

TOTAL IMMERSION

The ninja tactic for creating your killer idea

When I started my new career in personal development I marketed myself as a creativity coach. I advertised for free clients initially and coached some of them in my own home.

And I found out something very interesting. When you have your target clients sitting right in front of you in your house and they're talking candidly about their lives you learn a lot very quickly.

One of the things I learned is that it was very hard for me to sell one-to-one creativity coaching. There wasn't a clear enough pain for people to pay me one-to-one rates and I didn't have sufficient status or track record to win the kind of creative clients for whom

creative blocks were a problem worth paying to solve – eg professional artists, musicians or writers.

Fortunately I also learned that a lot of creative people are very frustrated by being in careers that don't provide them with opportunities for creative expression. That was a problem they were willing to pay to get help on.

And I learned that what interested me most was helping people produce something new; I wasn't interested in helping people with job related concerns like interview skills and CV writing (even though these things were standard for most career coaches).

This led me into creating a unique, enjoyable, well-paid career that gives me pretty much no concern for competitors.

Immerse yourself in the world you're interested in and you too can learn rapidly about your target clients, your business and yourself.

Everyone knows that the best way to learn a language is to immerse yourself in it, ideally by living in the native country. That's total immersion.

TURN OVER TO FIND HOW TO
ACHIEVE TOTAL IMMERSION



Here's how to achieve total immersion yourself over the next month:

Immerse yourself in your tribe

Get into direct contact with clients as I did: Meet them in person one-to-one or in groups, run an event, run a course, run an online group. If necessary (eg if you don't have any track record yet) do it for free or token payment.

Immerse yourself in your subject

Read the 5 most exciting, most recent and most well respected books on the topic. Doing this alone will immediately make you better informed than many people who have been working in the field for some time!

Then put what you've learned into practice

Theory is one thing but you've got to use it and live it. Apply what you've learned in your own life, your work or with your clients. Mix it with your own emerging philosophy and values and make it your own.

Immerse yourself in your tribe's issues

Remember the Idea Hunt game from the first momentum webinar? (See Julia's mindmap later in the newsletter or watch the recording in Academy Central if you haven't seen it yet) Notice what people at your event/in your sessions/in your online group are worried about, complaining about, frustrated with – and what they're craving. If you can do something that helps them with it, you have a potential income stream.

Immerse yourself in solving your own problem

Many of us are attracted to building a business that addresses a live issue in our own lives. Just pick an issue that matters to you in your own life and throw yourself into finding a solution. Read everything you can on the subject, get the best books, the latest blog posts or research (if relevant), try out possible solutions, contact experts and ask to interview them for your blog (at minimum else ask if they'd be willing to answer 3 questions from you by email).



If you did nothing else but compile and distil everything you learn from books, clients and talking to people with the same issue, and publish it on your blog, you would create something of real value to others that has a good chance of spreading and generating some income for you. You don't even need to be the subject matter expert yourself. This is true for events too – you can organise an event where others are the expert speakers.

So, if you choose a topic that you're interested in and you're willing to immerse yourself in it, you will be able create something valuable out of it for others.

Be willing to put energy into it, be generous, get into contact with people, help them and learn along the way.

This has an additional advantage and that's that it places your focus on helping others instead of the all too common neurotic head-chatter of, "Can I do this? Am I good enough?" and so on. We've been brainwashed for many decades of school and employment to think like this but it is nonsense. We can all help other people if we put the energy into it. You just have to be willing to dive in and immerse yourself.

FROM MY NEW BOOK: Start With One

All successful blogs, businesses, or events must start somewhere. It might seem overwhelming to build something that makes consistent and significant income before you start but remember that you can usually start with just one thing – your first product, first event, first blog post, first client – without worrying too much about what's going to happen afterwards.

You can have the grandest plans in the world for, say a series of original themed events, but it's difficult to get people excited about a concept. You can however get people excited about a real event you're organizing when they know where it is, and what the theme is, and who is speaking or performing.

This even applies to tech startups who will sometimes start with just one 'killer app' that they think people will get excited about. Apple famously followed this policy by making Apple the best platform to firstly do Desktop Publishing on, then video editing. In the case of Internet startups where the service could be used for all manner of tasks, they sometimes choose to focus what I would call

the 'killer use case' – one possible use of the service that is particularly compelling.

Amazon did this when they started out. Although they now sell everything from PCs to MP3s to saucepans, Amazon started with just one product – books. Books were chosen because of their worldwide popularity, low price point, and because Amazon's unlimited range would be particularly beneficial to book shopping.

