

EPISODE 035

## Can A Song Save A Life?

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See the show notes at [storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-035](https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-035)

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**[00:00:00]** Hi, this is Melanie from Stories in Songs - Writing the Lyrics.

In today's bite-sized episode, I wanna address the question: "Can A Song Save A Life." I feel this is important to talk about because I want to illuminate that lyrics ain't an afterthought to making a song. They are equally as important as the melody and the song's production.

I mean, writing Songs as well as Listening to Songs can be the greatest aid in a desperate situation. It can keep us from falling down a cliff and empower us again. Like Galadriel said to Frodo: *"May it be a light to you in dark places when all other lights go out."*

That's the power of songs.  
But let's shed some more light on the power of songs.

Let's talk about how a song can even save a life.

### TEASER

## The Power of Songs

**[00:01:19]** Can you remember a moment when you felt completely lost?

A moment when everything around you crumbled, and no matter how you spun it, everything slipped away, and nothing made any damn sense anymore?

I mean, how are we supposed to put such difficult moments into words when we can't comprehend them ourselves?



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Unfortunately, such cursed turning points are part of life, but it's up to us whether we throw ourselves off the razor's edge and give up or regain our balance in the tightrope act of life and carry on.

Fortunately, a faithful companion in our lives stands invisibly by our side. It camouflages itself in various colors and sounds, and no matter how it approaches us, just a few sounds are enough, and it already embraces our battered soul and grants us pause.

A quick stop, a precious distraction to feel a touch that can only be felt through music.

Sometimes just a single note is enough to break through our black thoughts with a light storm.

But as beautiful as the musical blanket of the soul feels, its words are the ones that give us the strength to lift our heads and look up.

In about four minutes, a song can turn a hopeless situation into a new perspective.

When something unexpected happens that threatens us with severe change, it always seems like a really bad thing.

But things in life are a paradox if we just give them the time to unfold. That's how something bad can turn into something good.

And when it comes down to it, when we're teetering on a razor's edge, a song can save our lives because songs that harness the power of storytelling have a character with a purpose facing a huge obstacle.

And something is at stake - no matter what they decide, they risk losing something. And yet, taking a breath, this character fights for the good that carries meaning. And through their example, we can take the courage to target our own problems and overcome them.

All it takes is one song.

## My All Is Lost Moment - New Zealand Part 2

**[00:03:17]** Let me tell you a story to illuminate what I've just talked about.

I met a guy in New Zealand. He was German too, and we had a little romance. We joked around and went for long evening walks. You know those typical things when you meet



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someone who makes you smile, feel excited and bubbly, and look forward to the next minute you can spend with them. I felt free and light.

Unfortunately, we only had a couple of days together until he traveled on while I had to stay and keep picking strawberries to earn money to see him again.

He did Work and Travel in Australia, and we said that once I had enough money, I could visit him in Australia as he had visited me in New Zealand. So a couple of months later, I found myself picking apples, and peers as I was still trying to scrape the money together.

I still remember the heavy straps of the fruit basket slicing into my shoulders. I carried that fruit basket right in front of me, plus a rusty old ladder with one spike so that you could put it up like a triangle... you just had to be careful to not put the pointy edge in a rabbit hole, or you could end up hanging in the tree.

And that was all so heavy. You could put 20 kilos of apples in that basket or 30 kilos of peers. Peers are much heavier than apples. So I had to learn that the hard way. Or, as you can say, the way that weighs the most.

So, I earned enough money and went to Australia to see that guy again.

And a lot can change in a couple of months. I tell you.

It turned out that we both had a different picture of each other. I thought he was a gentle caring soul, and it turned out to be drugs and booze for him. And he thought I would loosen up more when it comes to those things... well, I don't drink, and I certainly don't do drugs, never have, never will. So few days in, we broke up a relationship that never really was one. It was hard to face the truth... just be confronted that everything you thought for so long turned out to be nonexistent. I felt sad like the floor was swept away under my feet.

So yeah, that was an unexpected turn of events. But we still traveled together because we both had taken the time to travel up the east coast, and it was very convenient to split the gas bill in two.

