

**TRANSCRIPTION | E01 | ARTISTIC ROOTS PODCAST**  
**Neil Schwartz | Body Inclusivity in the Dance Industry**

MC = Mel Charlot | NS = Neil Schwartz

**MC:** Welcome to Artistic Roots! Today we're going to be talking about body size and inclusivity in dance, which we know very much about. I'm excited to talk about it and to talk about you and your journey. Just to share some fun stuff with everybody. Before we start, I got to talk a little bit about you so that everybody knows. Neil Schwartz ([@80sb.a.by](#)) is number one, a good friend of mine from New York City. We met at the Broadway Dance Center. He's an incredible teacher (street jazz). He emphasizes musicality, performance and dynamics while motivating students to maintain a positive classroom environment. I have been in those classrooms, and I can attest that yes, he really does. You are a dance artist, choreographer, teacher. I think I can add so much more to this list. You are a great person. You are a positive person, positive influence, and mentor. There's so much more to add to this. You are an artist, period. He has taught internationally (I'm remembering when we taught in Argentina together), has choreographed for artists such as ASTR, Bosco, Wynter Gordon, Rome Fortune, Mateo, PUCH PLAY, to name a few. He also was a choreographer for Pharrell Williams' G I R L Fragrance at Sephora, and you can see him in commercials for the New Jersey Lottery and MasterCard. He's blessing our screens too. And I think that's great to even start our conversation. How does it feel to be on the screen? Because we always talk about how we prep our students and our dancers to be on stage, to be on TV or dance behind the artists or for them to become the artists, whatever that is. But in this situation, you are it. So how does that feel?

**NS:** It's a nice feeling, especially for doing this for so long. I think that after years and years of hearing, "I'm sorry, but we don't have anywhere to put you" to "We specifically want you for your body type, and what you can offer," it is pretty cool to see that kind of flip that the industry from what I started to where it is now having changed and for the positive. I've always been behind the scenes, but now to be directly in front, I think is something that I'm excited for, but I also was like, "OK, I got to get it together" because I was thrown in at one point when things started changing and pressing for the positive. And they were like, "No, we want you for you and for your body type and for your size." And I was like, "I'm all for it". I've been waiting for years to do it. Let's do it.

**MC:** I think it's so great to see because I have this conversation all the time, people are growing up. That was kind of my example as well is that you grow up watching people on TV and you don't see yourself. Then you feel like you need to start adapting to what you see or maybe you're not fitting in, and you're supposed to fit in. And it could really mess you up growing up. And especially as an artist to not hear your voice as much. I think that's great and I'm excited for the people who are seeing you and are like, "Oh, I can do it too." Can you pinpoint a moment in your life where you saw someone that inspired you and made you feel like, "Oh, I could really do this," whether it was either dancing, teaching, choreographing, modelling, etc.

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**NS:** I would say I have a couple of pinpoint moments that just clicked for me. But I would say the earliest one that I can remember for when I said I was going to do this professionally and I was going to move forward with it and not go to grad school was in 2007. I was performing at a show called ECDC, which is the East Coast Dance Competition that was hosted by Culture Shock® DC. I was dancing for another team called Dynamic. I was backstage and we had just performed and then Culture Shock went on, and I got to see Zach Lattimore and so many people. I was watching them, and I just saw all this passion come out and I can distinctly remember where I was backstage because my whole team was over in the corner, but I stayed to watch them perform. And at that moment, I said to myself, “This is what I have to do. This is what I want to do”. And that’s when I’m going to push forward, and I know that I can achieve that. That was the pinpoint moment for me. Someone who inspired me, when I was first coming up, it would have to be my mentor Luam ([@luamky](#)). And Rhapsody James ([@rhapsodyjames](#)), Candace Brown ([@candacebrown](#)), Lisette Bustamante ([@lisetteslife](#)), and Shanette Heard ([@nulyphe02](#)).

**MC:** Can I just mention that you’re mentioning all women of colour, right?

**NS:** Yes and you want to know something funny? Luam calls me Jasmine because she says that in my past life, I am a woman of colour. So she goes, “In your previous life, you were absolutely Jasmine”, and I was just like, “OK, cool.” It’s very interesting because all my life, I have felt very connected to the Black community, the Hispanic community, the Latin community as well as the Asian community. And I would say I always felt very accepted. Those are my best friends, my family. I look up to Luam, Rhapsody, Shanette and Lisette. I gravitate towards women. I’m gay, but I’m inspired by women. I would say more than men. I’ve always been very inspired by women. Not saying I’ve been very inspired by men as well. But I would say my artistry and who I am as a person has been moulded through powerful, influential and incredible artists who are women and women of colour, for sure.

