

by Marianne Faithfull

I never give advice. But I can tell you what I've learned.

I had commercial success very young. Rather short-lived. I can't say I like it much. I much prefer where I am now, where my records sell steadily, and I'm not sort of in the middle of the maelstrom.

I have a theory that if you get great reviews, and I nearly always do, that completely negates commercial success. The worse reviews you get, the more commercial success you have. It's just one of my mad theories, but it's possible, isn't it?

As I've gotten older, I've learned to disguise things much better in my writing. I've always used what all writers use, which is composites. You know, nothing is simply about *me*. The fact that the audience believes that it is is part of my skill. It would bore me to death to just write about myself; it would drive me mad.

I'm really glad I did my autobiography, and I'm very proud of it. But I only put in what everybody else knew already. I didn't put in a lot of things that I wanted kept private. I have a whole other private life as well that nobody knows about. And I would have thought they'd be hip to that, but they weren't. They just wanted to know about the same old stuff. So I gave it to them.

It's an incredible privilege to have people listen to your work and like it. 'Cause what it really is, if you make records, is a one-to-one relationship, which is the kind of relationship I like. It's like being alone with someone and talking to them. That's what making a disc is, or my discs, anyway—preferably on a rainy day.

Record companies have their uses. I'm going through my honeymoon period at Virgin. I think they're very good, and I'm very happy to be on Virgin. I also think it's funny—Marianne Faithfull at last, on Virgin!

It's a very, very, very delicate maneuver writing songs with somebody. You really have to leave your ego at the door, as they say in AA. And I think that one of the lucky things for me is that I'm a woman—because I don't have to carry so much ego. I have to have one, obviously, or I wouldn't be able to be me. Ego is not a villain. But it's just not always useful to the writing process.

I'm calmer these days when I perform live, but I still get stage fright. It's the usual sort of insecurity of the artist. Maybe not everybody is like that, but I think a lot of people are like, "Will they like me? Will it be okay? Will the band play properly?" I mean, I've done everything I possibly can to make sure I'm okay. But you never know.

The first time I really revealed myself was on *Broken English*. Until then, I'd been playing something else. What I thought with *Broken English* was that I really expected to die, actually. And I thought, before I die, I have to reveal myself as I was then. I mean, I'm not like that now. But I wanted to show that's who I really was.

I used to regret the narcotics. But now I've stopped. I've sort of realized that, in a way, it probably helped me from doing something worse. I might have killed myself otherwise. That's rule No. 1: Don't kill yourself. Obviously, even though I couldn't, it's best to avoid narcotics. In my defense, I was in great pain. I spent quite a few years in heartbreak hotel, and that was my way of dealing with it. I'm very, very lucky I haven't touched anything like that since 1985.

—INTERVIEW BY DANIEL DURCHHOLZ

Marianne Faithfull's latest album, *Kissin' Time*, was written and recorded with a host of collaborators, including Beck, Billy Corgan, Dave Stewart, Jarvis Cocker, and Blur.





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