



## STORIES &amp; INSIGHTS

## Meet Debra Snyder

STORIES &amp; INSIGHTS // 5 DAYS AGO

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We were lucky to catch up with Debra Snyder recently and have shared our conversation below.



**Hi Debra, thanks for joining us today. I'm sure there have been days where the challenges of being an artist or creative force you to think about what it would be like to just have a regular job. When's the last time you felt that way? Did you have any insights from the**

I am now the actor I have always wanted to be. It took a long time. I had to go through many challenging obstacles. This year, I claimed Deb, in a loving and powerful way. I stopped condemning myself for always needing a side job to survive. And I create content that speaks to my mission: raising women up to acknowledge their own greatness and not condemn other women in the process.



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**Debra, before we move on to more of these sorts of questions, can you take some time to bring our readers up to speed on you and what you do?**

Over my career, I've gotten the opportunity to create a variety of roles. From national commercials and film to stage and television, I've worked with an array of talent, both on and off camera.

I had a wonderful time in a recurring guest star role as 'Dolores' on ABC's Season 2 of "mixed-ish." Additional television work includes 'Marsha' on the 'Kill Me' episode of HBO's "Big Little Lies," and guest appearances on "Life in Pieces," "Boston Legal," "Unscripted," "Sins of the City," and "General Hospital." I've appeared in numerous national television commercials, playing a wide range of characters including a tuba-loving Mom and a hungry truck driver. My 2019 Bombas Sock commercial, where I got to act with a Yorkie Terrier mix, was 'one of the

holiday's most talked about commercials,' per Ad Week. In 2022 it was chosen for the CW's Greatest Holiday Commercial Countdown!

My film credits include Random Hearts (directed by Sydney Pollack) where I played a clueless art gallery assistant opposite Harrison Ford. My film career started when I was chosen to play Martha in Ang Lee's Pushing Hands. Other film credits include Landfall, Sins of the City, and Detour. My film "CarouCELL" won a couple of awards in Florida. I created a web series "Eve & Edna" and many music videos which are on my YouTube Channel.

On stage, I made my Off-Broadway debut creating several characters for Nicky Silver in New York City, including originating the role of the uptight repressed 'Vivian' in Freewill and Wanton Lust. I've performed in countless plays and musicals in the Los Angeles area including Six Degrees of Separation, Atalanta, Clean House, and two Ovation-nominated musicals; Divorce the Musical and The Breakup Notebook: The Lesbian Musical, and The Man of La Mancha.

I received my MFA from Brandeis University in Boston and my BA from Kalamazoo College in Michigan. I had a wonderful time studying overseas at the British European Theatre Studies Group in London with teachers from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

My family is my heart. My husband, Doug, and my cat and two dogs keep me laughing!

### **We often hear about learning lessons – but just as important is unlearning lessons. Have you ever had to unlearn a lesson?**

I had to unlearn that working a job to pay your rent does not make you a failed actor. I am a "Working, Working Actor." My entire life I've heard the standard gossipy, ego-damning phrases that vulnerable artists are exposed to. Why do we let them hurt us? Why do we think the worst about ourselves? Being hateful is easy. Being truthful in the face of that hurt is challenging. We lean into the myth that if I book, I have talent. Talent doesn't exist only when an actor books or gets an acting job. It's not something that comes and goes with jobs. It lives inside of each and every artist forever.

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"Those who can't, teach"

"If you enjoy something else other than acting, go do it."

Recently I was discussing acting and someone said this to me, " Lower tier actors, like you, have had a job your entire acting career. Medium tier actors are ones who make a living acting. Upper tier actors are the fabled 2% who make millions." For some reason this upset me and I went home to discuss it with my husband, Doug. He clarified what my defensive mind wasn't hearing. He said, "Deb he didn't say your talent was lower tier... just that you were an actor who worked." It all became clear and is something I want to share with other actors.

I will always be an actor even if I have a supporting job. For so many years, I felt ashamed I couldn't survive as an actor. I learned eventually that being able to make money has NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR TALENT! This became very clear to me when Tina Turner retired. I thought to myself... does her talent go anywhere after she retired? Never, it lived in her to the end of her days.

I have always had a job. Then I realized I have a unique, high-level ability to work in databases without ever having been taught. I believe my creative soul gave me access to parts of my mind that work without formal training. I did it. I enjoy it. And I do keep on acting. I have had some wonderful creative opportunities. In this day and age with all the accessible technology, I have created even more exciting artistic opportunities for myself.

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### **What do you find most rewarding about being a creative?**

Creating content, working with a variety of talent, and telling stories that mean something to me is my reward. I write children's music with Philip Bynoe, under our group name PBnDeb ([pbndeb.com](http://pbndeb.com)). We've been joyfully creating music for over 20 years. We released 7 albums to date. Philip, who plays the bass, is currently on a worldwide tour with Steve Vai, an incredible guitarist.

I've always loved producing my own content. I won an award for filmmaking. I started my own production company in California entitled, Wise Women Films, with two dear friends Malinda Farrington and Julie Markowicz. We created a 4-episode webseries and a couple of music videos before we disbanded.

I recently worked on a short film for Anthony Riggins, an incredibly talented young artist. He wrote a script then decided to act and direct the short. He was fantastic at both, not easy to do.

To keep sharp, I create short pieces of content for social media. I wrote a scene and reworked it with actor, singer, director, Georgia Van Cuylenburg. We filmed it with Michael Gonzalez, actor, musician and cinematographer, entitled "The Campaign." It will be coming out shortly. I have a fun Halloween concept in the works because I LOVE Halloween! Boo!

Whatever your journey is, dig deep, tell your story from your own viewpoint, and don't listen to the naysayers' boring and repetitive phrases. It's a tough business. There is no right path for everyone. I wish you success. I wish you joy. I wish you a creatively fulfilling life even if you have to work.

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#### Image Credits

The Dolores shot (Gold outfit and colorful bustier) has to be credited with ABC/SteveB Baffo

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