**MC:** So beautiful, I love it. Speaking of, I’ll jump on this because that’s the influence and the inspiration for the artists, in your artistic roots. If we talk about your artistic roots before even meeting these people, what can you share with us? What are your artistic roots like?

**NS:** I mean, for example, the first vinyl I ever purchased, you know? Well, my parents were nice enough to help me out because when I was younger, I had to make allowance. Yeah, so chores around the house and I give them so much credit for this. They always told me, “If you want something, you have to work hard for it.” You’re not just going to get it handed to you, you have to work for it. And that really, I think, pushed me just along with either my career or just how I conduct myself in life and pushing and moving forward for the things I want. But I’m going to have to really work hard for them. I remember I saved up enough and my parents helped me out a little bit just to finally get it.

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**NS:** The first thing I ever purchased was The Pointer Sisters greatest hits. The song Jump is probably the song that started everything for me. It was the Pointer Sisters "Jump" and Janet Jackson "Control" was the first cassette I ever owned. And then I have older siblings, so I have a brother who is 10 years older than me and a sister who is 14 years older than me. And I would go through their music and go through all these things, so I was exposed to these incredible artists at such a young age that it's what inspired me to do what I love to do. I used to watch a show called Kids Incorporated, which was a show about this group of teenagers and they come in and they own a restaurant and where they perform. Fergie was on it. Jennifer Love Hewitt was on it. But basically, they would come in and then they'd be like, "Oh guys, it's time to sing a song" and they get on stage, and I would just be in the corner, just like getting up. And that's the thing I did after school. I was very connected to MTV at that time and to media, culture and I was absorbing everything. I was a sponge. I just soaked it all in and I realized that I was moving every time.

**MC:** There's something about having like older, siblings around this too. I grew up with an older brother and he is seven years older than me and I. I say this all the time. Obviously, yes, my parents also played music nonstop. To this day, we make jokes about how Saturday mornings were like. You would hear the music blast and it would be from French music to Haitian music to Spanish music to everything. Even opera. It was so many different things that my parents would listen to. And then I would sneak into my brother's room and try to steal his tapes and be like "Oh, what's that?" He started getting CDs like Tupac and Lil' Kim. And I was like "I don't think I'm supposed to listen to this, but I want to listen to it." And we had the CD pouches, I love it. They're somewhere in my storage. I'm so thankful for that because I feel that shapes where we're going and has a lot to do with where we're at right now and how we see music and how just even how we just see art in general, because we didn't have social media not saying that social media is bad. Of course not. I feel like because we didn't have that, we had to create so many moments for ourselves, being in a room and just playing music. I think we had to create that for ourselves.

**NS:** It's so cool that you said that because I think that plays into our artistry 100% on the fact that we had to really imagine things and to create things in our minds. I love that you said that because it's 100% true. And I think that's what has inspired us, and what inspires us as far as different pieces to create or different artists that inspire us, or which lanes specifically we want to go down or decide on the other because I feel like I started one lane and now I'm totally on the other complete end of where I had originally started, it should evolve that way. But it all goes back to the fact that, because I was not allowed in my brother or my sister's room, I would sit in front of that door. I would push my ear to the door, and I'd listen for hours and hours. My brother was on one side of the spectrum. He was like super grunge, heavy metal, soft rock and all that. And then all of a sudden, my sister is on the complete opposite end and was like Paula and Depeche Mode and Tears For Fears and Erasure and Pet Shop Boys and all of that. I fuse those two things, and then I found out for myself, The Cure and Robin S. and La Bouche.

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**NS:** I found eurodance, commercial, electronic, acid house, dark wave, new wave, cold wave. All these different things, by fusing my two influences and then doing my own research, I was able to find these incredible artists that I found on my own. Oh, and Crystal Waters and Aaliyah. Crystal Waters was probably one of my biggest influences for dancing, period.

**MC:** I do want to touch on how you've been really able to connect to the different things of your roots, the things that you grew up with, the things that have influenced you to try to give in to whom Neil Schwartz is and how you feel in this season, because next season could be different because we're multifaceted, especially as artists. In your classes or even when you mentor dancers, how do you help them find their voice and connect to their artistic roots?

