

EPISODE 009

My Secret Songwriting Weapon to Write Captivating Lyrics ... even if You Don't Feel Like A Very Good Songwriter!

See the show notes at storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-009/

[00:00:00] Hey, what's up, everybody? This is Melanie Naumann. Welcome back to the Stories in Songs Podcast.

I confess I'm guilty of not being around for quite some time. But this episode will not only give you an explanation for me being away, but what's even more important than everything else is telling you for the first time ever where the Stories in Songs Podcast will take you, what you'll learn from it, and how it can make you a better songwriter to reach higher album sales, get more fans, and finding your unique voice.

If that sounds great, then keep listening.

So the big question is this:

How do singer/songwriters who want to keep writing their own lyrics and stay true to who they are without taking on an image the industry wants them to, and who believe their songs have a greater purpose, how do they write lyrics in a way to help them stand out from the crowd, yet still reach a larger audience and get skyrocketing sales?

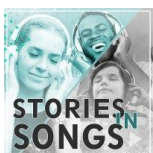
That is the question, and this podcast will give you the answers.

My name is Melanie Naumann, and welcome to the Stories in Songs Podcast.

Alright, everybody, I'm excited.

You know when you start something, but you have no idea where it's going. You have that desire to create something, but you just don't know where all your work, research, energy, and creativity will take you?

So sometimes, when you're on the road, metaphorically speaking, you have to stop and take a moment to look back at where you've come from to realize where you are and see what path you are on.



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And the same is true for me.

As you might have noticed, I haven't published a new podcast episode in months. And I'm super sorry for having missed out on showing you so much more about how to tell a captivating story or moments of it in a song to really hook and engage your listeners to give them something meaningful.

I'm seven months pregnant now, and in the last two weeks, I've finally found back to my old self. I was tied to the couch for months with a bucket next to me, and I just had no energy left. Everything I loved to do was on pause, and I just hoped that I'd be better soon.

I am now, and I'm super excited to reintroduce you to my podcast.

Because, as I said, I had time to stop and rethink what I was doing. And ask me how I can provide the best value for you so that the time listening to my podcast leaves you with new ideas, concepts, inspiration, and the know-how to write engaging and meaningful lyrics for your songs.

And I wanna give a special shoutout to one of my listeners, 'DennyDiamond,' who recently left me a review saying: "I have been searching for this, and you have done it." So thank you, Denny. It means a lot to me that this show is helpful for you.

So today, I want to catch up on something I had been missing out on Telling you what this podcast is all about, what you can learn from it, and for whom it is perfect, and for whom it might not be the first choice.

[00:03:07] So let me ask you a question:

What If You Had The Ability To Know How To Write An Evergreen?

A song that would resonate with your audience, hook them from the first line, and which you could then use to skyrocket your album sales and get more fans?

If that's something you're interested in, keep listening.

Now, as the title of my podcast suggests, it's about storytelling in songwriting.



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But don't sign off now just because you think you don't tell stories in your songs or because you do not consider yourself a storyteller.
Stay with me a little longer.

When I say storytelling in songwriting, I'm talking about writing lyrics while focusing on the question: What is the gist of what you are writing about?
I'm talking about the content, your character or characters in your song, the problem they are facing, the change they go through, and in general, how to apply the craft of storytelling to your songwriting so that you become a great storyteller. Knowing how stories work is key to writing powerful & engaging lyrics so that you reach a larger audience, get skyrocketing sales, and find your unique voice.

Do you need proof that this concept works?
Stick with me a little longer, and I will show you some case studies I've done to prove this concept.

But first of all, let me introduce myself to you.

[00:04:30] So you can say for yourself if you think I'm qualified to talk about this topic.

So, again, my name is Mel Naumann, and I am a story consultant for songwriters. I believe songs have the power to save lives. That's why I want to help musicians write about what's meaningful to them and stand out from the crowd of all the other musicians in the same genre.

And I'm here to tell you the TRUTH you need to know about songwriting!

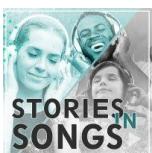
Here are the most significant problems you might face right now.

