

## Final Documentary Transcript

Narr: It's a place. It's a home, and it's a landscape. It's a gentle, but strong reminder that there still is space for comfort, and there's room to breath. But this place doesn't have an address, it isn't inside a building, and no one else lives there. This place is a mental safe haven – a place where you can free yourself from the stresses in living, a place where you can learn more about yourself than you've ever known, a place where you become who you truly are. Some people call it the zone, some people call it their flow, I call it my place of escape. Here, we'll be looking at different artists and musicians, how they relate to the zone, what they feel when they are there, and what their art does for them. First comes Ben Mandeberg, a seventeen-year old guitarist who strikes a chord with the concept of the zone: he feels like the key to his is jamming with his band, A Glass Gesture.

Ben: Being in the zone is just having musical conversations with people. For me, jamming with Charlie and Evan for the past three or four years, you really get to know somebody on a completely different level. And it's so funny, it's so weird, it's not like they become predictable, you just really get to know somebody and you really get to understand what's going through their head, just by talking with them, but really not talking at all.

Narr: Ben sees it as a way to satisfy his inner emotions while communicating musically with others.

Ben: You're playing some sequence of notes that happens to satisfy yourself and them and they respond to you by taking you in some other direction, and you go with their little flow there. It's really a whole different form of interaction, it's outrageous, it's crazy.

Narr: Of course, everybody has their own ideas on where their zone is, and everybody has different ways of getting there. But Ben feels like, for him, music is the easiest and most rewarding way to get there.

Ben: Well, it's really just about human interaction when it comes down to it, you know, you can just connect with people on such a different level musically than you can, I think, with literature, or anything visual like film or photography or anything else really, just because it's all so cognitive and it's such a different, unspoken kind of interaction that you can have. It's like trying to describe love, or something, it's just there and it's human nature. It's rhythm and people need rhythm in their lives. It's continuity, and they need something to fall back on, they need some kind of force that holds them down, and a lot of the time that can be music, just because music, I think, a lot of the time makes people's lives seem more real to them, just in the sense that people relate to music and it's comforting, and people can see something in their own lives in the music, and it makes people aware of themselves.

Narr: Music allows one to jump onto a whole new scale of interaction with others. In this case, the zone in music is a form of escape, but even more so it functions as a union: a binding of people together as one.

Ben: I feel like music is so based on interactions, you know, it's you and you're audience, and the whole point is that you're also your own audience. Even if you're by yourself at 12 o' clock playing guitar in your room, you're still trying to please yourself. The whole point is, it's satisfaction and all it comes down to is satisfying, and I guess you could call that refreshing and I guess you could call that some form of escape.

Narr: And why is that escape desirable? Ben feels like it's the unique combination of feelings he obtains when playing, and comfort he feels in the place he reaches.

Ben: It's just comfort and there's that element of familiarity and it's just like, you're satisfied, you're at ease. But the thing is, with music, you're still alert is the thing. It's not subduing in any sense. You're still alert and you still understand what's going on during every single second in the rhythm, in the moment, in the music. And with whoever you're playing with, you still have to keep up, you know it's a race, it's invigorating, it's stressful at times almost when you don't feel like you have that knack. And the thing is, all that is very grounding. It brings you back, and it lets you not think about being somebody, it really just brings out who you are.

Narr: Escaping, as we can see with Ben, isn't necessarily what people want to get out of their creative actions. In his case, the highlight of the zone is that unspoken connection and alternate form of communication that he feels when there. But everyone is different, and their desires through creativity are different as well. Jamie Taggart, and art teacher and artist alike, sees art as both a form of therapy and a way to share yourself, and your emotions, thoughts and feelings with others, whatever they may be.

Jamie: I think that art – well for one thing it's very therapeutic – so that's the first thing that I think art can do for a person is be a form of therapy. Whether that be away for them to express anger or frustration or joy – any emotion I think it can be a way for a person to express any emotion that they have. Also, I think that art can be a huge outlet. And I guess, you know, that's sort of along the lines of being therapy or therapeutic. And I think it can provide a way to get out of your system this need to express yourself. I think all people have the need and desire to express themselves and I think that art is a great way to do that. I think that people in general like to feel understood or want to feel understood, want to feel loved, want to, you know, make themselves known to the outside world and I think by being creative and taking part in the creative process – that's a way that they're doing that.

Narr: Along with art being a therapeutic experience in her opinion, she feels that in that escape, the zone is a definable area you can enter.

