

>>Snapshot

Emilija Ellen

Actor

Equity



“The workshops and webinars have helped me in many ways, most importantly in helping me to look after myself.”

Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

My passion is theatre. I love creating from scratch. A friend and I started a theatre company called Nomads of Bazar and we staged ‘The Maids’ in London, which was an incredible experience. This meant we had to learn all about the administration aspects of a theatre production as well as the acting side.

My agent gets me more mainstream work. One standout job that I loved was a play in Derby, Skybus, which took place on an airport bus. With full audience participation, using landmark locations and people, the story developed as the bus travelled between the Derby town centre and the airport. It was very inclusive and the feedback from audience participants was very moving.

What do you like most about your work? Why is it so satisfying?

To me acting is about touching that humanity that lives in all of us and which is the core of being human. I love to connect with that human element, that inner beauty, which is both simple and complex. There are so many layers to us all and sometimes we forget that. I like to tap into this and empower people through my work.

What are the biggest challenges of being a creative freelance?

The biggest challenge for me is solitude. If I am researching a new project a whole week can go by without me interacting with anyone. FEU Training workshops have really helped me with this. They provide such a great opportunity to meet up with other creative people.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

I have undertaken etiquette training and I’m currently doing life coach training. I use both of these in the ‘Etiquette and International Protocol’ training and

consultancy I do. I set off down this route after being approached by my current professional partner who asked me to prepare a presentation on western acting for a Chinese audience. This has developed and emerged as an exciting business opportunity that sees me travelling all over the world.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

Finding time for myself can be difficult. Preparing for a role or voice over job takes time, which doesn’t leave much opportunity for additional study.

I also find that discipline can be an issue. At drama school this is imposed, but once you are competing for work it can be easy to let things slip, for example, not doing regular vocal warm-ups.

I see myself as a ‘work in progress’ and never want to stop learning. Sometimes when you’ve done something, you feel you should know it, but it is important to remember, even if you think you know a subject, you can always learn something new.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Effective communication
- Write that book and get it published
- Digital marketing for creative professionals.

Webinars

- Stress busting
- Developing assertiveness
- Building confidence
- Developing Resilience
- Strategies for success.

What are the most important things that you’ve learned or gained?

The workshops and webinars have helped me in



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many ways, most importantly in helping me to look after myself. The assertiveness webinar was a real eye opener - previously I thought assertiveness was being rude! Now I know it is OK to say no, assertively, and to listen more to my gut instinct and inner integrity. I can now set boundaries in a polite way and stay true to who I am.

I've learned that you can't control events, but you can control your responses. I have given myself permission not to worry about everything and not to carry the whole world on my shoulders.

The workshops have even helped me earn money. At the 'Digital Marketing' workshop, we were asked to complete a marketing form and this form helped me clarify what I needed to do, which galvanised me into action. Within two weeks, I had got a job in film and then six weeks later had new voice over work as a result of having updated and re-posted my voice over reel.

My mindset has been changed - now I remind myself that I am a creative individual and have to spend time doing something creative every day, which includes plugging into an FEU Training webinar to reconnect with the creative world.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

FEU Training is a source of support and inspiration for me. The quality, professionalism and level of expertise is exceptional. The content is applicable, intelligent and of great value to me.

It's great to meet people from different industries with

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different viewpoints from such a wide cross section of creative professions. I appreciate getting feedback from different perspectives. For example, journalists ask such great questions and often have more focus on analysis and facts, while I am more about concepts and a broader picture. I'm often hard on myself but working with other people has been like them holding up a mirror allowing me to see myself more positively. It's good to know that you are not alone.

It's a great place to gain new creative tools in a safe environment, which I have found hugely valuable. It is a very welcome perk of my union membership.

Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creative?

The Actors Centre provides great training, but FEU is unique.

