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Who Do You Think You Are?

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there and money. I was so interested in so many things I wasn't able to do them as I do now. I wouldn't have followed the whimsical interests nor have thought as I do now. Thankfully for me that was what I wanted to do. Back in those days I had a professor say, "There's no way I'm going to compromise all of this amazing, fun, hard work, strategy and engineering the lives that I want."

I think of myself as more an entertainer. That's the catch-all term for people as a communicator, as a performer. When I was a host, I felt I was moving toward a sense of self-honesty. When I was a director and actor, I felt I was moving away from that. Now that I'm a director and producer, I feel I'm moving back toward that.

The reason I fell into entymology was because there's a job or career that is unique. I'm the only one who can do it. I'm the only one who can do all the things that I do. Entymology is also a good play on words with entertainer and entomologist. What dark things exist under the Entomology website so you know it's Dunphy: Entomologist. Another picture comes, with him in a sleeveless shirt holding a kitchen knife: Etcetera. Click on the link to his own website and you'll see someone with great facial hair and shoulder-length locks. A picture of him in front of the Iowa State Museum: Why entymology?

Where did your love for acting come from? It came from doing it and it came very late in life. When I came to college I was mostly your thing before? I was in the science club. I was in the science society. There was something fulfilling about it. And the reason I fell into entymology was because there's a job that I could do. I'm the only one who can do it. I'm the only one who can do all the things that I do. Entymology is also a good play on words with entertainer and entomologist. What dark things exist under the Entomology website so you know it's Dunphy: Entomologist. Another picture comes, with him in a sleeveless shirt holding a kitchen knife: Etcetera. Click on the link to his own website and you'll see someone with great facial hair and shoulder-length locks. A picture of him in front of the Iowa State Museum: Why entymology?

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Look up Brendan Dunphy on the Iowa State Department of Entomology website and you see a young man, shaved, with short hair. He’s showing his large collection of insects. Dunphy studies medical entomology and surveys the mosquito population. Click on the link to his own website and you’ll see someone with great facial hair and shoulder-length locks. A picture of him in front of a carousel pops up: Entertainer. It slides to the picture on the entomology website so you know it’s Dunphy: Entomologist. Another picture comes, with him in a sleeveless shirt holding a kitchen knife: Etcetera.

Read a bit into the site and you see that he’s also hosted shows for Discovery Channel and the BBC. Who is this guy? How can a person be entertainer and entomologist? What dark things exist under etcetera? We had to find out.

Ethos: Where did your love for acting come from?

Brendan Dunphy: It came from doing it and it came very late in life. I didn’t start until my fifth year in college. It came by happenstance of me taking an acting class, the encouragement of my dad, and having people say that I was good.

The job of an actor really at the heart of all is to communicate with people in an honest way. Auditioning, doing monologues, reading scripts—it’s hard to find stuff more fun than that.

What do you typically work on in acting?

BD: Back in 2007 when I started, there was a duality of scientist and actor. But then in 2009 when I started producing theater, that was another hat thrown into the mix. The number of hats that I wore just kept growing and growing so that there was the scientist and the theater actor and theater producer, film actor and film producer. Then there was the TV host and recently, my music. I’ve been throwing in more hats where my passions have happened to lie.

So you consider yourself more of a performer?

BD: I think of myself as more an entertainer. That’s the catch-all term that I can use to describe all the creative things that I do. Entertainer is also a good play on words with entertainer and entomologist.

You said that you only started acting late in college. Was science mostly your thing before?

BD: Throughout the majority of college. When I came to college I was there to buckle down and learn the world in which I lived. Coming to college, you have that practical advice running through your head—thankfully for me that was what I wanted to do. Back in those days I wouldn’t have followed the whimsical interests nor have thought as big as I do now.

Why entymology?

BD: The reason i fell into entymology was because there’s a job there and money. I was so interested in so many things I wasn’t able to identify specific path I wanted to go down or knew to go down because I wanted to go down them all.

What does your work schedule look like?

BD: Interestingly, I’ve been able to keep a 9 to 5 schedule. It’s been a very mutualistic relationship between me and Iowa State. That comes from setting out those terms and say, ‘If you want me to work here, these are the things that are important to me and those things cannot be compromised. I have to do this and if I can’t then I simply have to leave.’

Sometimes I have treats things phasic. If there’s a phase where I have to shoot a film for 3 weeks I have to devote those 3 weeks to it, then when that’s done I then can go back to whatever. It has come through hard work, strategy and engineering the lives that I want.

So you aren’t shooting for a Nobel Prize in science?

BD: Hosting TV shows and giving me that experience of educating people in ways that are entertaining feeds into the ways I teach classes to make it interesting for students. So they’re directly linked with each other.

Tell me about your experience as a TV Host?

BD: TV hosting has taught me is to get off my scientist high-horse, which I used to be on. There was something fulfilling about it because I feel that I have more to offer people as a communicator, as Brendan, than as a character. When I was a host, I felt I was moving toward a sense of self-honesty.

So you aren’t shooting for a Nobel Prize in science?

BD: I might want to go to that in the future, but for now I feel that I have more to offer to people as Brendan, as a communicator, than I do as a scientist.

There’s no way I’m going to compromise all of this amazing, fun, childhood-dreams that I’m accomplishing in my life. Making a rock album and rocking out in shows surmounts over being in a lab right now. Give me ten years, fifteen, maybe I’ll come back around to it.

So what are you working on right now?

BD: The heart of desire is music. Music is that art form that I think is the most powerful.

About three years ago I got together with a guitarist that is also an entymologist here, and started writing songs. Now we’re waist deep into an album. Getting that album made means more than anything.

In the bigger picture I don’t want to sacrifice me, I don’t want to sacrifice who I am, I don’t ever want to compromise my core values as Brendan and the types of things that occupy my time, which is a lot of things. I always want to be pursuing many things. I want to have things in the fire and always maintain versatility. That, in my opinion, is the spice of life.