Amazon sold their first book on 3rd April 1995 to a Mr John Wainwright; the catchily titled Fluid Concepts And Creative Analogies: Computer Models Of The Fundamental Mechanisms Of Thought by Douglas R. Hofstadter.

Within two months, Amazon's sales were up to \$20,000/week. Now they make that amount every 20 seconds.

But they never forgot customer number one. In fact they named a building after him on the Amazon campus.

So... put all your thinking and energy into creating the first instance of what you're doing and make it happen.

HOW TO PLAY THE IDEA HUNT GAME...



10 MINUTE GUIDE: AUTORESPONDERS

- 1** An autoresponder is an online service for building an email list of people interested in your work, sending them newsletters, and automatically delivering emails at set times.
- 2** Building an email list is one of the most valuable things you can ever do for your fledgling business: the bigger your list the more money you can make. Start now!
- 3** Because of anti-spam laws, it's very hard to move autoresponders so start with a good one.
- 4** The best autoresponder for beginners is aweber costing only \$19 (£12) a month for up to 500 email addresses. It's professional quality and yet is easy to use.
- 5** First signup for an account at <http://introduction.aweber.com>
- 6** Then inside aweber, create a web signup form asking for just 2 things: the person's first name and their email address.
- 7** Log into your wordpress site and install aweber's widget to make it easy to use your signup form. There's a video here: <http://bit.ly/aweberwidget>.
- 8** Congratulations you now have an email list that people can sign up to even while you're asleep! Now log back into aweber and write a 'Follow Up' message to automatically send a friendly welcome message as soon as a new person signs up.
- 9** To send a newsletter to your list (which you might want to do weekly or monthly), use a 'Broadcast Message'. (Aweber's help pages contains good, simple videos for all these topics).
- 10** To encourage more people to sign up to your list, give them a free gift! Eg create a PDF with useful information (perhaps something like this 10 point list), and include a link to it in your welcome email. Then next to the signup box on your website instead of saying "Sign up for my newsletter" you can say, "Get my FREE 10 point guide to [your topic] and other useful tips – just enter your details below"

And if all that sounds too technical for you, hire our tech expert Jason Kruger to set you up. Just email him on jason@jasonkruger.com to find out more.



Academy members around the world

We have a Eurocentric demographic in the Academy plus a handful in the US and Canada, 4 people in and around Sydney and one in Hong Kong.

KEEPING MOMENTUM

Develop a Growth Mindset by Momentum Academy member, Isabel Harward



Isabel Harward

Carol S Dweck, Ph.D, professor at Stanford University, discovered in her research into success that whether we achieve our goals or not depends largely on what kind of mindset we have. She distinguishes between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

With a fixed mindset you believe that success comes through innate talent and you don't believe that skills and ability can be developed through effort and dedication. You are afraid of taking on challenges and trying out new things because there is a risk of failure and when you fail, you fear that you will be judged by others as not being smart. When setbacks block your way you don't have the resilience to learn and carry on. You probably are more likely to say "I can't do this" and stop trying altogether. This is the mindset that would have you say, "I'm just not the creative type and I never will be, I'm not born that way".

The growth mindset is all about wanting to learn. You know that talent can be developed over time with effort, practice and dedication. You accept setbacks as part of the journey and always ask yourself "What can I learn?" and "What can I do differently". As you're ok with failure you're resilient when things don't go the way you wanted and you continue on your learning journey. You're happy to take on challenges and try things you haven't done before. You're happy to be a beginner and not look smart.

To be successful and achieve your goals it is vital that you adopt a growth mindset. Recent brain research has shown that our brain is 'plastic', it can change and new connections can be formed at any time. It's never too late to rewire your brain for creativity. Science has shown that it is possible but you have to believe that you can.

Carol Dweck identified four steps to develop a growth mindset:

- 1 Listen to your inner voice and recognize when you are in a fixed mindset.
- 2 Recognize that you are free to choose your mindset.
- 3 Get into a dialogue with your fixed mindset, reply to it with a growth mindset (e.g. Respond to "I can't do this!" with "Yes, I might not be able to do it yet but I can learn how to do this with patience and dedication.")
- 4 Then listen to your growth mindset voice and take action.

As children we might have been praised only when we produced good results. It has been shown that for a growth mindset to develop it is important to praise effort and dedication irrespective of the outcome. Therefore, make a commitment to reward yourself for your efforts and your continued dedication to develop and nurture your creativity. Say to yourself "I might not be creative yet but I can learn and learning can be fun."

