

GRAVITY

The background of the cover is a night landscape. A winding road is illuminated by long-exposure light trails in shades of orange and yellow. In the distance, a lighthouse sits atop a dark hill, with a beam of light shining across the sky. The sky is filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy is visible, creating a sense of vastness and wonder.

**How to Create an
Irresistible Brand
Unlimited Deal Flow
&
Infinite Possibilities**

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www.peter.show

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Dedicated to Susan. You are my everything.

PROLOGUE

I believe in you.

You can do this.

You are only beginning.

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CHAPTER 1

THE NEXT BIG APP IS ALREADY HERE

I've seen the future. How do I know? I spent over 15 years traveling to the future, and I've brought back my learnings. I know what the future of work looks like from a professional and personal standpoint. Many of my readers, like myself, were born in a time when there was no internet, no social media, and no need for an online presence or digital-identity. There was no Twitter, LinkedIn, or Angel List. There was no Medium for personal blogging, no Facebook, no Tumblr, or Wordpress. As digital sojourners and engineers, we not only needed to build the technological platforms that everyone enjoys today, but we also needed to establish the norms, behaviors, and uses for the technology we developed.

You see, we needed to create digital identities because the market decided that those were important. We built and managed our digital resumes and profiles so that we could attract the right eyes, and display the 'correct' version of us that made sense for the tactical and strategic needs we had as a professional, and in many cases, get the job we wanted. There was no work-from-home opportunities nor remote-work jobs. If you didn't show up at 8:30 AM every day to the office, you weren't a good fit for the corporate culture. As the internet advanced, we leveraged digital resumes and hyper-curated our online profiles in a very one-dimensional facade of who we are so that we could attract the right hiring manager, and still have to show up to a brick and mortar office building.

Today, this is no longer the case. We now live in the mobile-first, video-first, remote-work world, and this world is only expanding and growing in endless directions. You can now make money from home and never set foot in an office nor be culturally required to wear a tie or pleated pants or high heels. We have live streamers today who make \$10M/year just talking into a microphone and a

camera, and online influencers with millions of subscribers who never leave the comfort of their parents extra room. There is online consulting, training, and coaching of every single form of service out there. It's all remote, virtual, and on-demand.

Even more shocking, the knowledge workers of tomorrow and the Generation Z+ populace have been born into a world where their first breaths of life are digitally captured on Instagram and Facebook, on loop. Their first steps are immortalized on YouTube and Snapchat, and their first drawings from school are shared on Twitter and Pinterest. The future employees and entrepreneurs *already have a brand*, poorly managed by their parents at first, and then mismanaged on their own as they grow into their tweens and twenties. All they need today is a cellphone as the mechanism for communicating their brand to the world, and they mostly use video to do it.

The next big app is already here and what is so wonderful about it is that you don't need to know how to code, build a startup, or assemble a team.

The next big app is video. You don't even need to build anything, yet. You just need to hit the record button.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUTURE OF WORK IS VIDEO

In the future, tools for the Web 3.0+ world will enable individuals to manage their brand from a platform perspective. As of the writing of this book, I know of several startups that are building systems that will allow for individuals to have one place to manage all of their walled-garden social platforms. While these integration tools are fantastic and much needed, there is a looming trend that cannot be dismissed: *The inevitable rise and dominance of video and management of one's personal brand and community.*

In my travels spanning the future, I saw a world where hiring managers will immediately look towards video, social media, and individual brand pages before they look at a resume. We're already seeing the younger generation's consumer habits going towards not only mobile-first but video-first as well, especially in the digital natives of today: Generation Z. Reports show that this younger generation's most used website is *YouTube*, and they'd instead learn from a video than text. Not only that, but a rising trend is also for Gen Z to search YouTube or a video site for something *before* they use a search engine! In some countries, YouTube and video platforms *are* the search engine of choice, not Google!