Jamie: I would call the zone or define the zone as the space that you enter into when you are no longer aware of time or no longer aware of anyone else around you or your own self. That you're just totally entered into this creative process that you've lost track of the outside world and you have really become a part of the creative process as opposed to you sort of governing it and being the one in control. It now has sort of captured you into the process.

Narr: And being an art teacher, Jamie has experience with kids of all ages, and in teaching them consistently, she has a pretty clear idea of why it's so enjoyable and great for them.

Jamie: For one thing it's research and studies have shown that it is a proven fact that students, when they are able to participate in art and take part in the creative process that they are learning things and exercising a part of their brain that they wouldn't use otherwise and it actually impacts their other subjects and you

know, improves their ability across the boards of the other subjects, but I would say what makes are unique from the other subjects is just the freedom that's given in art to really explore and also to be unique it's extremely objective but I would also say that it requires concentration and requires work and I'm not somebody that, and art teacher that's just going to say "Oh, come in and roll on the floor and do whatever you're feeling" You know, I think that there is order – it's a paradox. Like there's a lot of order and then there's a lot of freedom and a lot of chaos in some regards so there's that paradox there and that's what I think makes it unique also that you do have, sort of, the best of both worlds. The order and the precision and the concentration and also the freedom and the creativity and the sort of chaotic madness that goes along with it.

Narr: Along with the fact that studies show art benefits students and Jamie's belief that art can be total freedom, she believes that it requires serious concentration and devotion. But where is Jamie's place of escape? Because teaching art is her career she feels like that escape and entrance into the zone that so commonly goes along with art isn't there as much while she's teaching. But she feels like that escape comes when she personally is engaging in the creative process.

Jamie: Okay, we'll that's a good question, I personally, for me, right now in my life art is not so much a form of escape because it's my job – I'm an art teacher – so it's also my job so for me I'm a little bit more aware, I'm more conscious. I'm working with the mediums and working with the materials a lot because that's what I do everyday, and I'm not always in the zone. Does that make sense? But when I'm creating and I'm partaking in the creative process then yeah, I do feel that it's an escape. But I think that you can have art be a part of your life in more ways than just as an escape or a way of sort of exiting reality for a short bit you know, I think that you can partake in it and it not act as an escape.

Narr: Jamie's place of escape exists when she personally is engaging herself and working with her own art, but even though she may not be able to make that escape as much, she's giving kids the chance to find their place when working with art. But for her, the comfort and therapeutic feelings that go along with the creative process are what gives her an escape. Her husband, Eric Taggart, is also an artist, but once again, sees his zone, or "flow" as he calls it, as a point he reaches when time loses it's meaning. It's here, in this space that he creates a visual representation of his feelings and emotions that he needs to get out, through his art.

Eric: I think art is a way that I process a lot of my feelings and emotions. I work with what you might call troubled youth – kids with disabilities, mental health concerns – things like that, so it can be pretty intense work and I definitely see when I look at my artwork after it's done, I see that I've processed a lot of my emotions and my thoughts and feelings about those kids and their lives in my artwork, and so I think it's a way to kind of let out all that stress and tension and work through it.

Narr: He creates art the way one would write a journal, you could say. Eric sees his art, also, as a form of prayer and connecting with God.

Eric: I think of it as being kind of like meditation or psychotherapy or prayer in that it's a place for me where you really get to really meet yourself. It's kind of like a quiet place or a sanctuary where you can

really kind of be alone with yourself and God. So, yeah, in that sense it's a really unique experience and a powerful experience and you could say maybe a self-actualizing experience.

Narr: Art obviously does a lot for Eric, and a big part of what he gets from art is learning about himself, seeing unconscious symbols in his art that relate to his life after he's created it.

Eric: I will create artwork and have kind of a vague sense of where it's going as I'm creating it or when I start it and it completely takes on a life of its own. It goes in directions I never had imagined and I keep working with it until there's something about it that seems right to me and at that point I try to stop but I definitely look at my work after I've created it and I can write pages and pages about it, you know, what it means to me, what it's kind of expressing and it's full of connection and symbols and things that I never realized were there. Sort of symbols and connection that my unconscious had been working with and processing that I wasn't even aware of as I was creating it and in that sense it's invaluable as a way of learning about myself.

Narr: Eric's zone is what gives him these gifts, and although he does relate to it, he feels like it's not something one can pin down and describe in detail, however he gives us his version of what the zone is to him.

