Applying the Philosophies of the Beacon Model

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Applying the Philosophies of the Beacon Model:
The Use of Creativity as a Lifestyle to Produce Immersive Halloween Entertainment

A Project
in Creative Studies
by
Mike Raisch

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Applying the Philosophies of the Beacon Model:
The Use of Creativity as a Lifestyle to Produce Immersive Halloween Entertainment

The purpose of this project is to apply all the knowledge and skills learned from a master’s degree in Creative Studies at Buffalo State college combined with personal experience in order to share perspective on what a “Beacon” is and how its core values are the foundation for enriching your life as well as the lives of those around you and how it all relates to Creativity. Furthermore, this project applies the concepts from the Beacon model more deeply through supporting philosophies and how the Halloween holiday naturally serves as a Beacon. There is a relationship due to the fact that the constructs for Halloween and Creativity are strikingly similar. Lastly, this project outlines how the philosophies within this project were implemented in a real-life application and describes my journey over a period of many months applying these philosophies to my Halloween entertainment business, the challenges that ensued and the learns that resulted from them. The finished product will serve as a Beacon itself in order to spread the illuminating presence of Creativity in our daily lives.

Key words: Beacon Model, affective creativity, Halloween, consciousness, awareness, creative movement, social behavior, entrepreneur, business climate, environment, group dynamics, philosophy, self actualization, love, light, It

Mike McHale

12/1/15
Date
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Part 1: Defining “Beacon”

This section explains what a Beacon is and how its core values is the foundation for enriching your life as well as the lives of those around you and how it all relates to Creativity.
The beginning of this document is precisely a sentence about itself.
We are each like a drop in the ocean. We may sometimes feel that our droplet is insignificant in the vastness of the deep blue, but without your droplet and everyone else’s droplet, we would not be as deep and beautiful as the ocean because the ocean would not exist. However the ocean (collective) does exist, therefore all of the water droplets (individuals) must exist as part of the whole. You are and we would not be without you.

This simple truth of the Oneness of all things will set you free.
**Spirituality:**

The vital principal in humans, animating the body or mediating between body and soul. The incorporeal sense of being.

**Creativity:**

The process of which two or more things are combined to produce a new original thing that serves some kind of purpose to the entity that produced it.
Philosophy of Creativity & Spirituality

The source of all living things is ignited through the use of creativity and gives us a sense of purpose, resulting in living and loving a full and wholesome life.
I have been trying to come up with an answer to the most mysterious questions of life... why do we have life and what does it all mean? I've looked all over for answers, and the funny thing is that every answer has a counterpoint. Nothing ever seems to land on an affirmative “answer”.

In my personal perceivable reality there is consciousness that connects all things. This consciousness powers the spirit and motivates us to move, to take action, and to create. Holistic learning can occur through internal spiritual experience without external influence. This means that theoretically a person born in our shared reality can grow up in a “box” without any people, books or knowledge of common language to influence their perceived reality and still have the ability to tap into the Absolute Truth by exploring consciousness internally. Books and language are insufficient in delivering this knowledge because the words diminish the thing that it deeply is and therefore unnecessary in the grand scheme of things.

Although I have sought out multiple perspectives on the subjects of spirituality, religion, consciousness, mindfulness, science and creativity, this essay is a testament of my personal account with the universal consciousness, what it has opened my eyes to and what it means to me. Why would anyone care? I can feel it in all of my being that I am not alone. I am confident that the consciousness I've had the opportunity to explore is accessible to everyone (Absolute Truth). Whereas our interpretation of this may vary (Perceived Reality), we are fundamentally talking about the same thing. We just use it and describe it differently (Shared Reality). That being said, it's important to understand the most effective way to approach situations and gain insight into this inexplicable yet universal Absolute Truth. It’s important because all things of nature instinctively desire freedom, and as many great minds have agreed: the truth will set you free.
Shared Reality:
The physical realm of form in which we all collectively participate.

Perceived Reality:
What a thinking being observes to be truth based on their experiential points of reference.

Absolute Truth:
Things that are regardless of observations and conclusions.
The model on the previous page (Figure 1) is a visual representation on what has the ability to effect the others (represented by direction of the arrows as in [this] can effect→[this]). Notice that the Absolute Truth is unaffected because it is what it is.

Let’s consider a potato. You might like or dislike potatoes, concluding whether they are good or bad. That is your Perceived Reality. But regardless of how you feel about potatoes, the Absolute Truth is that a potato is what it is. Even calling it a potato is not the Absolute Truth. I could call it something completely different like a “fanloof” but the thing remains the Absolute Truth that it is. We have collectively agreed upon calling it a potato (at least in English) and that is our Shared Reality. However that’s still making a conclusion about the Absolute Truth that the potato is.

Once we label something we are diminishing the Absolute Truth of the thing. Labels are useful however, because it allows us to communicate about the thing and have a mutual understanding of what we are talking about. Talking about a thing can offer new perspectives and ultimately lead us down a path of better understanding of that thing on a more holistic level. However, if you’ve never experienced eating a potato, you may only know of a potato so we can converse about it, but there is no way for me to describe eating a potato that would supersede the experience of actually eating it.

One can only define purpose in their perceived reality. Purpose can't exist in the Absolute Truth because purpose is a judgment and would diminish the Absolute Truth to something less than it is. When someone is stubborn enough to think their perceived reality is the Absolute Truth it becomes a problem. A problem of which can be resolved through the creative problem solving process (CPS). We do not currently have the knowledge capacity to fully understand the
Absolute Truth and communicate It. Communicating is supportive but not a replacement for personal understanding of the Absolute Truth. I believe the Absolute Truth can be known at least to an extent. That being said, when talking about beliefs it is important to stay open to new ideas, new thoughts, new perspectives and new data. In order to do that one has to assume a humble position, meaning that you assume you may be "wrong" in the situation and look at situations objectively. When someone disagrees with an opinion, the mind naturally puts up a defense system in order to protect its thoughts from external influence. In a way, a disagreement is much like someone throwing a punch and our natural reaction is to block or fight back. We want to protect our thoughts as much as we want to protect our body. This is why most people often react when facing a disagreeable situation rather than approach with real control.