You can test your current mindset on Carol Dweck's website: <http://bit.ly/mindsettest>

John says: Thanks to Isabel for this excellent intro to Carol Dweck's work on mindset. Check out Isabel's blog 'How to nurture your creativity' for other great posts on the subject of creativity: www.isabelharward.blogspot.co.uk



WHAT I'M CURRENTLY READING

This month I have absolutely loved reading “How to fail at almost everything and still win big (Kind of the story of my life)” by Scott Adams, creator of the Dilbert cartoon.

Unusually for me, I read Scott's book straight through without splicing my time with other books. It's a mix of stories from Scott's own life (including how he became a successful cartoonist while still doing his day job and how he found a solution for a mystery illness that stopped him speaking for many months) mixed with his tips for your own success in business and outside of it.

What was particularly pleasing (and reassuring to me) was that his ideas support many of mine from Screw Work Let's Play and my new book.

Firstly Scott says that “Goals are for losers” and that what you really need is a system:

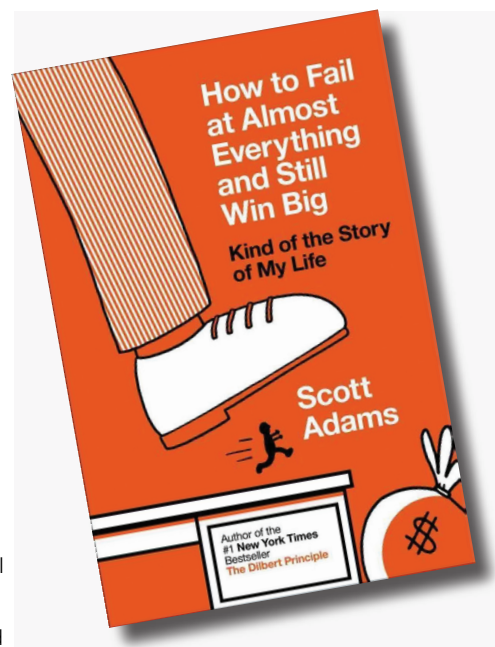
“To put it bluntly, goals are for losers. That's literally true most of the time. For example, if your goal is to lose 10 pounds, you will spend every moment until you reach the goal—if you reach it at all—feeling as if you

were short of your goal. In other words, goal-oriented people exist in a state of nearly continuous failure that they hope will be temporary.

If you achieve your goal, you celebrate and feel terrific, but only until you realize that you just lost the thing that gave you purpose and direction. Your options are to feel empty and useless, perhaps enjoying the spoils of your success until they bore you, or to set new goals and re-enter the cycle of permanent presuccess failure.”

He then explains that what really leads to success is a system. I would call it a process myself. This might include the kind of things we teach on the 30 Day Challenge like working on your project for a set time per day and measuring your success on whether you did your time today rather than whether you achieved some result.

Secondly, Scott illustrates the power of feedback – if you're brave enough to hear it. This made me think of the Play Cycle and how important reflecting and adapting is to creating something really successful:



“The turning point for Dilbert came in 1993 after I started printing my e-mail address in the margins of the strip. It was the first time I could see unfiltered opinions about my work. Until then I'd relied on the opinions of friends and business associates, and that had limited value because that group of folks rarely offered criticism. But wow, the general public doesn't hold back. They were savage about my art skills – no surprise – and that was just the tip of the hateberg. But I noticed a consistent theme that held for both the fans and the haters: They all preferred the comics in which Dilbert was in the office. So I changed the focus of the strip to the workplace, and that turned out to be the spark in the gasoline.”

Dilbert now appears in 2,000 newspapers in 70 countries, making it one of the most successful syndicated comic strips in history.