Eric: I definitely relate to that concept of the zone and I read a book called "Flow" that kind of deals with that idea. It was a psychologist who really studied it, like what's going on in the brain and what it means and in a sense I feel like flow for me is like a form of prayer, and it's a way of being really in touch with what's going on inside of me and kind-of really in touch with my surroundings and the materials that I'm working with. You definitely lose your sense of time, you know, I'll be down in the studio for six hours and think that it was like thirty minutes, I really will like lose my concept of time and in a sense it's a lot like playing, like if you imagine a child who's playing on a jungle gym or pretending he's a warrior or a ninja or something and he's racing around and jumping off of things throwing things and getting really excited and really deep into his imagination, and that's kind of art for me because there's a sense of play that surrounds it, a sense of playfulness and peacefulness, just kind of letting yourself go into the process and materials you're working with and letting your mind go wherever it wants to go and create.

Narr: The flow Eric experiences allows his art to be so expressive and relevant to his life, and through that expression and ability to be in-touch with himself through his art, other seemingly different areas of his life have been affected.

Eric: So kind of my goal – or a thing that art does for me now is the more I kind of explore myself as an artist the more I see that transfer into other areas, like I've become really interested in quantum physics and astrophysics – kind of weird stuff – and not so much the math side of it as much as the theory and to me it's like there's something incredibly artistic and creative about those things and working with all my different mediums I think kind of sheds light on all these other fields of study like science become more interesting to me and exciting to me and math becomes more interesting and literature – you know I can make more connections and I see some of those connections coming out in my artwork and I see my emerging interest in science and different things like that actually fuel my artwork so that you begin to see some of those

themes so there's kind of this cycle where my art informs all the other areas of my life and then as those areas become richer they inform my art. I guess to sum it up you could say the art sheds a light on or deepens my experience of the other subjects rather than being something that's different or better than, it sort of informs or illuminates the other areas, and that's a cool thing.

Like Eric, Aldo Noboa, a music teacher out of San Francisco loses track of time and moves out of everyday consciousness when he is in his place of escape

Aldo: I am a musician, I am a music teacher, I'm part of a national music program that is a business and my company title is Chief of Knowledge, which, I consult on all things pertaining to curriculum, culture within the schools, and musical details.

Narr: Aldo Noboa is the leader of the San Francisco branch of The Paul Green School of Rock; a nationwide program teaching kids the basics of playing music, with attitude.

Aldo: My personal definition for music is the expression of life's movement through sound. Music is a metaphor for the rules of life, and I think the further back in history we go, we might find more clues as to how cultures used to use music in that way. But some of the most general rules of music tend to be general laws of nature, and at some point I made that connection.

Nar: Finding his connection of life to music, Aldo opened the door for more connections to be found, this time, his connection between meditation and the zone.

Aldo: Meditation is a broad word, but I'm referring to the actual practice of breathing and mediating, whether your focus is Zen or whatever, but its meditation, breathing, and learning how to control your energy. This zone that we speak of is the experience of being completely in the moment while being completely thought free. A lot of the practice of meditation is to relax yourself and constantly focus on your breathing, while trying not to entertain any thoughts, while trying to explore what's considered nothingness, which is considered on human terms impossible because when you try to experience peace or quiet, all you notice is that nothing is still, and that's a good spot, but I find that zone to be the musical equivalent when I'm in the throws of the best parts of playing music, I'm not doing anything I'm just playing, I'm completely in the moment, I'm not thinking, I'm not worrying, I'm not concerning myself with several hundred people in the crowd, I'm not even necessarily concerning myself with my musicians. I'm just there, we're all just there and we're making something in the moment, and to me that is the zone and its also where I've channeled most of my meditational exploration, it's all now through music.

Narr: Aldo's profession and love are so closely linked with his job that he says there is nothing to escape.

Aldo: It may sound corny, but, what's crazy, and this can go in as part of the answer to the last question, there's nothing to escape in this realm. You know what I mean, like, if I were cutting fish for a living, then my escape would be music or whatever, but I do music for a living, and there's nothing to escape.

So how can we best describe the concept of musicians and artists escaping into the zone? With Ben, both his escape and zone are about personal connections, within himself, and with others. Eric sees his artwork much like a prism, reflecting and highlighting connections to his world and his many varied

interests. Aldo sees that his escape and zone are at one with each other, a place where he essentially resides full time.

Our interviews reflect our subject's individual and unique interpretations of escape and entering the zone, while revealing many similarities. Ben, Eric, and Aldo, all describe their music and art as vehicles for transformation. Their passion, curiosity, and commitment fuels their creative process in which they reach a suspended, spiritual place where their creative mind lives only the moment and its emotional freedom. By finding the similarities between our interviewees, we've been able to refine down the idea of escaping into the zone, though we still don't completely understand.