The point of this essay is to explore the fact that one's spirituality is based on how one processes thoughts and feelings. Hopefully one can gain insight on how we might achieve internal (Perceived Reality) and external (Shared Reality) peace through creativity (Absolute Truth).
Participation

When I was in elementary school, the entire student body was occasionally escorted to the school gym for a mini-vacation from the typical classroom agenda. We all sat on the floor making all sorts of gossip of what’s to come. It was finally show time. All the kids, including myself, were throwing spit passed our index fingers while making a loud “Shhhhh” noise in order to get the whole auditorium to quiet. I’m not aware of how many times I experienced this before I realized the irony of the loud “Shhhhh!” In my moment of revelation during the collective “Shhhhh!” I decided not to participate in the noise anymore and choose to participate in the quiet. Quiet was the desired state/ideal after all. By participating in the quiet there was one less person adding to the noise and we were one step closer to the goal of being quiet as a whole. There is a movement of peace and love happening all the time. Your droplet can be a part of the collective ocean of love and have one less person adding to the noise if you choose to participate.
The Beacon Model

Beacon:

A shining example of an ideal. The light that stands out of contrasting darkness.

The Beacon Model (Figure 2) contains five parts that depend on each other in order for the others to exist. This model is a prototype and will continue to be developed over time as we explore the implications of Beacons. The overall purpose is to visually show the flowing cycle of what makes up a Beacon. This can be useful for self-development, finding love, creating quality products for business, forming communities, etc. If life is in a slump or business is in a low, using this model to become aware of what you may need to reevaluate can help turn the tides back to a new fulfilling cycle.
Defer Judgment

Defer Judgment:

To refrain from making conclusions until it's appropriate. Generally the appropriate time to judge is after gathering enough data and/or ideas about the subject at hand.

I want to start with talking about Deferring Judgment but not because it’s a starting point in the model. The point of the infinite cycle of the Beacon Model is that it’s a flow that can be entered at any point. The reason I’m starting with Defer Judgment is because it’s generally the stage that needs the most work and the point of which we have the most control over. This stage also discerns the main difference between a Beacon and a Black Hole. A Beacon is illuminated from a place that is liberated from judgment. A Black Hole emerges from a place where judgment is tolerated. It’s important that I use the word “tolerate” because when judgment impedes on the creative environment it is not due to conscious fostering of judgment; Consciousness insinuates that judgment is purposefully deferred. Becoming aware of judgment that exists in your reality is the first step to removing it.

Behaviors that will assist with Deferring Judgment: Be Open to new ideas and perspectives

Assume Positive Intent

Assume a Humble Position

Be Honest with yourself and others

Don’t impede other’s Freedom

Set others Free by Deferring Judgment
The interesting thing about deferring judgment is that we are not removing judgment altogether. Judgment is a useful tool but only helpful when it’s appropriate to make an affirmative decision about something. Even after making a judgment it’s important to continue to stay open to new ideas. The circumstances may change or an opportunity may offer a better and new perspective or solution. It is not a matter of avoiding judgment but rather knowing when and how to use it.

A deep understanding of how and when to use judgment appropriately will Remove Fear that hinders Creativity.
Remove Fear

Fear is an interesting thing. There are a few different types of fear:

Mortal Fears:

Fears that help us survive because we fear harm and death. Generally these fears elicit a fight or flight response in order to assist in sustaining our lives. For instance the fear of putting your hand on a hot stove or when someone holds you at gunpoint. Some people even see the fear of death as a motivator to “live like you’re dying” and seize the moment. That seems pretty useful.

Phobias:

Fears of things that serve no actual threat yet we happen to be scared of them anyway like clowns, vegetables or your left hand. That seems pretty useless.

Fear of Self:

This fear deals with judgment. There is a constant fear of being our true selves because we might be judged by others for not fitting in or not being good enough. We judge our ideas or expressions too soon because of our surrounding judgmental environments. This can also contribute to the fear of making an affirmative judgment when it is necessary due to the lack of confidence. Conformity ends up being the result of this fear.
We are generally born with a care-free spirit and lack the fear of self. When we were children we would jump around, poke things and follow our natural curiosity without care. That’s the case at least until we are told not to do things we are doing or told that what we doing isn’t good enough or it’s not as good as another’s doing. We progressively forget what freedom is. We continue to be judged via grades in school, work metrics, making our parents proud, meeting our lover’s expectations, etc. All this judgment causes anxiety, stress and ultimately other health problems. This is the fear that needs to be removed in order to create the most constructive creative environment. (Although it would be nice not to have the fear of being harmed or killed as well, not to mention any phobias that might get in the way.)

In order to help remove this fear of self we must first understand our true human potential. Where and how we fit into the big picture. Remember we are each like a drop in the ocean where the ocean is the collective. You are and we would not be without you. This simple truth of the oneness of all things will set you free.

Fear can disguise itself in a variety of ways. Anger is common indicator that fear is present. Very often it is a fear of loss of control. If you find yourself angry in a situation, reflect on what you do and don’t have control over. It’s likely that you don’t have control over someone else's perceived reality. This also means you are making a judgment about their perceived reality. Acceptance of what cannot be changed directly is the key to be liberated by this fear. Lead by example in attempt to be a Beacon and it will have a changing effect on those around you.

Beacons shine light on others promoting them to participate in the Beacon model themselves much like the “Shhhh” analogy. This creates a Constructive Creative Environment.
**Constructive Creative Environment**

**Internal Environment:**

Dependent on how we judge ourselves, our ideas, and our actions. Also referred to as “person”.

**External Environment:**

Dependent on the judgments of others and societal/cultural norms. Also the laws of physics apply as the structure for what is possible in our shared reality.

If Removing Fear is achieved, the result is a Constructive Creative Environment. Creativity flourishes where there is a quantity of ideas produced. Removing Fear opens up the possibilities to a greater potential because there is no fear to stop ideas from flowing. This Constructive Creative Environment becomes a safe-haven for people to express themselves.

Expression can come in many forms. Most commonly expression is delivered through words, inflection and body language. In a Constructive Creative Environment these expressions should communicate through joy, humor, enjoyment and other pleasant emotions. If there is anger, frustration, depression and other negative emotions is it likely that there is fear, distrust and/or judgment within the environment.

The results of these expressions are the Creative Product.
Creative Product

Creative Product:

The observable representation of the Beacon. Serves as the access point for communication between Perceived Realities within our Shared Reality. Has appeal that consequently draws in observers that harmonize with the product.