- Music directories are super crowded with competing artists.
- People are so easily distracted nowadays and miss paying attention to your songs.
- Sometimes you feel like you're not a good enough musician because your songs never seem to make an impact like your music idols did on you.

But that's not the end of the problem. It actually gets worse! Why?

Because some theories are going around that try to convince you that:

- Marketing and promotion define the success of an album.
- Songwriting is solely about understanding music theory and structure and
- Lyrics don't matter anymore.



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If you believe that, it means you'll never experience the joy, pride, and profitability of making a difference and an impact on the world by moving people and connecting with them through the power of your lyrics.

And, worst of all, many can't get past the idea that becoming the songwriter of a real, good song takes the experience of both: being able to write the music as well as knowing how to write captivating lyrics.

But luckily for you, there's now a solution to your problem!

But before we get into that, let me share a quick **story** with you...

[00:06:23] You may be wondering a little about how I came to be here with you today.

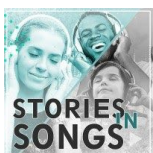
Well, there I was, a teenager, a dreamer, a wannabe artist trying to find my purpose in life and being struck down by the realization I had to give up on my dream of someday working in the music industry.

At the time, I was trying to write my own songs.

I struggled with expressing the melody I heard in my head so that my friends could play it. And I was getting more and more frustrated and sad that I just did not have the physical capacity to share my art with others.

That meant I felt like a failure, which made me think I let everyone down. I just hit a brick wall. There was something I really wanted: contributing to creating art, but I just couldn't because I couldn't figure out how to express what I wanted them to hear too.

Then something really bad happened: I got a new music teacher in high school. She was convinced that everyone could sing, which sparked my hope because she could teach me how to get better. That changed when she heard me singing, or at least my attempt at it. And then she was brutally honest: She said: I always thought everyone could sing, at least somehow a bit, but those who really cannot, they get a C- for at least knowing the lyrics. Guess what I got? Yeah, a C-.



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This evaluation of my musical ability got only worse as I couldn't even show the capacity of playing an instrument. Well, I couldn't even clap my hands to the beat.

Realizing the hard truth about my shortcomings, especially in the one thing I wanted the most, and suddenly losing every grip and possibility I had, made me feel like I lost everything I ever wanted.

It meant I could never play or sing in a band nor work in the industry because I altogether lacked every essential element of physical capacity, understanding, or feeling.

As you can imagine, I was in bad shape and desperate.

For many years I tried to avoid looking back at my dream of contributing to the one form of art that I love the most.

Luckily, I discovered another passion, and I became a fiction writer, which led me along the path to learning more about stories, how they work, and how I can improve my own stories. It was then when I discovered my love for editing novels and helping other writers write better stories that truly fulfill or even exceed their readers' expectations.

But I soon hit another bump in the road because as much as I loved helping others write the best stories they can, I wondered if I should focus on working with writers of novels or comic book writers. Suddenly, I had two businesses next to being a writer myself: I continued working with authors and their books, but I also started another website to work with comic book writers.

As you can imagine, all this resulted in the fact that I was overworked trying to serve everyone but ultimately serving no one because I did too much at once.

But I wasn't ready to give up on my dream of working in the creative industry as an editor and helping people tell better stories to give them the chance to make a difference in their audience's lives. Still, at the time, I just could not see a way of how I could ever make a meaningful contribution when I just didn't know what to focus on.

Then, as if by chance, something amazing happened...

I flew over to Nashville to take part in the Story Grid Editor Certification Training. And in that seminar, we analyzed scenes from movies and books, but also songs. That's when I discovered that the craft of telling good stories matters in songwriting as well.

At that point, everything changed!



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I finally figured out how to use my love for the craft of storytelling to look at lyrics through the lens of an editor to help songwriters tell captivating stories in their songs so that their songs can stand the test of time.

That meant I could reanimate my dream of contributing my knowledge and experience to help write meaningful songs that can truly make an impact.

So because I was introduced by my mentor Shawn Coyne to the fact that the craft of telling good stories matters in songwriting as well, I was able to:

- become a story consultant for songwriters
- continue living my dream of being an editor while only focusing on helping singer/songwriters
- as well as serve my purpose, spread my message, and make a huge difference in people's lives

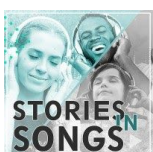
And that's why I'm so passionate about sharing my knowledge about storytelling in songwriting with you so you can benefit from the craft and power of good storytelling in your songwriting and have the chance to make a difference in your audience's lives too!