**NS:** I've gotten to the point where I think authenticity is key. When you first met me, I was doing one lane and I was following a certain path. And people would ask me to redo a combination that they had liked or a song that they like. And I just wouldn't do it. And I pushed my choreography to the side, and I was able to pinpoint what was going on. And it was that sometimes I felt like I was being my authentic self and then sometimes I feel like I wasn't. I said, "I need to take 10 steps backwards so that I can take 20 steps forward so that I'm a better educator that I'm a better mentor and then I'm a better teacher." I take education very, very, very seriously, and I take my students and those who come into my class very seriously by the meaning of the song, the purpose of the steps. Not just repeating, I always say, don't just repeat it a 5-6-7-8. Look beyond the 5-6-7-8. What is that 5-6-7-8 represent? And how can you get your voice across. I never I would never knock anyone for what they love to do. If you know that top 20 is your thing and you love that, I respect that 100%. As long as it's authentic. But that's a process, and it's different for everyone. I try and work specifically on mentality with my students because I feel like in this industry - that is a brutal industry - you must have that thick skin. You have to be able to pat yourself on the back sometimes when others will not. When I'm either mentoring someone or teaching, I want people to try not to be too hard on themselves, because we are perfectionists to the tee. And I think that's a good thing and a bad thing. It's a good thing because it means that we care, and we love what we do, and that we want to push. We care so much about what we do, and it means so much to us because - unless you're in this industry - nine times out of 10, a lot of people don't understand, or you have misconceptions, or you think it's a hobby. We have to be able to support one another. And we have to be able to understand where we need to go. And for me, I try, and for those who would like to be a future choreographer or an artistic director or a dancer, or whichever lane that they would like to go down, showing that this is the way that has helped me stay authentically myself, I can give you the tools. I'm only one person. I don't have all the answers, but I can show you what has worked for me and then you take it from there and you figure out what works for you. But I think that that's what's so awesome about our generation was that we have these incredible mentors who we are very fortunate to have. But they also pushed us to have our own voice. And I really that's what I am trying to do for the next generation and the generation that's coming in now as well as best as I possibly can.

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**MC:** I love it. Do you feel any pressure from the industry to fit into a certain mould, like with what we've been saying and thinking about the topic of body size and inclusivity in dance? I know you as someone who has always been true to themselves, you might have had episodes, you know where we sometimes give what the public wants or what your students want you to teach. There's a point we get to and we're like, "No, this is what you get when you come to a Mel Charlot class or this is what you get when you come to a Neil Schwartz class. But do you feel any pressure from the industry to fit into a certain mould? And do you think that there are still some certain standards in 2021?"

**NS:** Do I feel pressure anymore to fit a certain mould? The answer is definitely no. Did I at points in my career? Absolutely. Those little insecurities that we have that everyone has, no matter what level you're at, these little insecurities that we have from time to time, they do follow you. And it doesn't matter how successful or where you are in life. They do follow you. I think that there are tools and stuff that we can work with and use that help us to combat some of that "I feel like I have to fit a certain mould. I feel like I have to do certain things." I got to be honest with you, I think for me, when we were coming up, we had a lot of different choreographers and artists that brought different things like, I'm just being honest and real. When you see Kevin Maher ([@kmaher56](#)), you know his style and you know his artistry. When you see Rhapsody James, you see a mould, you see an artist, you see a style, you see a legacy. She's a legend.

**MC:** There was something about them that it's like, you knew you kind of had an idea of what you were going to get, even though they still have many tricks up their sleeves as well. You can come in one day and be like, "Oh, this is totally different," but still could be true to who they are, to whom they were. I think that's what was inspiring for me. I want to find my voice. I want to find out what it is that when you come and take a Mel Charlot class, this is what you get. And you can get more. There will always be more gems because I'm growing as an artist, as a woman, as an individual. There will always, always be more things. But the fact that I find my - I don't want to say niche necessarily - but you find your voice, you find what's what it is that really stands out as Mel Charlot, as Neil Schwartz. I think that shows within us that we got beautifully influenced by that.

**NS:** I like to see the word artists because I say that we do more than just dance. You've always had it, but you know you have your own way in 100%, that is yours. And it's awesome. But to go back to what you were saying, I feel like I felt that pressure from time to time. 100%, I'm human. Of course, I felt that pressure, and sometimes I feel that pressure again. I know what it feels like to be on one side and I know what it feels like to be on the other. And I like being on this side. I like feeling that I'm being true to my artistic self. We found what makes me the happiest, and in return, it's made me a better educator, it's made me a better artist in general.