The product is the “final” outcome of the desire state. “Final” is in quotes merely because some products may never be “finished”. There can be a creative product that continues to be developed in order to shine brighter as a Beacon or just adapt to new conditions.

As the desired state, the product provides purpose to the process. Why do we do what we do? Because we desire to accomplish whatever the end goal is. Whereas that is a fine thing, it can also be a means to an end. The Creative Product may be a goal or objective but it is not the “point”. The “point” is to be in the flow of the Beacon model so that the entire process is fulfilling. This ensures that the sense of purpose is ongoing rather than a peak experience when the goal is reached.

This product is the access point for communication of the Absolute Truth and will draw in other people and products that connect to the product through the Law of Attraction.
Law of Attraction

The theory that the energy you put out into the universe gets returned to you.

The notion is that expressing positive energy and spreading positivity will, in turn, bring about positive results. This is closely related to the idea of karma or the law of three in Wiccan/Pagan religions.

If the Creative Product is the subject then the Law of Attraction is the verb. If the product is something perceivably good and useful to others then they would be attracted to it. This is apparent in songs we vibe to on the radio, art we connect with, products we buy, TV shows we watch, people we love, etc.

This not only matches products with people but also brings like-minded people together because they are all on the same wavelength as the product and each other. This builds community. For instance, if a sporting event is the Creative Product then the crowd is the result of the Law of Attraction.

The greatest way to impact the world is to envision your self as the creative product.
Rabbi Israel Salanter once said,

> When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.

I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation.

> When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town.

I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family.

My family and I could have made an impact on our town.

Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

(see Figure 3)
If you define yourself as the creative product, you can become a Beacon and attract freedom, love and creativity which will make your stay here with humanity a constructive and fulfilling one. In this state Judgment is Deferred because of the harmony it creates completing the cycle.
Black Hole:

The antithesis of a Beacon.

A toxin to life.

A force powerful enough to suck the light out of one’s Perceived Reality by impeding on their freedom.

This is Absolute Truth Illusion.

This is Creativity Death.
Tolerate Judgment

Sustain Fear

Law of Attraction

Destructive Environment

Byproduct

Black Hole

Figure 4
Nature is the purest form of Absolute Truth in our Shared Reality and the most majestic Creative Product in existence.

It is a Beacon for inspiration and guidance.

Follow It.
Conclusions for Part 1

Trust and communication is foundational to any relationship. When we connect with the Absolute Truth to shape our Perceived Reality we can communicate honestly through creative expression to create harmony within our Shared Reality.

The guidelines for Creative Problem Solving can be used as a way to enlightenment. Creativity is all about connecting the dots. Having the ability to connect all of the dots within your Perceived Reality and others’ Perceived Realities opens up opportunities to contribute constructively to our Shared Reality. This leads you down a path to greater understanding of the Absolute Truth.

The Absolute Truth is a state of being rather than state of knowing conclusively. Any attempt at communication merely supports but does not supersede the actual thing that It is.

By Deferring Judgment on ourselves and others we Remove Fear. This results in a Constructive Creative Environment internally (Perceived Reality) and externally (Shared Reality). This opens up opportunities for positive, Creative Products to flourish. The positively charged product communicates with the spirit of others bringing about positive results (Law of Attraction). Bringing like-minded persons together will increase the probability of acceptance thus Deferring Judgment.

You can participate in the movement of Peace and Love within our Shared Reality in a constructive way by making yourself a Beacon.
Part 2: Halloween as a Beacon

This section discusses the concepts from the Beacon model more deeply through supporting philosophies and how the Halloween holiday naturally serves as a Beacon.
Preface

The Creative Studies program has opened many intellectual doors for me. While doing my research I began to feel my life start to make more sense. There have been creative processes and spiritual journeys that have shaped the person I am today, but until recently I have not been able to make sense of it all. I realize now that there is much more to know about the deep understanding of consciousness. I am searching for the core of how mankind is able to innovate, move forward, feel motivated and perceive the world around us. The more I study, the more I believe that spirituality and creativity are related.

The tools that are used to help recreate and understand the creative process are fascinating to me because they are the same processes that occur in my head when I am utilizing creativity. Now, with the assistance of these tools, I am able to accomplish those processes more deliberately and successfully.

Although it is not my main focus at the moment, I am also passionate about creativity in education. I am immensely bothered by the standardized testing and regimented educational structure most public schools are delivering to the younger generation. My concern is that my children will not have the proper environment to grow and flourish. I hope to have an impact on my potential children’s education with what I have learned through this program.

This paper will touch upon my passion for Halloween and education and how Creativity will be the foundation of everything I do.
Philosophy

Creativity:

The process of which two or more things are combined to produce a new original thing that serves some kind of purpose to the entity that produced it.

I have come across many definitions to creativity as it continues to stew in the minds of theorists and philosophers. Among them all, there are certain things to observe that are shared among most interpretations of the abstract concept. This list of three criteria for creativity is what I used piece together my final (and always evolving) definition of creativity.

1. It must be novel, at the very least, to the creator.

2. There must be a creator.

3. It must be useful in some fashion.

To break down my definition of creativity, I talk about “the process of which two or more things are combined”. This aligns greatly with the concept of bisociation by Arthur Koestler (1964). Simply put, two things that already exist but perceived in completely different facets are forcibly and deliberately put together to create a new thing. “Produce a new original thing” accounts for the necessity for the creation to be novel. “Serves some kind of purpose to the entity that produced it” observes the usefulness of the product and that there is a creator. I chose to use the word “entity” rather than “person”, because I refuse to limit creativity to just humans. I believe many animals have the ability to be creative and that whatever entity created life must inevitably be the most creative thing in existence.
Philosophy of Creativity:

The source of all living things is ignited through the use of creativity and gives us a sense of purpose, resulting in living and loving a full and wholesome life.

Being in the Creative Studies Program has expedited my spiritual journey exponentially. I would like to share some background prior to my entry to the program. I was living my life and going about it like most of us do. But then I had a defining moment. I was out in nature and I was simply appreciating the grass. Weather was perfect. I got to thinking. Very deeply. I opened my mind to the point where all the filters created by our material world were stripped away. Suddenly I was thrust into a white light which felt like the convergence of all things. It was this all-knowing presence of fullness. It was unity in perfect form. It was the most real experience I have ever encountered. My life shifted instantly and my perspective has never been the same.

