MR JOHN BUDGE (2): MY COMPOSING PROCESS

What is the process that you go through to produce your best work?

Well, I'm one of those obsessively tidy individuals and I have very little on my desk. If I've got a lot on my desk, I feel stressed, and so therefore, I find the best work I can produce is where I have as little clutter in my life as possible. So I want everything very tidy on my desk. And I also would like nowadays to have, if I'm going to do some thinking work, I also want to have dealt with all of those little emails as well because then they just niggle away at me when I'm thinking. And I like peace. I do not like open-plan offices. I work rather anti-socially with my door closed and it's not that I don't welcome people if they want to come to see me, but I don't like noise. And I like just peace and quiet that I can think through a problem, and I find that that gives me my best work.

Are there any special strategies, activities, tools or settings that you use particularly during brainstorming?

Yeah, well, usually you know something's going to come up. And I think a lot in my shower. And I like taking long walks. And I think about these things when I'm doing these things and mull over them, and then desperately try to remember, at my stage of life, all the arguments that I thought of which I think are good arguments. And so I make a note. Nowadays, I usually make a note on my smartphone of the particular points that I want to make to somebody, and so I find that to be helpful. But again, this is just me. I want to emphasize to those watching this, the students, that they may come up with a totally different way of doing it and there's no right way. It's what's the best for you and what would give you an environment to produce the best work.

What advice do you have for students about adopting a productive process?

I think it's fair to say that even the most efficient person, and I think I am quite efficient, you always have something on your desk at night you left over.

We all have a bit of a mental block about it and some firms actually move files around that when you get to that point whereby you just can't deal with that particular item or that file or that client,

they then swap and give that file to someone else and that's quite a good idea.

But the other thing, if it's your particular client and it's your particular problem and you have to deal with it, I have always found that once you get into those files, they're never as bad as you thought they were going to be. And you sometimes wonder why you didn't get a move on earlier with that particular matter.

And what I'm saying to students is that all of us have this. And I wouldn't consider, you just don't have too many of them, but it's not a failing on your part because I think everyone has a file or a matter which they find difficult to get into, but don't sit on it for too long. Do find space to get into it and if you're finding it a little bit difficult, talk to your colleagues about it. And it's always a problem shared is a problem halved.