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**NS:** I don't want to look back at my career and say, "Well, Neil, you could have been a little more honest with yourself". For example, a lot of people love a mainstream artist such as Camila Cabello. She is absolutely phenomenal. I love how she performs. I love everything about her. I think that she's wonderful and I think that she is incredible for the next generation. But am I saying to myself, "That's who I want to specifically choreograph for?" It's not on the top of my list because again, like I said, I'm just on a different kind of a path for myself. But it doesn't take away from the fact that I respect that artist to the ends of the Earth. It's just because we all want different things for ourselves, and I'm just being honest with myself. And when you see my work, when you see who I am and my style that you say to yourself, "Okay, that's Neil." I'd rather be known for that of being honest and true to myself than trying to please, an audience or a group or a student. I want you to come into my class, sometimes you'll know what you're going to get, sometimes you don't, but you'll know I'm being authentic myself so that you can feel something and hopefully that will inspire you to move forward.

**MC:** There are so many beautiful gems with what you just said, because I think it's a part of great tools that you want to have as an artist, period. But as a professional dancer, as an aspiring choreographer, when they say you want to have tough skin for this industry, it's like you want to get closer to who you are and who you're meant to be. And you know how much I bring my faith into everything. For me, stay close to whom God made you be. We're all different. And that's the beauty of it. That's what will keep you lasting for a long time, because the right people and the right artists and the right jobs and the right surroundings, everything, all the opportunities will come to you when you're fully in the right space of where you're supposed to be and who you're supposed to be. If it's not speaking to me in the moment, or if it's not necessarily in line with where I am in life, I'm not going to choreograph to it or I'm not going to necessarily teach to it because I want to teach you something that's going to be connected to whom I am in the moment so that it's authentic so that I can actually teach you something so that the actual like real gems are coming out in that moment, not just because I'm teaching you the latest song. Again, there's nothing wrong with teaching the latest song if you're connected to it. There's something about digging deeper and whether it's lyrics or the style of music and that connects to how you're feeling in the moment or what you're going through, because that's how you can possibly connect to someone who's taking your class, even if it's one person that will go to you and say, "I really needed that today." And that sparks a change that then helps so many after that. Those are things that I think of how the industry was we didn't feel comfortable to necessarily do that. I always knew, even just growing up, I always knew, I loved the baggy clothes. I love dressing like a tomboy. And at that moment, it was like, "Well, to be in the industry, you have to wear tight clothes and you have to wear these shorts and you have to lose weight. You have to fit a certain look, especially because all the girls dance together and bring your heels. And when you think about it, the industry is about commercial and it's a product and you're selling something. But at the end of the day, you want to start thinking about sparking that change because you can't just offer a product to one certain type of person. That's not who we are.

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**MC:** As soon as I realized like, “OK, I can do that. I can have my hair like super straight and long. I can lose weight and wear this super tight outfit.” But if I feel like it, I will. But if I want to be in this like baggy clothes and I want to wear a do-rag on my head. If you want to go in that route, then go, because that’s something that’s in you. And the closer you get to who you really are, how your body, the seeds. If we’re talking about artistic roots, but the seeds that are literally planted within you and if you’re connected to that, the branches that come out of you are going to be ridiculous because you’ll be reaching out so many people that don’t even walk the same lifestyle that you do at the end of the day. And I think that’s why even with you when you think about it, I’m not even surprised that people are like, “Do you know, Neil?” They would never think that you and I were friends and that you came to my wedding. But our circle and our artistic surroundings, we’ve always been like that. I think the people we’re close to in the industry, we think alike in that way. You want to be different. You want to own who you are and your light and your body shape and your skin tone and your hair the way it is. And this is an amazing moustache that you have. I think that’s what’s always been really cool about you as well, that’s been very inspiring is that you were like, “No, this is who I am”. There’s going to be moments where you will doubt a little bit, but those are the moments that you want to hold on to and grasp to because when things get tough in the industry and people test you or test your character or come at you with, like “I don’t think you’re ready. Maybe you need a little bit more experience”. You’re ready to respond to that and to have tough skin because you know who you are. You know, also what you have to offer. I realized not long ago, I know what I have to offer, and I know that people are lucky to or blessed even to have me in their presence or to have me in the room. And it’s not saying that in a cocky way. It’s saying it and not just with my quote unquote credits or you know what I’ve done. It’s who I am, the type of person that I am, the type of experience that I’ve had as a human being, not just in the industry. That is something that a lot of people lack. And it’s unfortunate and you want them to realize that because it’s so much more than just that you’ve worked with, who are you at the end of the day, are you able to come into the room and be like, “Hey, do you have a good night last night?” Not just “Who’s the last person you were working with? What next job are you on right now?”