In the Gospel of Thomas, he talks about the light within men.

(24) His disciples said to him, "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it."

He said to them, "Whoever has ears, let him hear. There is light within a man of light, and he (or “it”) lights up the whole world. If he (or “it”) does not shine, he (or “it”) is darkness."

I have always been the spiritual person who loved to burn incense, listen to new age music, read tarot cards, and meditate. After my transcendental experience, however, I have been actively searching for solid answers and confirmation that I was not crazy for feeling what I felt. I knew there was more to know, because everything I felt was beyond good and it just made so much sense to me. Being in the light made me aware that everyone was apart of this bigger entity
and that everyone had access to it. It was the single most beautiful thing ever. I knew there were more answers.

Through some strange compound of events I heard about the Creative Studies Program at Buffalo State College. It called to me, like the love you are always on the lookout for, but never truly know what you are looking for until it introduces itself. I do not believe this was some random happenstance. I believe that from the beginning of time everything has been in sync with itself and everything happens in a very powerful and meaningful way. This concept of “synchronicity” was coined by Carl Jung the 1920s. So within less than two years of being in the Creative Studies Program, I have cried and laughed and been mind-blown on countless occasions. It has provided answers to so many questions I had and so many I had not prepared myself for. This is where it comes full circle. My coursework required me to visit the Creative Studies Library which engulfed me in a pool of books full of wonderment that quite easily supported my transcendental experience. I was ecstatic to be reading from other acclaimed authors and theorists of the creative field who wrote books about the very thing I experienced.

Between my personal experience and serious digging in the Creative Studies Library, I have formed my ever-evolving philosophy of creativity.

First of all, what could possibly be more creative than the creation of all things in existence? Nature. The nature of all things is creative. Everything around us was at one point or is still becoming novel. Nature is so useful in every way. And I believe there is an entity that created it all. It is often said to “look to nature for inspiration for creativity”. That is probably due to the fact that nature is the greatest creative work as we know it. Just the human body is an
incredibly complex work of art to the point where we ourselves have become creators. We have transpired from nature’s creativity. It is as if we have willed ourselves into existence. The internal core of us is full of creativity. It is our building blocks. Also, we get to live among the rest of creation and embrace the beauty of everything that surrounds us. So to say we are not creative is to say the ocean is not water, when in reality without water it would not be an ocean and without creativity we would not be human. More on the ocean analogy later.

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<td>Integrated Co-Creative</td>
</tr>
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Figure 5

Above shows a chart (Figure 5) adapted from The Oracle Institute (2014). I find this chart incredibly fascinating and relevant to the relationship between creativity and spirituality. I do encourage you to take the time to observe the levels and try to identify what level you align with. However, I would recommend paying no attention to the “years” listed when trying to find your level for I find those to be irrelevant to an individual. There is a lot that I could say about this chart, but to avoid getting long winded about religious dogma, I will just mention the few things directly related to the topic at hand. Notice that in the “Values & Motivation” column beyond the “Tipping Point” it talks about “the LOVE” and “the LIGHT” which lines up with
“All is one” and “I am”. These short statements match up to the “convergence of all things” and the “white light” I experienced within my ascension I talked about earlier. Also take notice to Level 7 “One for all” as it integrates “spirituality & God view” as a co-creative. Collectively thinking, my take-away is that we all, as conscious beings, are part of one big entity and that entity is the driving light-force behind our creativity.

I will finish this thought with the rest of my ocean analogy. If the ocean is the entity that is the whole, and the water is creativity then we are the individual drops that make up the whole ocean. The drop can be separated from the whole of the ocean, but the make-up of the water remains intact. And the drop may forget that it was a part of something bigger. But then it has the opportunity to become one with the ocean again and feel what it is truly like to be water again.

There is an excerpt from the Gospel of Mary Magdalene that can be interpreted similarly.

The Savior said, “all natures, all formed things, all creatures exist in and with one another and will again be resolved into their own roots, because the nature of matter is dissolved into the roots of it's nature alone. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Now let’s take a closer look at how these concepts can be applied to Halloween as a business model.
Vision for Halloween

My grand vision is to bring together a community of people to create a successful, sustainable and creative haunted house business that people want to be apart of. Additionally I desire for this business to consist of an environment where employees and students can learn, develop and grow.

I aspire to lead a team in being the best they can be by inspiring them to be self-aware of their skills and opportunities while consistently improving themselves. Ideally I would like to combine both of my passions, haunting and teaching, by creating educational opportunities revolving around the creation of a haunted house and other aspects of the entertainment industry.

Ways I have thought to support this ideal:

• Hold a summer camp for the younger generation to learn life skills through facilitating acting, make-up, design, business and hopefully other courses related to the entertainment industry.

• Be a common-ground for internship programs by reaching out to local colleges, open my business for the purpose of college credit and help interns get “real-world” experience.

• Re-create a scholarship program to help monetarily support an aspiring student to further their education toward their dreams. (I initialized a scholarship at SUNY Fredonia once before with the same intention but the legacy has dwindled since my graduation)

Due to my belief that life is intended to be lived with all the passion and love that can be experienced while being alive, it is a desire of mine to manifest a safe haven that will welcome
all of these ideals and liberate others from the fear exemplified in the following, beautifully
written passage by Robbins:

He always wanted to explain things. But no one cared. So he drew.

Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything. He wanted to carve it in stone
or write it in the sky. He would lie out in the grass and look up in the sky. And it would be
only him and the sky and the things inside him that needed saying.

It was after this that he drew the picture. He kept it under his pillow and would let
no one see it. And he would look at it every night and think about it. And when it was
dark and his eyes were closed, he could still see it. And it was all of him. And he loved it.

When he started school he brought it with him, not to show anyone, but to have
with him, like a friend.

It was a funny school. He sat in a square, brown desk like all the other square,
brown desks. And he thought it should be red. He was in a square, brown room. Like all
the other rooms. And it was tight and close and stiff.

He hated to hold a pencil and chalk, with his arms stiff and his feet flat on the
floor. Stiff, with the teacher watching… watching. And then he was told to write
numbers. And they weren’t anything. They were worse than the letters that could be
something if you put them together. And the numbers were tight and square and he hated
the whole thing.

