and a total stud of a player. My new task was to pick him up every morning in my old Jimmy for school. It made me feel like "the man", because Aaron actually was "the man" and I was in his sphere. One morning, I was pulled into a room with the coaches and traded to a different team in Powell River. This blindsided me, and what made it worse, was that same night Nanaimo and Powell River were playing. It was tough, but I had to suck it up and get through it.

Things were going along with the game that night, and it was a rough one. In my head I was thinking about my buds on the other team, as the day before I was on their side. Then, in the middle of the game, tragedy struck. Aaron took a routine hit, fell awkwardly into the boards head first. The game stopped, the arena of about 800 fans stood still. He wasn't moving. I remember sitting on the bench feeling the tension - fucking get

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up man. He didn't get up. He became a quadriplegic after the hit, living ever since with virtually no movement in his body.

This was one of the most profound moments in my life, and I moved forward never taking a single thing in life for granted. Nothing.

## **How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?**

When the excitement of figuring something out becomes harder to find and cruise control sets in, the end of whatever thing you're doing is on the horizon.

There are many reasons for this - boredom, complacency, lack of ambition - and once you've hit that learning pinnacle where you don't have the urge to learn more, you're ready for change. This seems like a normal flow with life because people change, they grow, they develop new interests, they move on. What you loved more than anything else 10 years ago probably isn't what it is today (or maybe it is and you're one of the lucky few).

The way I want to look back on my life is like a series of chapters - I'm not going to die with "Wedding Photographer" written on my tombstone. That doesn't mean I'll turn my back on the things I've enjoyed which have helped me with my story to this point. What it does mean is I'm an open book to what's next, and I constantly challenge myself to be prepared for recognising the signs when it's time for a new chapter.

# Niki Boon



**Nelson-based N.B.** is world-renowned for documenting the 'life-as-art' wildness of her four children as they grow up in the top of the South Island of New Zealand. Up until a few weeks ago Niki, Rob and their family lived in a converted old school house with goats out the back, dogs inside and a horse out the front - until they rolled the dice, bought an old vineyard, moved into a shed and are currently figuring out how to grow feijoas while bunkering down for the winter.

@nikiboonphoto

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## How do you approach change?

Challenging the way I look at things, assessing where I'm at. What is my narrative? Am I currently challenging that? Travel is a massive change agent for me, but travel to somewhere I have never been before. While another country is the ultimate, another region, another mountain, river or town will do.

Travelling and gathering stories from around the country and the world refreshes my eyes, allows me to be more aware and realise that I am part of something much much bigger. It helps me see things with a greater sense of depth, where everything is new and nothing is certain. It's like a state of fluidity - needing to adapt to the constant change, I can surrender to the movement, get lost in the journey, have my mind open, walk in the places I don't know, just keep walking and looking, not thinking, just looking, learning to keep my eyes open, even when I'm scared.

## What's your current 'changing it up' learning curve?

We have recently moved to a new house in a new region of New Zealand, so there is currently plenty in my life to keep me changed-up (learning how to cook all meals on a barbecue, how to make a shed feel like a home, and navigating the colourful nuances of installing a homemade composting toilet being a few).

I am finding myself in a fascinating space, both artistically and as a parent. My kids are growing up and teenagers are a whole other breed than 'kids'. Everything changes, including my parenting and my art - yet another reminder that both art and life is unstable, even volatile. It is meant to be this way, and it moves me to explore new territory, a shift, a change from one idea to another, some of which is as unsettling as hell (will I ever make decent art again? Will I fail as a parent today again?)

**“It's really just about doing a thing, leaning into it, even if you have no idea how to do it, that it is okay to figure it out as you go. My kids have taught me this”.**

But experience has taught me that there is reward for choosing change, challenge, and uncertainty (and realising that actually it's all uncertainty, that maybe it has always been that way, we have never known what the future holds, that the routines we fall into/create are just smoke screens fooling us into thinking we do).

The challenges, and turbulence make for the back bones of memorable and share-worthy stories. Stories are the essence of people, it is our primary language, they are all we have at the end and all we take with us when we go. There is no doubt in my mind that with every waking minute we should put our energy and souls into our stories.

## What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

Well I'm old, so there has been many to date. Most recently would be the decision to 'educate' our kids at home, a decision that involved leaving an established career (and with it an identity), dropping to one income and changing up what life was for us all - but fuelled by a deep belief that grades are an illusion, experiences are worth more than 'right' answers and that everything is worth questioning, especially authority figures. I figured it was worth a shot.