I also saw a world where remote-first companies were the norm. Due to this, the barriers to entry into international work are gone and long forgotten. In today's current working world, it is reasonable and unsurprising to find that many American companies hire contract talent from countries in Europe, East Asia, and beyond. In many cases, it is a strategic business practice that I've used many times. I've hired teams from Ukraine, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, and Japan, to name a few. When talent is economically-efficient, and the teams for hire are exceptionally attuned to remote-first work, the results can be nothing short of

amazing. In my vision of the future, I saw a reality where you can work for any company in the world, *from* America. Want to work for a company in Germany? How about Egypt? Or Korea? Pick a country. The future will be video-first, where you can now work for any remote-first company of your dreams. But first, they'll need to find you. Managing your online brand and being amazing on video is the key to global possibilities of work, employment, and play.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEXT BIG APP IS VIDEO

The next big app is already here. The next big project is already here. The next big thing for your career and success is already here. The best part? You don't need to know how to code. The next big app is you, your brand, and building your future. If you're old like me, we can start today and leverage our life-experience to our benefit. For the younger readers, you have decades of advantage and time to craft and custom-build your brand that can open up infinite opportunities.

Considering that many children today have social media pages that will survive them into adulthood, I see recruiters going back to see what type of household the candidate grew up in, what their interests were in elementary, middle, and high school. I also see recruiters using social tools to aggregate the candidate's potential based on their 20+ years history of being online. Just as there will be tools to integrate all social platforms, there will be tools that allow data-miners to make sense of all of that aggregate data.

Interview conversations in the future will look like this:

- *"I see that you were into drawing and soccer throughout your childhood schooling years, and I also see that you have 38 videos of you talking about how much you loved animals throughout your university days. How do you see these personal interests helping you be the best IT Infrastructure Manager at our company?"*
- *"I loved watching your 5-part series on how to build a baking soda volcano in middle school in 2018. From there, I watched your vlogs from 2027-2029 on how you helped lead a \$5M project to success, and your presentation style has much improved (haha)! Your communication style is the right match for our company culture. I do wish you hadn't stopped creating videos, they were great!"*

- *"It's clear that you've spent the last ten years focusing on education and training in Human Resources. You made it so easy for me to understand you from your personal landing page, and I enjoyed reading some of your blog articles about your experiences helping clients improve their HR practices. I can see that many of the videos you created, and articles written there could prove very useful to our current HR department."*
- *"I regret to inform you that we have decided to go with another candidate for this job opportunity. We just could not find enough video or social media proof about who you are or content showing us you're an expert in this field. We suggest that you spend time building up content showing your capabilities. All of the other candidates have deep portfolios of work, mostly video."*
- *"I can tell you very clearly why we'd love to have you join our company. You were the only one with tons of media and content that helped our leadership understand not only what you know, but who you are as a person. You made it clear on your videos what principles and values guide your decisions."*

The new professional market will be defined by those that have leveraged video to their advantage, and those that ignored it or allowed centralized systems to manage their digital and social media identity for them. It might seem sick for me to say that an individual's brand begins the day they were born, but this is because people born today are being put online immediately in multiple mediums by their parents. This new paradigm is worth fully understanding. Thanks to social media and the emerging tools of social aggregation, data-mining, and influence-scores, we now live in a time where managing your digital brand is not only good hygiene, it will be *imperative to be competitive*.

CHAPTER 4

GOALS OF THIS BOOK

This book aims to clearly define how to manage and build an irresistible brand, or what I call a Gravitational Brand. I've worked with hundreds of individuals in helping them grow their personal brand from zero, starting with the required principles and core messaging they want to portray to the world. Do not be deceived. You already have a digital brand. It will become even more necessary in the future to manage it yourself and build it into something that is wholly you.

This book has taken 20+ years to write, and it started when I got my first Sony digital camera with video capabilities. Some of my very first videos were of my brothers and sisters around the house, playing outside, and doing chores like washing the cars. The funny thing is, I knew I was going to write this book about ten years ago. I knew what I was doing with video would be important in the future. I knew it then, and it still works even better today because roughly in the year 2005, I began making 'professional' videos and putting them online.