Then the teacher came and spoke to him. She told him to wear a tie like all the
other boys. And he said he didn't like them. And she said it didn't matter.
After that they drew. He drew all yellow, and it was the way he felt about morning. And it was beautiful. The teacher came and smiled at him. “What's this?” she said. “Why don't you draw like Ken’s drawing? Isn't that beautiful?”

After that his mother bought him a tie. And he always drew airplanes and rockets like everyone else. And he threw the old picture away. And when he lay alone looking at the sky, it was big and blue and all of everything, but he wasn’t, anymore.

He was square inside, and brown, and his hands were stiff. And he was like anyone else. And the things inside him that needed saying didn't need it anymore.

It had stopped pushing. It was crushed. Stiff. Like everything else (Robbins, 1985, p. 81-82)\(^1\).

This is a story of birth, beauty, creativity, and death. Not the good kind of death either. I will address transformational death later.

The first thing to observe is that the character in this story had something to say. He had the desire to express himself. And quite poetically might I add. Next he created a picture. This picture served a purpose to him. What was that purpose? He felt whole. “It was all of him”. And he loved it! To this point in the story he was untouched by the outside world and felt free to express himself and through his creation he felt whole. That aligns with my philosophy of creativity. It gave him a sense of purpose, resulting in living and loving a full and wholesome life. But then he is placed inside an environment with structure and rules. Initially he wanted to paint his desk red. And he wanted to paint his morning yellow. And he did not want to wear a tie. The teacher told him it didn’t matter. It didn’t matter what he wanted or how he felt? The teacher

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\(^1\) This story originally appeared in *Generation*, Saskatoon, Sask., reprinted in March 1982 *Brainmind Bulletin*. 
then judged his creation basically telling him that it was not as good as another creation she had observed. Insert fear. Now the student feels the need to compete and only create things that are approved by the system. This fear has disconnected him from the source and stifled his creativity. Since creativity is the source of feeling alive, I would say the child is now experiencing the absence of life… death.

When our acts are not received well or not received at all, we think something is wrong with us. Because our survival depends on the love of others, we adapt. We bury the part of ourselves that does not meet the approval of others along with the joy of creating. The pride of accomplishment and the desire to share ourselves with others also get buried because we lack wisdom to discern between behavior the essence of our spirit (Kincannon, 2005, p. 44-45).

We see this sort of thing happen quite frequently in our public school system. We are stifling the creative spirit of our upcoming generations and killing their opportunity to live a fulfilling life. This saddens me to a great degree and in response my vision will be highly influenced by all the elements that make an environment conducive to creativity so that everyone involved can feel whole. I am not necessarily in the market to start a school per say, but I definitely want to create something that is educational.
Fear

Fear is what stifles our creativity. The boy in the story was fearless until a sense of competition and the need for acceptance was brought into the picture. Before, his picture was created out of love and showcased creativity. After, his fear of not being accepted stunted his ability to be creative and was cut off from the source. Love casts out all fear. Thus, there needs to be an environment that invites Love in order to conquer fear and make way for the potential of creativity.

“As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. Part of a pilgrim’s work of the journey is to overcome our fear in order to serve as a beacon of liberation for others imprisoned in the darkness of despair, injustice, alienation, and fear” (Kincannon, 2005, p. 42). This is exactly how I want to lead. If I am able to eliminate fear by knowing and embracing Love then others will be liberated through my love.

I am in the business of fear. Ironic, I know. Many haunted house businesses are in the business of scaring through the use of startling effects and actors jumping out. This strikes the flight or fight response in a safe environment which provides a thrill for sure. And they serve their purpose. However my vision of a haunted house plays on a more deep-seated fear. A much deeper response. Fear that gets you thinking and gets under your skin. Now I just discussed how fear is the antithesis of love and stifles creativity. But instead of creating fear, I’m forcing customers to face fear head on and interactively. Through the strong use of storytelling, I hope that when my patrons leave they feel the need to talk through the experience they just had because it has affected them in a way that may have caused them to rethink their position in life. Much like a really good movie affects its patrons. Not to mention they will be fully immersed in
the creative product of which will be the byproduct of my team working in an ideal creative environment. Much like a student surrounded by square brown desks can feel the need to adapt to the structure, my patrons will feel the need, at least for a little while, to adapt to the fully immersive creative work they have been engulfed by.

The types of fear I plan to showcase in my haunt are related to the reason I took an interest in the haunt industry in the first place. Growing up I always felt like the weird one. For whatever reason my abnormalities became something I was proud of. I even bragged about it. I was ridiculed for my “strangeness” but I wore it with pride and replied “thank you” to most of my peers that participated in such demeaning behavior. I did not mind being the outcast. But I realized that people were afraid of it. They did not like the idea of being “strange”. Conversely, there is a need to overcome shadows so that the light may shine brighter than it did before. There needs to be an outlet to break down the barriers of what is considered taboo and unacceptable.

Enter Halloween. This was the holiday when all the strange things are somehow universally accepted and even celebrated. It is no wonder it is the second most popular American holiday next to Christmas. Unfortunately consumerism somehow wins the top spot for holidays, but Halloween is where it’s at. It creates an environment for people to express themselves in whatever way they feel without the everyday judgements of the square, brown-desk parts of our society. So even though I was pretty comfortable in my own skin, I found homage in this holiday. My goal, as a service to humanity, is to provide an interactive experience that exposes them to the strangeness they inherently yearn for.

In a simple yet mysterious way, an artwork can reach from center to center; as I get more and more deeply in touch with my creative source, I am also more deeply in touch with yours. The reason for this, as mystics have always known, is that it's the same source. We
are indeed all one and our diversity is an expression of this larger oneness (Robbins, 1985, p. 55).

That means that in our depths we are connected. The same stream that nourishes you nourishes me. So when you dip into the stream, create something from it, and share it with me—whether it be a piece of music, a poem, or recipe—Something in me rejoices. My own creativity leaps for joy, and my source, which is our source, resonates. The artwork has become a bridge between us and from each of us to our common source (Robbins, 1985, p. 56).