And my message to you is this: Even if you don't believe you are a good enough songwriter and think you can never make it, then I tell you, yes, you can. And using the craft of storytelling in your lyrics is the secret that will show you how you can be a better writer and ultimately the person many people will connect with - because you got something to tell. And you will know how to tell it in an engaging and captivating way.

So this podcast is entirely about how to tell captivating stories or moments of a story in your lyrics without suffering writers' block ever again.

Now I told you I had **proof** that storytelling indeed matters in songwriting.

[00:12:25] But before I get to the results of my case studies, let me continue my story and what happened after I figured out that the craft of storytelling can be applied to songwriting as well.



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I knew I was onto something and wanted to discover more about how much potential power and effect storytelling has on the success of a song, an album, or even an artist's career.

So I went back to the first band I had become a fan of: the Irish band **Westlife**.

For those of you who don't know them, you can compare them with The Backstreet Boys only with less dancing on stage.

They are known for singing mostly love songs, but the real reason I chose them for my case study was that I wanted to find out why I lost interest in them. Of course, at that time, when I was a fan of them, I was a teenage girl, but still, there was something else at work that made me quit listening to Westlife.

And using their discography of my first case study to prove that storytelling in songs matters gave me the answer to why I stopped listening to them.

Westlife has released 11 studio albums, two of which were the greatest hits albums. When you look at the number of their worldwide album sales – which I consider a factor of success – you can see that the numbers declined from one album to the next, making their first album their best-sold album and the last ones the least sold ones. There was, especially, a drop in sales for their ninth studio album 'Gravity.'

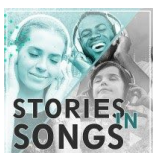
If I claim that storytelling in songwriting matters, I had to analyze every single song of their eleven studio albums to prove that working theory.

I did that analysis by filling in a spreadsheet and answering different storytelling criteria for each song. Altogether I had a list of 41 different storytelling criteria, which led to filling out over 6.000 spreadsheet cells.

I then summed up the numbers for each album, calculated the quota for each storytelling criterion, created graphs to visualize the results, and started comparing the albums with each other as well as with the chosen factor of success – the worldwide sales numbers – while solely focusing on the storytelling aspect.

And that's when I discovered a clear correlation between how masterfully the stories were told on the songs of the albums and how high sales were for each album. It was a parallel line between storytelling power and the worldwide sales number.

Now I not only knew that I was indeed onto something. I also understood why I didn't stay a fan of Westlife. Because the songs on their album didn't have as much power over me as those on their first three albums, they didn't hook me anymore or keep me engaged. They just didn't tell moments of a captivating story in their songs anymore, so I lost interest.



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Of course, I knew that one case study doesn't prove a thing.

So I chose a band I wasn't a fan of and that I wasn't much listening to and who represented the most significant contrast to a love song loving boyband I could find: Placebo.

Once again, I analyzed all their 82 songs of their seven studio albums and compared the records with each other and ultimately with their European sales.

Once again, I proved that their best-sold album 'Sleeping with Ghosts' tells the most captivating stories in its songs, but I also found why their album 'Loud Like Love' sold the least albums.

Once again, there was a clear correlation between the applied craft of storytelling and the sales number.

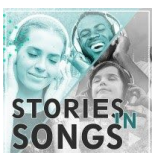
Now I could go on telling you about how I did all this. If you check out my website storiesinsongs.com, there's a tab called 'Case Studies' that explains my entire process in detail.

But for now, I want to tell you what it means to have discovered how much the craft of storytelling indeed influences the success of a single release or an entire album. And what that means for musicians, singers, and songwriters.

How can you **benefit** from listening to this podcast?