I'm going to give you my all, my everything. I'm going to do my very best to provide you with all the details of what I've done in multiple startups and projects so that you can pick and choose which parts work best for you. While I may sound prescriptive at times, know that your experience will be fundamentally different from mine. Don't forget, within the context of every decision you make should be the core principles outlined in this book.

It's time for you to be the captain of your brand and rise above the average. It's time for you to create gravity.

CHAPTER 5

A BRIEF STORY OF AGILITY

Agile and Scrum changed my life.

These ideas not only taught me how companies and development teams could build better products and services but also how to personally leverage the principles of Agile and Scrum to make my life awesome in every way. If you haven't heard of Agile, let me give you a straightforward overview:

Agile is a mindset, philosophy, and worldview that asserts that life (or building software) is very complex. The best way to approach complexity is to execute quickly on an idea or experiment, learn from that experience, and continuously improve (be a self-educator). While you may perform experiments at intense speeds sometimes, the goal is a sustainable pace. The Agile Manifesto (agilemanifesto.org) values consistent cadences to your work, appreciating a solid day's worth of effort with a long term horizon in mind (big vision). Collaboration is key. Or as I like to say, don't go the road alone, for too long. Faster alone, farther together.

Scrum is natively a product development framework. Scrum has proven that certain behavioral practices improve software and product quality, increased time to market, and enhances company culture and morale. Scrum has established itself at scale at the international conglomerate-sized organization down to the early-stage startup. Scrum has solved the team-level tactical issues and has optimized companies at-scale. Scrum has improved company cultures and saved companies trillions in ROI globally. It's not just a damn-near perfect framework; it should be the de-facto framework to begin any endeavor, work or life.

I first learned of Scrum (scrumalliance.org) in 2004 and immediately applied it to all of my clients. Previously I was using standard project management techniques, process control mechanisms, and a lot of Microsoft Project. I saw an immediate improvement in all of my client's software projects that I began writing about the power of Scrum in my first blog ever, Agilescout.com (dead now). I continued as a consultant for four more years until I decided I wanted to do more than be a part of my client's successes. I wanted to be the captain of my own life and career. Scrum gave me the courage to start.

I fully applied Agile and Scrum to my personal and business life. I built my first company and it got acquired in 9 years. My second company got to \$100,000 MRR (monthly recurring revenue) in 14 months. My third company had its best monthly revenue only nine months in at \$53,000, received venture funding, and is well on its way to success. All this time, I continued to teach and train select clients as a Certified Scrum Trainer. Why? Because Scrum changed my life for the better and helped me build many great companies and have legendary experiences! I saw the world. I met amazing people. I ate the best food!

Agile and Scrum were gateway drugs to a lifetime of self-education in personal branding, marketing online, and using content as advertising. One of the foundational roots of Agile was born in Japan. It is the idea of *kaizen* or continuous improvement. It must be at the heart of the founder or curious entrepreneur. I call these people the *entreprocurious*. Here is a core principle: *If you're not willing to discipline yourself to self-educate and learn quickly through DO-ing work, all the books in the world won't help you.* It would help if you took personal responsibility and radical ownership over your life. If you want to have an irresistible brand for yourself and the projects or business you embark on, you must be willing to 'go pro' and invest your time and money into your self-education. No one will help you on this. This is your journey alone. No one will pick up the sword for you. You must be assertive and a self-starter. It's you versus resistance every day.

Agile and Scrum were the reasons I began making videos online.

I wanted to experiment with online coaching and training on Agile and Scrum to create a unique brand and grow a community around it. This community is still alive and well at [agilecommunity.online!](https://agilecommunity.online)

It was because of Agile I stumbled upon the power of video.

It was because of Agile that I learned about creating personal gravity.

It was because of Agile that I'm not afraid to pivot my life in different directions and try new things.

Through my self-education, I created many different models within the Gravitational Brand, and I can't wait to share them all with you now!