Robbins is talking about what he calls “deep to deep”. To bring it home, art created from our source connects us to others because we draw from the same source. When I establish environment that invites Love and promotes creativity and conquers fear, an astounding haunt will be erected through the power of the source and our guests will feel deeply connected to the fully immersive work of art.
Freedom

When I mention “freedom” to someone that perceives the Level 4 Judgmental God (see Figure 5), according to the chart, they reply with something along the lines of, “Well if we had the freedom to do anything then why wouldn’t we just go around killing people?” What that is actually referring to is free-will with no rules, which is not the same thing as freedom. Sure, if no one is stopping you, you could technically kill someone. But you don’t. Why? Because we are all connected. Therefore killing someone would be destructive to that person’s depths and thus destructive to your depths because it is coming from the same source. Freedom, however, is the liberation of fear so that an individual can express themselves through the Love and Light of God without the limitations of judgement resulting in infinite opportunities. And where there are infinite possibilities, creativity blossoms life.
Structure

Now there is freedom and there is structure. Structure is not necessarily contained boundaries. When some think structure, they may think about the brown classroom with the brown desks. Order. Stagnation. Rules. However, structure can have infinite boundaries. But without structure there would be chaos. The building blocks of something are the structure. Music, for instance, has a set of audible frequencies of which we create melodies. Yet there are infinite possibilities of products of this structure we would consider music. Without the structure it would just be noise. So whereas we have the freedom of infinite possibilities, we are structured by the creative Love that guides us. We as beings are built from creativity and Love.

Rediscovering your building blocks will shed some old perspective you held onto leaving behind a more true and fulfilling perspective offering freedom. This process can be considered a transformational death.
Death

Many people fear death. It would seem scary to go through something physically excruciatingly painful and go… where? Anywhere? Somewhere? Nowhere? Contrary to the belief that there is something to fear after death, you are awakened to who you are, and how everything is connected and that you cannot be destroyed because you are infinite, you are filled with Love, Light and freedom. And it conquers all fear. You realize that death is just a transition, and that wherever we go, that wherever is good.

There is a lot of beauty in death. We are reunited with the source and experience a transformation into something worth dying for. This death can be physical death or one of the many more metaphorical deaths we encounter while experiencing physical life.

Not only do I bring this up because it is a beautiful perspective on death, but because death is largely used in the haunted house industry. There are Grimm Reapers and undead zombies and graveyards and vampires and violence and murder. Death is a huge part of what we do. However, as things go, I like to do things differently. All those dramatizations of death are part of the material world and I will certainly be using some of those things in my haunt. Like everything else, they serve their purpose. But my vision is to design with death as a transformation. Death in the spiritual world is probably more easily understood as metamorphosis. Which anyone that has ever seen a butterfly can attest to the fact that metamorphosis is a beautiful transition. It is just a maturation of your self. Elements of transformational death will be scattered about the haunt with the intent that there might be a transformation for our patrons.
Strategic Plan

Part one of the strategic plan is almost complete; finish studying creativity at Buffalo State College. My strategic plan would not be nearly as well-developed or spiritually driven if it was not for this program.

I plan to bring my vision to entrepreneurs and investors as well as the Small Business Development Center to get all the questions I need answered in order to complete a fully developed business plan. Within those plans, I will consider:

1. Government funding and tax reductions for the educational opportunities within my haunt business.

2. Location based on not only a market full of haunted house patrons but close to primary and secondary schools.

3. A marketing plan that cannot be ignored.
   a. Free news coverage
   b. Billboards
   c. Previews before horror movies
   d. Exposure in local schools
   e. Live-action art spectacles in public places
   f. Sponsorships
   g. Listed in every possible free public listing

4. Ways to bring in local artists/creatives to work collectively on a mind-blowing final product.
5. Ways to ensure there will be a feedback system so that I may maintain an open mind and grow based on the most important thing, my people.

At first I thought that maybe I could start out with a haunt and then incorporate the education element thereafter. But after writing this paper I am realizing the purpose of my visionary haunt is intended to be an educational experience anyway. So I might as well just dive in with both feet and utilize the educational element to my advantage. Time to take the risk-taking shoes out for a run!

“If you keep your eye on the profit, you’re going to skimp on the product. But if you focus on making really great products, then the profits will follow.” - Steve Jobs.

Steve Jobs was a brilliant and obviously successful man. This gives me faith that if I create a genuine great place to work, visit, and learn, then money will be secondary and flow automatically. To ensure that I have a strong foundation, on the following page I have provided a credo of building blocks to ward off chaos and promote wholeness.
Credo

The following ideals will be upheld by my company and in my everyday life.

- Honesty and transparency will always be rewarded. Dishonesty, fear and shadows will be addressed with an open heart and open mind.

- Everyone has equal opportunity to express ideas and feelings.

- We serve ourselves by providing great service to others, colleagues and customers alike.

- We seek novel and useful ideas.

- We grow or we die.

- We invite Love.
Further Research and Visions

Since our journeys are infinite, I have interest in furthering my research in the dark side of creativity. My medium for art is a rather dark subject. Haunted houses are not exactly full of rainbows and sunshine. That is not my point however. My curiosity lies with the concept of the ability to be creative with things that are not coming from the source of Love. Very creative people make extremely complex weapons of mass destruction. Others, such as Hilter, were able to wipe out millions of people relatively efficiently. Gas showers were very creative. They served a purpose and were novel. However, I highly doubt it was designed coming from a place full of Love. So I would like to know more about how creativity plays in the role of the villain.

After my educational haunt business has reached a sustainable status, I hope to serve as a beacon in my industry and facilitate workshops or personal consultations revolving around my philosophy. My ultimate goal, in whatever I'm doing in the present moment, is to embody creativity and breed more creative change leaders. This will help me in the process to solidify my success in the haunt industry in the future. By taking the concepts that I've learned in the creative studies program, combining them with my experiences in life and the development of my philosophy of creativity, I can now implement toward my strategic plan and further visions..
Part 3: Personal Application

The purpose of this section of the project is show how the philosophies outlined in the previous sections can be implemented in a real-life application. The following pages will talk about my journey over a period of many months applying these philosophies to my Halloween entertainment business, the challenges that ensued and learnings that resulted from them.
Halloween, Creativity & the Beacon Model

My grand vision is to bring together a community of people to create a successful, sustainable and creative Halloween entertainment business that people want to be apart of. Additionally I desire for this business to consist of an environment where employees and students can learn, develop and grow. The overall objective is to serve as a beacon for creativity and promote creativity as a lifestyle, not just a skill.