**NS:** Anyone who’s in your presence is lucky, period. And that’s why I always wanted to be around you. I feel like we all kind of pushed each other forward. And when times get tough and we needed just to talk, we were always there for each other. No matter how many times we see each other or where we are on our paths and stuff like that, it always comes back to square one. And that’s something that’s beautiful about what we do is that it’s always there if we need it and when we need it and I love that. I love that about our generation is that we were very supportive, and we still are very supportive of each other and no matter what lane we went down. There is room for absolutely everyone. What’s yours is meant for you, and no one else can take it away. And that’s the reality.

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**NS:** You work hard, you give it your 100% and you're all and you're honest with yourself, things will happen for you in the time and the way that they're supposed to happen. You don't have to lift a finger. You just have to be honest and true to yourself. And sometimes we get impatient, and we compare. Which is totally human. Everyone does it. But then when stuff starts to happen, you put in the work, you put in the effort. It happens for everyone at different times.

**MC:** Speaking of the younger generation and how social media now is huge. With that, do you think social media, such as Instagram, has an impact on the beauty standard or do you think on the other side, it helps? What do you think about it?

**NS:** I think social media is what you make it out to be. I think that social media can be an extremely incredible platform that can connect you to people all over the world and can be a really incredible tool. But I think it's also a tool that can be a little too much at times. But it's kind of how you control it, you know who you follow, whom you look up to, what inspires you. I think that the people that I follow, I can look up to or relate or make me feel like I'm not alone when I'm going through changes in my artistry. I think that it's like everything: in moderation. I personally, I go on once a day. I always support my friends, and I always make sure that I interact with my friends. But I also make sure that after that, I'm off of it and I'm going out and I'm seeing friends and I'm trying to as best as I possibly can have time where it's social media time and then time where I'm out there and I'm living my real life.

**MC:** I think anything in moderation, I agree with that as well. And I love the idea of control because I remember feeling overwhelmed at a certain moment and was like, "Oh, my page doesn't look like I want it to be." I think it's a good idea because you control like, what do you want to use it for? Are you going to let it just influence you and scrolls for hours? I think it does have an impact with beauty standards, but I think it could have a good impact if you follow the right people that are also good for your mental health. I want to follow people who inspire me. I want to follow different types of people so that I don't feel like I'm in a little world of mine. I want to get inspired by other people. When I think about the beauty and body size and all that, there's no perfect way to look. I think now more and more because we have influencers and because we have real people now taking the reins and being like, "Well, you know what? I'm going to market myself. I'm going to market my art and do I want to do." We're able to see each other more. And we're able to see that there is a lane for everybody and helps you figure out what that line is and that the right people will be attracted to your page, and you will be attracted to the right pages that you want to see and what you want to see on your timeline. I think that has to do also with maturity. It has to do with guidance. It has to do with having the right people around you, right mentor, especially, for the younger generation. It's good to see people in their natural habitat, and it's good to see people cry and not make things so perfect about life because life is not perfect. Or I should say life is perfect because it's full of imperfections.

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**NS:** I can't remember, but someone posted "Instagram is not real life." This it's just part of, it's not the full part. There's got to be some other things that are inspiring you and pushing forward that have nothing to do with social media whatsoever. And I think that's really important. I think to make sure that you have a good group of friends, just good relationships and stuff like that. But I know for myself, and this is just something I practise, and I'm not perfect at it. But I know that when I'm with friends, this goes down. I try and put my phone to the side and be in the moment a little bit more.