CHAPTER 6

PERSONAL BRANDING IS THE NEXT BIG THING - YOUR BRAND VISION

Before we can jump into the more tactical specifics of how to create a gravitational pull to yourself, we need to work on you. I think it's safe to say that many of the readers of this book are in roles such as:

1. Social media marketer or brand specialist
2. Community manager or social media manager
3. Founder of a company
4. Owner of a business
5. "Influencer" or online personality
6. Progressive thinker about the remote-work world
7. A remote-worker, contractor, or consultant
8. Someone who wants to be on the front line of the digital future and wants to prepare themselves for a mobile-first, video-first, remote-work world ;)

You may be on this list, or you might not be. It doesn't matter. I've seen the future, and everyone who works will need to care about their online brand. I believe that the period of 2020 to 2030 will be *the* decade of personal branding, and I want to give you a head start.

In the future, paper resumes will be a forgotten practice. In the future, recruiters, hiring managers, and leaders will look towards social and video as mechanisms to decide on whether to hire an employee. Frankly, hiring managers should be doing this now. Whenever you need to scale a team or pick executive leadership, YouTube should be the first place you type in the candidate's name.

It might seem like a novel idea today, but I assure you, my vision of the future is real, and I know I'm right.

The value of you being on video to a potential employer is easy to identify: *understanding personality match, communication style, and finding visual agreeableness*. Watching a video of a candidate allows for a much fuller picture than LinkedIn profiles and bullet lists of accolades. It even gives the hiring manager the ability just to enjoy learning from the candidate. What if you made it an enjoyable experience to watch you?

For you, the value is abundantly clear. You have a chance today, to begin establishing your Gravitational Brand, and learn how to communicate your value out to the world. It's going to take time, years of hard work, and dedication to your craft. You'll be investing in yourself and grow a robust worldwide network of people, all drawn to you because you dare to lead by example.

There are three parts to creating an overall vision for your brand:

1. Where do I want to be? - Mastery over self.
2. What must I do daily? - Discipline over time.
3. What am I communicating? - Relationships over the content.

Simple right? Starting with the innermost circle is the first part of a Gravitational Brand: *Where do I want to BE?*



CHAPTER 7

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

CREATE IT IN YOUR MIND

Asking yourself the question, "*who* do I want to be in the future?" is a useless self-reflection question to posit. There is no future-you, only you at every moment in time. You are yourself all the time. Choosing how you behave is something you *decide* to do every day. There is no future-you. Only you today, living out decisions. The question is, what is influencing you to make those decisions day-in and day-out? What is the motivating factor that gets you out of bed? What is it that can provide you precisely the strength you need to beat daily resistance? What is driving you to stay the course and not give up? I'll tell you what it is. It's not *who you want to be*. It's a vision of ***where you want to be***. When you get to where you want to be, you'll be precisely the person you needed to be to achieve it.

You've already seen people in the places that you want to be, standing on a stage or sitting with a group, out in the wilderness or giving the presentation, meeting people you respect, or being alone. You can picture yourself being there as well. *You can create it in your mind.*

In many cases, there are people who are less intelligent than you, less sophisticated than you, and undoubtedly less talented than you doing what you'd like to do and being where you'd love to be. The only difference between them and you is that they started years ago and didn't give up.

I finished building my dream house in 2014, and it was awesome. I won't lie, there were parts about the build that I didn't enjoy, the fighting with the township over stream buffer variances, the permits required to cut trees down, or finding my nosey neighbors walking through our house during many parts of the build because #curious. Here's the thing: *My wife and I dreamed of building the house years before we made it.* For me, I had created my entire garage layout years before we even broke ground. I knew what I wanted it to look like from a design and functional standpoint. It's what I focused on for years as a powerful outcome of my hard work as a startup founder. I had real tangible goals and a place I wanted to see myself in. It was the vision that kept me going through all the good and bad times. I knew where I wanted to be. I created it in my mind.

Here's the powerful secret: *You can already build your future before it happens, in your mind.* Create the scene and develop the story. See yourself where you want to be, whether it's a hustle, startup, company, or just self-improvement. This vision is what you need to have to build anything significant. You don't need to know *how* you're going to get there. First, you just need to know *where* you are going.