I aspire to lead a team in being the best they can be by inspiring them to be self-aware of their skills and opportunities while consistently improving themselves. Ideally I would like to combine both of my passions, haunting and teaching, by creating educational opportunities revolving around the creation of a haunted house, the creative process, spiritual creativity and other aspects of the entertainment industry.

My journey up to this point in my life contains all of the foundation for this project. I started on the path of Halloween at a young age. Even in pre-school my favorite thing to do was play dress up. I was always a dreamer, coming up with fantastical locations and situations. My uncle Dave was a huge advocate for Halloween and my family would always visit his house during the season to walk about his elaborate front yard displays. For me it wasn’t about the “scary” stuff. It was about the escape.

We, as living beings on planet Earth, have a shared reality. Your reality is concurrent with mine in this space-time continuum. However our perspectives on that shared reality vary. Also my effects on our reality vary from yours. We can use our thoughts, dreams, emotions and imaginations to effect the world we live in. Many believe in the Law of Attraction. The concept
is that whatever energy your thoughts provide to the universe, the universe will return back to you.

I have observed when I laugh, you laugh. Then we are laughing together. When I give to someone in need or provide a good service I feel good about it. So is that the universe returning the energy to you in the moment or does it “bank” it for later?

Ultimately all we have is how we feel in the moment. When we do feel something we have the ability to express ourselves in whatever way feels right in that moment. It might be through a painting or a song. It may also be by complaining in the break room at work. It might be going for a drive. It might be crying. It might be cleaning. It might be designing a haunted house.

All the ways we approach situations and the energy that we output has an effect on the situation. That can be observed on a small scale in something as simple as an interaction between two people. When one gets frustrated one of two things will likely happen. The other person can very easily get sucked into that frustration and become frustrated themselves. Or a more conscious person may approach the situation with greater control and give out opposing aligning/calming energy and thus diminishing the level of frustration from the first party.

When we do something to express the feelings we have, we are giving that action our energy powered by our feelings. When someone else can experience your product of that expression, it’s likely they will be able to feel the same feelings you put into it. Much like when you observe a painting or hear a song. It speaks to your core and rejoice or cry or laugh accordingly. In the previous paragraph, the body language, inflection of voice and words are all part of the product and thus effecting the level of frustration in those around the subject producing it.
The effectiveness of these expressions are determined by the intent behind the energy. Energy emerging from a place of beauty will be delivered as beauty. When you watch a good, sad movie you might cry. Sadness is often associated with a negative connotation. Most people would prefer to be happy rather than sad. But with a movie that delivered a beautiful product causes the viewer to enjoy the experience of the cry. A movie that was designed with poor intentions or fear, may cause the viewer to still cry but not find beauty in it and maybe even regret watching it.

In order to have an environment conducive to effective and beautiful expressions we can look to the guidelines for creativity.

According to FourSight model (Puccio, 2002), Creativity calls for these ground rules during the divergent process:

- Defer judgement
- Seek Wild and Crazy Ideas/Novelty
- Strive for Quantity
- Build on Other Ideas

Halloween is the perfect platform for these ideal environmental factors for creativity. The holiday encourages you to express yourself through dressing up in costumes. Generally the wilder and crazier the costumes, the more praise they receive. Because this is universally accepted by anyone that celebrates Halloween, judgement is deferred which gives everyone in the environment permission to be whoever and whatever they want without fear. Expression and being “strange” is the norm during the holiday. Ironically many people associate Halloween with scary things and therefore promoting fear. That may be true, but the type of fear that is exercised
is related to death, gore, the deranged, or being startled. The fear of self, however, is more easily removed because of the structure of the holiday.

By creating an environment with Halloween as a platform it opens up people to express themselves effectively and produce a product that others can experience and enjoy. The well-intended beautiful energy that is put into creating the immersive Halloween experience will be translated to our guests. People experiencing the well-intended expression will spread positive energy that gives back infinitely. Since we are all connected, we benefit on a holistic level by this whole exchange of energy through works of expression.

The purpose of my Master’s Project is to focus my life’s well-intended energy into cultivating a company that ignites creativity and educates on how to use creativity to captivate beauty in life and problem solve. Ultimately, the objective is to spread Creativity because Creativity is essential to life. It helps you to stay alive but also to feel alive.
The foundational goals of this project are:

- To have the environment conducive to creative expression
- To have the tools to express oneself
- To feel the power of Creativity
- To share your expressions with others and have others feel the power of Creativity

The following ideals will be upheld by my company and in my everyday life:

- Honesty and transparency will always be rewarded. Dishonesty, fear and shadows will be addressed with an open heart and open mind.
- Everyone has equal opportunity to express ideas and feelings.
- We serve ourselves by providing great service to others, colleagues and customers alike.
- We seek novel and useful ideas.
- We grow or we die.
- We invite Love.
Personal Application

For months I’ve been having weekly creative meetings with friends and family interested in being a part of the creative process and my Halloween business. The first few meetings revolved around getting everyone on board with the vision and laying the groundwork for our creative environment. The short of it is listed on the previous page.

In the beginning I sent out a survey to get a feel for the group as to why they were interested in coming to the creative meeting for Dark Labyrinth Entertainment. There were a few other questions on the survey, but this was the most important in my opinion because it’s what will keep people coming back to the meetings. The team had these responses to “What do you hope to get out of being a part of Dark Labyrinth Entertainment?”:

1. I want to help others help themselves to the extent that we are able. I am also excited to gain experience teaching the acts of the creative self.
2. Being part of something great and helping out as much as possible
3. Being part of the creative process. Supporting in any way I can.
4. It's just a good time and I enjoy helping out a friend with his life's dream
5. I want to see this project through, it has potential to be revolutionary to the haunt industry. Also gaining experience on all faucets of the haunt, expanding my knowledge on the business side, building, and acting.
6. Expanding my creativity. Bringing positivity to the group and growth
7. To have fun doing something I'm passionate about and help out as much as I can with a pretty epic thus far haunt, with some pretty epic people
8. I hope to be part of a cohesive team going into the future and help this attraction and others look the best they possibly can.
9. I hope to help Mike [Raisch] with his goals. I want to support however I am able. I have no personal goals.
10. Taking the Halloween experience to the next level
The following weeks were then spent coming up with a solid storyline for our desired end product (the immersive theatrical experience we will create for Halloween). We nailed down some personality traits and history for the main character the experience will be based on. We mostly utilized “Stick-em up Brainstorming” and then converged on ideas as a group through clustering, voting and further discussion. The important thing is that during the process there was open dialog and often laughter. We were being productive and enjoying the moment.