We planned to travel for around two and a half months. After six weeks, he had to return to Germany. From one day to the next, I was stuck in Cairns. I mean, in New Zealand, I knew some people and places at least. But in Down Under, we had been on the road all the time. If I had met people, they were traveling like we were. So there was no one I could turn to. And my flight back to New Zealand was in a month. And that was in 2006, and I was 18. Changing a booked flight wasn't that easy, at least not for me.

Now, remember when I said that life is a paradox?



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A bad thing can turn into something good, and a good thing into something bad?

That's life.

And when I was there in Australia, being left on my own seemed sooo bad. I didn't have much money left, I wasn't allowed to work there, and I didn't know what to do.

I was up there in sunny Cairns, the sun beating down on me, sweating from all the irritating thoughts of what I could do. Where to turn. I just wandered the streets, singing "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" to myself. It was comforting to have that imaginary thought in my mind that my shadow accompanied me.

So yeah, once again, all I had was my mp3 music player. But when that Green Day song was over, one of my favorite german punk rock bands started playing.

They are called "Die Toten Hosen."

They had written a song called "Steh auf, wenn du am Boden liegst." It is also available to listen to in English and is called "Stand up." I include the link in the show notes. So if you like, check it out.

And that song was my savior, not because of its strong sound or the music, but for the words that communicated a valuable message to me.

Campino, the singer of "Die Toten Hosen" sang:

*When you  
Feel that all roads lead back to  
The same dead-end street, and you  
Feel the walls are closing in*

*And there's nowhere to break through  
Hold on when you feel alone, hold on  
Because there's always hope, be strong  
Don't go and throw your life away*

*Hold on for better days  
Sometimes your heart feels empty and your thoughts all black  
It's hard to take the strain  
But when the storm blows over and the clouds are have gone  
You can see the sun again*



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*Stand up!  
When you feel knocked down  
Stand up!  
Get up of the ground  
Stand up!  
One day your life will change*

It's not that great in English, but believe me, in German it's Bombe. Meaning it's absolutely great.

So with that song playing, I took a breath and took the next step.

I went on Facebook to see if my friends were in Australia. It was a far stretch, but it was worth looking into it.

So I went on Facebook.

And I saw the status of my American friend Kelly. It had changed from living in Colorado to living in Canberra, Australia. I just stared at it for a minute, like my breath had stopped because I couldn't believe that this was true. I messaged her right away.

Turned out she was moving to Canberra the next day. And I could come and live with them for a month. So I took the money I had left, booked a flight from Cairns to Canberra, and that's how it all turned out. Had the time of my life that one month with her. It was so great to have a good friend with you, it felt like family. And I wouldn't have seen her or even knew she was in Canberra – I mean, come on, after all, back then, when we were traveling, we went to internet cafés because we didn't have a computer with us, wifi, or a smartphone.

So, in the end, it turned out that it was the best thing ever that this guy had to return to Germany and left me stranded so that I could change direction and take a new step on a new path.

And there's always that one moment that beats you down after something bad happens. But if you gather the strength to continue nonetheless and not give up, bad things can turn into something wonderful. You just have to believe it.

And a song will give you the strength to see it through if the lyrics speak to you.

It's all about the lyrics and if they have the power to empower you.

So yes, a song can save a life.



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And if my story isn't proof enough, I'm sure there are lots of people who have one of those songs that helped them through a bad time in their life.

If you have one of those songs, let me know. Make a screenshot of that episode, post it wherever you post stuff, and tag me.

## The Next Right Thing

**[00:11:53]** Lastly, those valuable, empowering songs are even used in movies to demonstrate a character's all is lost moment.

An all-is-lost moment is, in storytelling terms speaking, the moment when the main character is as far away as possible from achieving their goal. It's when every attempt has failed them, and they need to face a moment of truth. And that moment can break you,... but it can also break away your old way of thinking and emerge into a new worldview. One, that serves you better.

So, if you've seen the movie Frozen 2, you know what I'm talking about.

In Frozen 2, you know that Disney movie with the ice-princess Elsa and her courageous sister Anna – the one where they meet the Wind, Fire, Water, and Earth Spirit.