When you get there, you'll be precisely the person you were practicing being, all the while, and you'll be precisely the person you needed to be to achieve it.

CHAPTER 8

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT IS WHAT YOU BECOME

What did you use to daydream about when you were a kid? I used to dream about being a professional soccer player and playing with two of my favorite players and greats of my time, Pelé and Diego Maradona. I never wanted to be them. I just wanted to be where they were. I wanted to be in that moment, right after scoring a goal, with the thousands cheering as I run, arms wide soaking in the adoration. I wanted the experience of playing professional soccer and winning games with the greats. It's what drove me to play soccer my whole youth up to college.

It wasn't a compelling vision of my life, more loosely aspirational. I knew I didn't have what it takes to play professional soccer and my first year playing college soccer proved that. I didn't have the fire like I've seen in fellow teammates during my time at Vogelsinger Soccer Camps and Olympic Development Camps. You just knew it when you saw it. It was pure feeling as you watched these guys on and off the field. Soccer would be their all-consuming passion until it couldn't be. You just knew. *It's all they thought about, all day.*

Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman emperor, said: *"Our life is what our thoughts make it."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great author, said: *"A man is what he thinks about all day long."*

We must master our minds. We must train our minds to focus on *where we want to be*. You already have role models or examples of individuals who have been or are at where you'd like to be — sharing in their experiences. This vision is a long way out, as it will take years to build your Gravitational Brand intentionally.

You are what you think about whenever you think it.

Training your mind to focus and remember where you want to be all day gives you not only the perseverance to grind and put in work, it also allows you to explore further what a person who is where you want to be would do to get there.

When I was building my first company, I had clear visions of where I wanted to be. Speaking at the most significant software conferences traveling the world to see the insides of remarkable companies, and to train and coach founders and leaders on how to build great products.

I woke up every day, and that is all I thought about all day long.

Why? Because I am what I think about all day. This clarity, this focus, drives all of my behaviors, actions, and emotions. If I begin an activity that doesn't align well with my brand in mind, it becomes easy to say no.

I have trained my brain, mastered my mind, and disciplined myself daily, never to forget the vision of where I want to be.

So consider this now, what do you think about most of the day?

CHAPTER 9

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

DREAM BIG THINK BIG BE BIG

Some days, my daughter wakes up and remembers her dreams.

What a fantastic opportunity to engage her mind in imaginative play, what great conversations await us in the gray! If it's a bad dream, I get the chance to help her understand in real-world terms what the potential implications could look like in her life. It is through bad dreams we can consider the right decisions to make.

My favorite thoughts of hers are stories with visions of magical creatures, beautiful sights, and very odd scenarios. It is this magical opportunity where I get to help expand her mind by merely asking questions like: *"Tell me more about this place."* *"What did the character look like?"* *"What did it smell like?"* *"Why did that happen?"* - Her world expands as I see her eyes widen and begin describing the tiny nuances, aesthetics, and specifics of her dream. She can now see new realities, unlocked parts of her brain, and expand her narrative as she actively learns to tell better stories. Oh, and I win big too. I get to have conversations riddled with smiles, laughter, and hugs!

Dream big! The larger the context, the more opportunities to uncover await you. Open the playing field. Think wide. Ask yourself lots of questions. Why? How? Who? How come? What if?

I like to think from a context of five or more years. That's how long it's going to take for you to be where you want to be. But only if

you are dropping daily deposits into being and acting like the person who is where you want to be.

Dreaming big is awesome for your subconscious and internal motivators. It allows you to:

- *Focus* - Learning to follow through and accomplish your goals
- *Find your abilities* - Learning what abilities you have to call upon to overcome challenges
- *Develop new habits* - Learning which habits fail to support your goals and which habits that enable you to succeed
- *Expand your network* - Learning from others who have already achieved what you want
- *Overcome limiting beliefs* - Learning what constraints you've put on yourself and freeing yourself from negative self-talk

When was the last time you had a big dream of your future?

Did you know it's 100% possible to be where you want to be in the future?

You must start today.