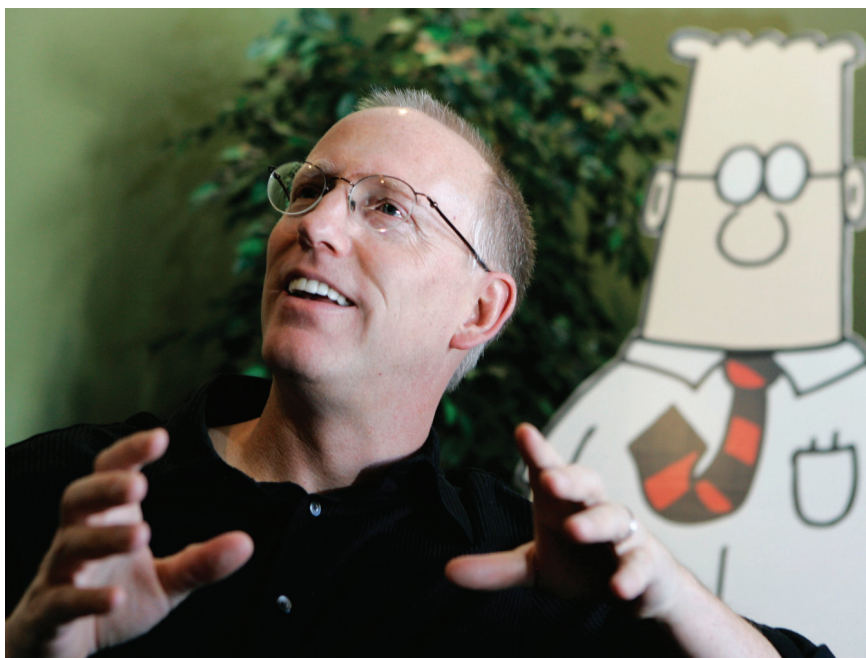
Failure

Early on in the book, Scott also lists all the ventures he has failed at – and there are many – and shows that as long as you are learning, you are still moving towards success; something that focusing on goals can hide.

“I'm delighted to admit that I've failed at more challenges than anyone I know.

As for you, I'd like to think that reading this will set you on the path of your own magnificent screw-ups and cavernous disappointments. You're welcome! And if I forgot to mention it earlier, that's exactly where you want to be: steeped to your eyebrows in failure.

It's a good place to be because failure is where success likes to hide in plain sight. Everything you want out of life is in that huge, bubbling vat of failure. The trick is to get the good stuff out.”



TIM HARFORD

Economist and author of 'Adapt: Why Success Always Starts with Failure' On the power of trial & error (from his TED talk)

People sometimes say to me, "Well Tim, it's kind of obvious. Obviously trial and error is very important. Obviously experimentation is very important..."

So I say, okay, fine. You think it's obvious? I will admit it's obvious when schools start teaching children that there are some problems that don't have a correct answer. Stop giving them lists of questions every single one of which has an answer. And there's an authority figure in the corner behind the teacher's desk who knows all the answers. And if you can't find the answers, you must be lazy or stupid. When schools stop doing that all the time, I will admit that, yes, it's obvious that trial and error is a good thing.

When a politician stands up campaigning for elected office and says, "I want to fix our health system. I want to fix our education system. I have no idea how to do it. I have half a dozen ideas. We're going to test them out. They'll probably all fail. Then we'll test some other ideas out. We'll find some that work. We'll build on those. We'll get rid of the ones that don't." — when a politician campaigns on that platform, and more importantly, when voters like you and me are willing to vote for that kind of politician, then I will admit that it is obvious that trial and error works.



WHAT'S JOHN UP TO OVER THE NEXT MONTH?

After Christmas I am grabbing a short break in Dahab, Egypt to relax, read, and hopefully go snorkeling at the famous 'Blue Hole'



Then at the end of January I will be flying off to Portugal for a weekend mastermind retreat with my own coaches. Anything to limit my exposure to the lengthy British winter!

Season's Greetings



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2014?

Here's what The Screw Work Team are looking forward to in 2014:

Academy genie Frank: "Getting clear on my coaching niche/specialisms, winning more exciting work and saying goodbye to financial reliance on HR consulting work"

Academy genie Julia: "Dancing lots, delving deeper into my creativity and encouraging more people to use art as a form of exploring, expressing and visualising their desires."

Screw Work Organiser and Assistant, Allison: "Achieving a better work/life balance, doing more of the work I love, stop saying yes to the work I don't! Essentially working smarter, not harder..."

Tech expert, Jason Kruger: "To work smarter and spend more time with my wife especially as we have a baby due in April."

John: "Throttling back after an extremely busy, exciting, and successful 2013 to focus on iterative improvements to my programmes. I will also be building the team to help run my business and so create a more relaxed pace and space for travel – including hopefully running my business from Thailand for a few weeks"

What about you?

ACADEMY NEWS

Next Momentum Webinar:
Mon 13 Jan 2014 - 7pm GMT

Next Platinum Academy meeting in London:
Wed 8 Jan 2014 - 7pm GMT

Next Platinum Academy Webinar:
Wed 22 Jan 2014 - 7pm GMT

Christmas:
John is off work from 25 Dec – 6 Jan and Allison is off between Christmas Eve and 3 Jan