**MC:** I created a whole other page for just my work. I love to still share some personal stuff. I love to still share pictures, but I'd love to have a page where you go on it and you just see the body of work that I've been working on as a director or creative director, as a choreographer, just so that it's clear, right? And then I was talking to someone, and they were like, "Well, how many followers do you have on your page?" I said, "Oh girl, I'm not even at 10K." Like why was that such a big deal? I'm now at 10K but I realize I was putting a lot of emphasis on it because if I'm going to have all these followers, I want to make sure I'm posting things that are going to help you in your life. And that is going to make a change because there's no point on me having all these followers for me not to do anything right. And then my biggest thing was like, if you're not a 10K, you can't do the swipe up in the story. You can't put a link. And I always shared stuff in my story, whether it was from my faith or certain political stuff or unfortunate things happening in the world. And I was like, I can't send people to the right space or to go read certain things or to go watch a video that really inspired me. And to continue that chain of inspiration that will help you create change, that will help you understand that you are accepted for who you are in this world because there are other people who think like you are who look like you. That's what I wanted to do. And I was like, that's when I connected to that. I want you to like if you come on my page, I'm inspiring you for something that might not even be in this season that you're in but maybe one day. Or maybe it connects you to what you went through years ago. That's what I want, because that's what I want from the other people that I follow as well. Now I also want to just encourage you because you might be helping somebody else or like the teacher in us would be like, "Well, you might be helping another student of mine." Yeah, you know what I mean? Like, how many students I had that I'm like, "Do you know Neil Schwartz?" But that's what's so beautiful about this walk of life and that needs to be shown a lot more within our industry. I think it's starting. I also don't think it needs to be forced. I'm not going to go down that road because I think we could stay there for a long time. I think it needs to be present and needs to be authentic and true and real and honest, because that's how I think you spark change and that's how you spark inspiration and that people can feel like, "Oh, I can do it too" or "I look like that and not I'm trying to be like you. But oh, it's possible. OK, let me find my way". I got one last question for you, friend. If you had a tool or resource to give to an artist, what would it be? And I want to remind us, because we spoke about so many things right now in the last little bit, but off of thinking about body size and inclusivity in dance, in terms of like who we are and all that. What tools or resources do you give to an artist?

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**Neil Schwartz | Body Inclusivity in the Dance Industry**

MC = Mel Charlot | NS = Neil Schwartz

**NS:** I'm going to say what I've been saying in my classes recently. And that is. I'm seeing a lot of artists being very hard on themselves, and it's very, very evident. It shows in their body language and it shows in their movement, and I've been going up to people like in my class and I'll just put my hand on their back really quick just to give them a little "I see you. I'm here with you. Breathe, relax." Whoever thought that we would be in a pandemic. Whoever thought that we would be experiencing all the things that we're experiencing. I remember when we would hear about climate change or what we would hear about all these different things, we'd be like, "Oh, but it's not in our lifetime. It'll be later." The fact that we're doing it and we're here now. And we were on Zoom for so long and we were we didn't know what the next day was going to bring. We still don't know. We're not sure things are changing every hour. That's something we've had to adapt. But I'm the type of person that sees the glass as half full instead of empty. You must have faith and we have to move forward or we're just going to what sit in our apartments or our houses and twiddle our thumbs. We have to move in some capacity. I've been telling the tool that I've been giving my students right now and that I would recommend to everyone is you have to be easy on yourself. I know that that's easier said than done. It's a practice, it's not perfect. I mean dance could have been taken away from us permanently. We've seen studios that close. I've had friends' studios that have closed. I think what has made me realize something now more than ever is that we have to as best as we can appreciate those around us and appreciate the fact that we're still doing what we love to do and that we're still pushing forward. I think as a community, we're very strong. I think that we're very intelligent and I think that we are absolutely, and essential for this world, and it's a beautiful escape for others. And I know that, just speaking with my family and my friends, they come on my page to escape. Just to get away from things. And I think that we have a big role in the dance industry. I think that we have a big role in the future of just everyday life, in sparking change and bringing hope when there's no hope. I always say the tool that I'm giving to them is to work on being easier on ourselves when things don't 100% work out in our favour, when things are moving in the way that we said that they were going to move. It will work itself out. It will happen because for so long, we weren't sure what was going to happen with dance. But here we are. We're here a year and a half after the fact and some things have changed, something's happened. We're still moving, and our industry got hit very hard. But we're still moving. It shows you how strong we are and how nobody will take that away from us and how purposeful our gift is.

**MC:** Neil, is there anything that you are working on that's coming up that you want to share with us before we say bye?

**NS:** I have one. I am in the process and I'm in the middle stages of it right now. But I just pitched the idea, and I got the idea pitched and they love it. I'm writing a children's book and I'm really excited. I'm writing it with my friend Sarah, and I'm really excited because I pitched the idea to a publisher, and they liked it.

**MC:** Thank you, everybody for tuning in and listening to this great episode with our amazing artist.