[00:16:51] Since the craft of storytelling can be applied to writing best selling albums, there are so many new possibilities and opportunities. Becoming a storyteller in songwriting, or let's say, becoming not a songwriter but a "songauthor" will help you:

- reach a larger audience and get more fans without stopping to write about what's meaningful to you
- find your unique voice so that you can stand out from the crowd of all the other musicians in the same genre, which means you will make your footprint in this world
- Write captivating lyrics for the songs you choose as single releases so that they better contribute to promoting your albums, which ultimately leads to more sales
- live the dream lifestyle of a successful international music artist because you know how to reach a larger audience through what your songs mean to them



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- make a difference and an impact on the world by moving people and connecting with them through the power of lyrics
- and most importantly, continue to do something you love and make money doing it while staying true to yourself

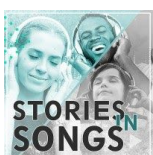
And that's why I'm so excited to share this with you so you can get these types of results!

So when we sum up what this podcast will teach you, is that something you are interested in? That means:

- Learn how you can use the craft of telling powerful stories or parts of a story to make your songs truly engaging and meaningful.
- Learn To Write Captivating first lines: So you can quickly pull people into your songs to make a difference in their lives or even save it.
- Get Step-by-step Instructions For Telling Stories In Songs, which enables you to confidently tell stories the right way in any type of song, which means you can put the power of stories to work for you in your lyrics, even if you don't consider yourself a storyteller.
- Find Out What Your Fans Already Love About Your Songs: Deliver on the promise that made them become a fan of you in the first place so your fans will continue to love and appreciate you and tell their friends about you.
- Discover The Essential Elements That Go Into Every Successful Story: to ensure your lyrics contain each critical element of a great story, which means your songs will sell like crazy... whether they're about falling in love, breaking up, society, ... it doesn't matter.
- Discover How And Why Stories Are Hard-wired Into Our "cave Man" Brains: Tell the perfect story to connect with your audience and hook them, which means you will write songs that truly resonate with your audience and that are meaningful to them.

If you still don't know if you should subscribe to the show, then answer the following questions:

1. Are you 110% committed to becoming a successful international music artist, making a full-time living from your sales?
2. Do you want to skip having to suffer from writer's block ever again?
3. Do you want to avoid having to spend thousands of dollars in trial and error trying to publish an album that sells?



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If you answered one of those questions with YES, then subscribe to the Stories in Songs Podcast and learn more about how to tell captivating stories in your lyrics.

I hope that made your decision easier for you, whatever you decide to do. :-)

Before I go, I wanted to give you a **preview** of what you can expect in the next episodes.

[00:20:44] This season, we will be dissecting the lyrics of love songs to find out what makes a great love song and how you can write your own love song – whether it is about a breakup or falling in love at first sight.

Even if you don't write songs that fit on the entire spectrum between love and hate, you will learn a lot about the craft of storytelling – especially about character development, hooking your listeners with the first line, creating conflict, and how important it is to let your audience experience a change between the beginning and the ending of the song. And, of course, you get step-by-step instructions on how you will be able to accomplish it all.

And the way we will come up with those answers is by studying from the masterworks and comparing them to songs that were not that great. That means we look at evergreens and recently released chart-topping songs to find out why they have or have not this tremendous power in connecting with us.

Some of the songs are, for example,

- Perfect by Ed Sheeran
- Rain on Me by Lady Gaga
- She's the one by Robbie Williams
- Just the Way you Are by Bruno Mars
- I Will Always Love You by Whitney Houston
- There's a Light that never Goes out by the Smiths
- and many more

I will publish a new episode every two weeks, which will take up about 20 to 30 minutes of your day. We will go through a complete love story in this podcast. Focusing on well-known moments of a love story like the confession of love or the seven stages to get through a



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breakup. To each moment or stage, I will analyze a couple of songs to give you various possibilities of how to portray each moment and how other artists pulled it off.

Each song will be one episode that also teaches one aspect of storytelling.

Oh, and before I forget, another feature I'm adding is a helpful exercise at the end so that you can use every episode as inspiration to write a new song around the topic we talked about or even get inspired by it. So this should help you to beat writer's block every time.

Subscribe to my podcast so you don't miss out on learning how to elevate your lyric writing to the next level that can truly impact your audience.

After all, songs can save lives.

I'm excited to talk to you again next week.

Stay safe, Melanie



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