There was a challenge of getting through all the topics I wanted to get through in a night because I didn’t have a written list that was easily accessible. For the following meetings I created a Keynote presentation that outlined the agenda and kept things on track much better.

Once we had a basis for a character and a skeleton of a storyline we needed to come up with the breakdown of scenes that will occur in the immersive theatre experience. Outside of the meetings, my dear friend Caitlin and I clarified what things were important to consider when coming up with an effective immersive scene in our show. We took those things and created questions and separated them into categories in order to assist the team in coming up with constructive ideas. We created a deck of cards with the questions on them and labeled by category so that they can be used easily as a creative tool.

I broke down what I envisioned into inspirational concepts that I like to call “wow factors”. A wow factor is the concept within a scene that not only sets it apart from the rest in a big way but has the potential to inspire awe in our guests. For instance, imagine a room that is flipped on its side so that you would be walking on one the “walls” when you travel through it. These wow-factors serve as guidelines or a springboard for thinking creatively. Some people think creativity is creating something from nothing. Contrary to that misunderstanding, there
needs to be some kind of structure for creativity to build on. The wow-factor is the structure in this case.

In the following weeks we heard from the team what ideas they’ve come up with. Using the POINt tool we gave the individuals feedback on their scene ideas. This was very effective because it kept the conversations open and by delegating the creativity to others in the group, the scenes were being conceptually designed at a quicker rate than if I were to do them myself or as a group in an unstructured way. As a team we came up with a solid 10 scenes that played an important role in telling our story through the experience.

Another focus was brought to the attention of the group in the coming weeks. We were planning on launching an IndieGogo crowdfunding project in order to help fund the big idea. A video was made, rewards were created and the project was launched. Unfortunately it was not very successful. We raised $265 which was only 3% of our funding goal.

There was another challenge that presented itself. One of the regular attendees to our creative meetings wasn’t aligning with our vision effectively. His intentions were pure and good and he had a lot of passion and ideas to offer. However, his anxiety and inability to communicate his ideas were causing more problems than solving them. I decided to allow him to continue to attend, however I needed to constantly evaluate my approach to his ideas and actions in order to be constructive to myself, him and the company. This is the risk you pose when your team is made up of volunteers.

We took a break from meeting for a couple weeks when I attended the Transworld Halloween Trade Show in St. Louis, Missouri. There I networked with a lot of people in the haunt industry (where creativity naturally flourishes because of the principles of Halloween). This trip gave me some new perspective.
Being among so many amazing people all gathered together with the same passion for haunting heightened my spiritual health. This closely aligns with the Law of Attraction bubble in the Beacon Model. Seeing that I was surrounded by like-minded people I was able to let go of the judgement of self more easily. This is the kind of atmosphere I want to bring home to my company.

After returning home with a fresh outlook, I had to reassess the challenges we had in front of us.

- The IndieGogo project was unsuccessful.
- We still don’t have a location to set up during Halloween.
- Our intellectual property is at risk of infringement

With all these challenges, I made a tough choice to let the one attendee go that was causing more problems than solving them. It’s conversations like those that I don’t care to have as an owner of a company, but I understand they are necessary at times. Trying to “fix” him was taking my energy away from the actual task at hand. Sometimes it’s necessary to remove what’s not working and sometimes what’s not working is a person in your circle. I would first encourage people to develop and grow people that show the most opportunities to do so. It’s also important to measure the output vs the input and make a decision whether or not it’s worth it. Simply put, surround yourself with people that will help you grow and in turn help them grow. The relationship should be mutually constructive.

At the following meeting we used the evaluation matrix tool to gain insight into what path we should be taking from this point forward. Without creativity, everything would have
fallen apart due to all the setbacks. Yet we do have creativity and therefore these setbacks are more like opportunities. After performing the evaluation matrix with the team, we decided to focus our energy on coming up with an amazing experience that we can showcase during Halloween, but more importantly that we can take to the trade show next March in order to protect our intellectual property.

This means we are taking the focus off of the original idea with all the scenes and character development. It’s on the back burner for a later date so all that time was certainly not wasted. Plus we had a good time creating it which is really the point of all of it, to love what you do and do what you love. This switch of focus aligns with my belief to never marrying an idea. Ideas need to be flexible because circumstances are unpredictable and often uncontrollable.

Looking forward, we will be focusing on making a sellable experience for the trade show in March and hopefully we can find a place to set it up to test drive it this fall. My ongoing Master’s project is all about the process of creativity that I try to live in every moment. The Creative Product of the project will be the ever-growing Dark Labyrinth Entertainment company and any of it’s byproducts. Altogether, I’m doing it! I am creativity and I express myself through it and that is how I spread creativity.

Last, I polled the team on what they value at work. The follow page is the results from that poll (Figure 7). It’s no surprise what was most valued.
What do you value in work?

- Creativity/Self-expression: 19%
- Helping Others: 17%
- Travel: 10%
- Variety: 10%
- Work with Numbers: 8%
- Intellectual Stimulation: 8%
- Adventure: 4%
- Influencing others: 4%
- Recognition: 4%
- Physical Work: 4%
- Leadership: 4%
- Work with Hands: 4%
- Prestige: 4%
- Flexible Schedule: 4%
- Research work: 4%

Figure 7
**Things to do**

- Live in the moment
- Have meetings that are desired just as much as the end product. In other words, enjoy the process/journey and don’t let what you do be a means to an end.
- Bring people together that mutually benefit from each other’s company
- Defer judgement
- Be open to new ideas and change
- Be humble and willing to be wrong
- View setbacks as opportunities
- Make mistakes
- Do what you love and love what you do

**Things not to do**

- Marry an idea
- Allow members of your circle to spread negativity
- Launch a crowdsourcing project without a marketing plan
- Be right all the time
References


Suggested Reading