At one point in that story, Anna finds herself in a dark cave. By the way, a dark cave is a place before we find our way into the light and hit enlightenment. It's so beautiful. It's, of course, a moment in the Heroic Journey.

Now, Elsa has pushed Anna away, and Anna and the snowman Olaf end up in that dark cave. They try to find a way out. And then there's this snow message that turns into an ice statue revealing that their grandpa, once king of Arendelle, has betrayed the Forest People. So finally, they have found the truth, which is hard because it uncovers a huge lie about their family. And then, the snowman Olaf fades away, letting Anna know that Elsa went too far and is probably dead now. Because her powers fade, and so does Olaf. And Anna is left alone in the darkness. All by herself, knowing her sister must be dead.

She's crying and huddles together in helplessness. She's absolutely reached the lowest point of her life. Additionally, she also worried that her boyfriend Christoph wanted to break up with her. It's one of those moments when everything rushes over you at once, and you don't know if you can hold your ground or get swept away.



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And then, in the movie, they play that song called “The Next Right Thing.” And it’s literally one of those empowering songs that help you if you find yourself lost, alone, and without hope.

Let me read some of the lyrics so that you can better understand what they say, but you should listen to it if you don’t know that song.

*I've seen dark before, but not like this  
This is cold. This is empty, this is numb  
The life I knew is over, the lights are out  
Hello, darkness, I'm ready to succumb*

*I follow you around, I always have  
But you've gone to a place I cannot find  
This grief has a gravity, it pulls me down  
But a tiny voice whispers in my mind*

*You are lost, hope is gone  
But you must go on  
And do the next right thing*

*Can there be a day beyond this night?  
I don't know anymore what is true  
I can't find my direction, I'm all alone  
The only star that guided me was you*

*How to rise from the floor?  
But it's not you I'm rising for*

*Just do the next right thing  
Take a step, step again  
It is all that I can to do  
The next right thing*

*I won't look too far ahead  
It's too much for me to take  
But break it down to this next breath, this next step  
This next choice is one that I can make  
So I'll walk through this night  
Stumbling blindly toward the light  
And do the next right thing*



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*And, with it done, what comes then?  
When it's clear that everything will never be the same again  
Then I'll make the choice to hear that voice  
And do the next right thing*

Isn't that song beautiful?

It picks up the listener at the emotional place where they are at. The first line starts right with the problem – one of the most powerful ways to hook your listeners.

And the song connects with them through that universal feeling of sadness and hopelessness. It's like saying: "*You're not alone in this. I've been there too.*"

And that's a great comfort that gets people to listen. After all, that's what stories do. They entertain and also help us deal with a specific problem by shedding light on it to understand better what's going on and how to overcome a difficult situation.

And the song "*The Next Right Thing*" of Frozen 2 does just that. It shows the character's transformation of believing in taking the next step. It's done so wonderfully. It's done in a way that doesn't force anything on you. It's like an invisible hand that reaches out to you and very slowly and gently pulls you back up on your feet.

And if you've seen the movie, you can watch how Anna gets on her feet again and fights to find a way out of the darkness - literally and metaphorically.

So can a song save a life?

Do lyrics have the power to give us the strength to carry on?

For me, it's a big YES.

What about you?

I would love to hear your thoughts. You can always reach out to me via email: [write@storiesinsongs.com](mailto:write@storiesinsongs.com) or message me on Facebook or Instagram.

Links are included in the show notes.

I hope you liked this episode. Please leave a rating and review if you want to support the show. Your support helps me create relevant stuff for you and your lyric writing goal.



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Thanks a lot and until next time.

Bis bald, eure Melanie

## Show Notes

- Die Toten Hosen “Steh auf, wenn du am Boden liegst” (German Version) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J86zYZGApkc>
- Die Toten Hosen “Stand Up” (English Version) – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJUvrv7O\\_6I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJUvrv7O_6I)
- Stand Up lyrics © BMG Rights Management, Melodie Der Welt GmbH
- The Next Right Thing lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group
- Watch “The Next Right Thing” on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/kFkCIV2gM-s>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LyricArtists/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/stories.in.songs/>



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