It has been a humbling and exhilarating ride, admitting that most days, I had no idea what I was doing or where I was going. Many mornings, waking scared shitless that everyone would see this. But I now highly recommend the crazy experience of flying blind on as many occasions as you can. With the complete circus that many days (still) bring comes a creativity that I believe is deep rooted in the chaos. Throw in some structure and long held beliefs to push against and

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challenge and I have been encouraged to change and expand my definitions of what I know good/bad etc to be. All the while being okay with the possibility of never really having an answer makes for a haven for creative possibilities. It turns out it's really not about chasing successes or fearing failure, it's really just about doing a thing, leaning into it, even if you have no idea how to do it, that it is okay to figure it out as you go. My kids have taught me this.

All change has the potential for magnificence and experiences are like colour to paint with. All of this, I have no doubt, will filter through to my art, and has me saying yes to (almost) all of the opportunities, all the changes, all the crazy things.

## **How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and change it up?**

When things start to become routine. I have been routine averse since a very early age, so am finely tuned to pick up on this in its early stages. Not having my head in the present, spending time in what could be, or what was, rather than the present.

With my photography, it's being happy enough with what I'm making. I think art, like life, is a transitional process, always shifting from one idea to the next, like it is supposed to feel unsettling, uneasy, fractured, fragile.

# Alex Walls



**Auckland-based A.W.** kicked off her multi-stage career as a fashion buyer combing the warehouses of the world to keep your clothes rack well-stocked. She then moved on to winning NZ's most competitive home renovation TV show (ably assisted by Corban, husband and maestro on the tools), and now helms the Alex & Corban homewares empire - throw in a growing family and the occasional high-end building project and you get the idea that Alex knows how to keep a few ever-changing balls in the air.

@alexandcorban  
@achomestore

## How do you approach Change?

This is a good question, and to be honest it's got me a little bit stumped as it requires some good self reflection. Aside from being really good at 'changing' nappies, in absolute honesty I have spent a lot of my personal life being scared of change. Growing up I lived in the same family home for a full 22 years, doing the same predictable routines and pretty much living out a life that was expected of me. My father was very conservative, very calculated and very afraid of change. I can't begin to tell you how many plans and dreams he had to 'change' up our lives, only to always find a reason for them not to eventuate. This has definitely shaped a lot of how I approach the 'need' of change in my personal routines and circumstances.

However, funnily enough when it comes to my business I feel I exercise change well. I consider that if you aren't changing, you aren't growing (I wish I applied this same logic to my personal habits). If we aren't being open to change in our business operations, products, services and ways we talk to our valuable customers then we are going to lose grip of our current environment and fail. Also, some changes you make may fail, but that's cool - it's a good way to learn about how to make yourself stronger, don't be hard on yourself.

My approach to the disruption Covid-19 has caused for our business and people that work in it, although it has been frightening, has been to try to find the positives and the

endless opportunities to review how our business operates. It's actually really exciting and in my control to implement the change and welcome a new outlook.

## “I learnt fast that family was the priority above all other expectations that burdened me”.

### What's your current 'Changing It Up' learning curve?

Just give it a try. You will never know unless you test the waters. Don't over commit to changes right away. Instead, you can be strategic. Test, evaluate and only then decide your final movements. This is the 'buyer' in me that has learnt this lesson well. In my career I have had to learn that every decision I make will not be a winner; in fact maybe even 50% of choices might fail some seasons. But you can use that lesson and that knowledge to improve your decisions and strategy later on.

### What's the most significant Change you've been through that's transformed your view of the world?

Becoming a mother. Prior to being solely responsible for a human being/s I would often allow my world to be dictated by work, social commitments and expectations that friends might have had of me or expectations I had of myself. I would drop anything and everything when a friend was in need and I

would prioritise working 60/70/80 hour weeks to meet my own expectations of what running a business should be like. I lived a life dictated by pleasing people.

When I became a mum, I really struggled to change this part of my personality instantly, but I learnt fast that family was the priority above all other expectations that burdened me.

I have been able to slowly find a balance (while often failing) between fulfilling the needs of my family and having quality time with them, while running a business and maintaining the handful of very important relationships in my life.

### How do you know when it's time to ditch the old thing and Change It Up?

When you keep finding yourself facing the same problems time and time again, well now is the time man! How much more can you take? I don't know if I can take much more of the kumara and zucchini mash being thrown in my face because my 9 month old is sick of the same shit over and over. So why not experiment? Let her taste a few new flavours and test out a new flavour palette. My intention here is that it's a metaphor for when we are stuck in a rut, whether it's in your personal life, business or whatever's. Change to your circumstances may or may not be in your control, but you can control how to activate it and make it your best change/decision yet.