CHAPTER 10

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

LEARN TO BE ALONE

Learning to be alone does not equate with being lonely. If you're ever feeling lonely or have feelings of loneliness, I've found three distinct ways of getting over it quickly:

1. **DO.** Put your mind and hands to work. There are always things to do, and there are still more experiments to run and test out. There is still much to learn!
2. **TALK.** Call someone and converse. Ask questions. Text someone to meet up with you face-to-face. Food is easy. Everyone has to eat. Suggest a food meeting and get your mind fed!
3. **GO.** Get out. Take a walk. Get in the car. Crank the music up. Work out—sweat out the bad juju. Get the blood flowing, oh, and blast that music!

Loneliness aside, being alone is the best. It allows you to think, read, meditate, and sit with yourself. These are intentional acts of the mind! Take a lot of notes. Carry a notebook with you. It'll allow you to save those ideas the moment they arrive in your brain. If you don't capture them now, they'll slide back into the ether from whence they came. I can't tell you how many times I've beaten myself up for not writing down an exceptional idea to execute on merely because I was sure I'd remember it when I was done with my task... never to emerge again in my head.

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere they can be quiet, alone with the heavens,

nature, and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be." - Anne Frank

Being alone increases your self-awareness. You have to sit with yourself and deal with yourself. I believe that most people in this world haven't had to face themselves in years. Afraid of what you'll find? Anxious about what you'll see? What would you say to yourself? Would your internal voice be disappointed in how you've let go of your dreams? Would your soul be troubled that you gave up so easily?

"A man can be himself only as long as he is alone, and if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom, for it is only when he is alone that he is really free." - Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer

When you are alone, you learn to empower yourself and allow yourself to make your own decisions. Speak to your heart. Exercise the mind in conversation with your ego. Let your heart decide your destiny and let your mind create the place you want to be.

"What has really happened when you feel alone is that you've abandoned yourself. You have stopped taking care of your own basic needs — you don't value yourself, you don't listen to your own thoughts, and you don't take care of your physical, emotional, or spiritual self. This is what is causing you to feel alone. You have abandoned you." - Gregg Michaelsen

You can find peace while being alone. It allows you to become self-aware. Studies have shown that having better self-awareness allows for better self-esteem, increased empathy, increased happiness, increased stress management, and decreases depression.

When you can sit with yourself and love yourself, you know you are all good at the end of the day. You are free. You are powerful.

What could you do with this type of power?

CHAPTER 11

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

KNOW YOUR HIGHEST VALUES

One definition of *value* is one's judgment on what's important in life. Values influence our behavior and attitude.

Don't know your values? Look at your behavior. Want to know other people's values? Observe them! How they behave, react, and respond, reveal what they value. Indeed, in the business world, this should be something we default to: *observe more, question more, less talking about yourself.*

Values can change over time. They can change based on what you decide to do: occupation, career, marriage, children, or moving to a new location. Your values can also vary based on what happens to you: illness, death, unexpected family changes, accidents, or trauma.

I can tell you distinctly that my values have changed many times throughout my life. Some of the most significant value changes for me were:

- When I completed three graduate degrees in the social sciences, my values and world views fundamentally shifted and changed based on what I was learning about people, cultures, behavior, and the mind.
- When I married my wife, only knowing her for two months, online. Yes, eHarmony for the win!
- When I had my first child, then my second. My priorities and values did a complete 180!

- When my last surviving grandparent died, and I missed her funeral because I chose work instead.
- When I was pushed out of my very own startup that I founded, bootstrapped myself, and helped raise near \$5M in venture funding. Oh, the suffering I endured!
- When my first company was acquired and realizing the compromises I had made, the unnecessary sacrifices taken and missing the earliest years of my children's lives. And learning that money never replaces time!

Aside from variable events that life thrusts upon you on a random Tuesday evening, most breakdowns in life happen because you're not operating by your highest values. Working from low values is destructive. They create a breakdown in the body, mind, soul, and spirit. Often these decisions are emotionally based and can become uncontrollable due to reinforcement of negative behavior. Sometimes it's an addiction (which can come in many forms).

High values are the opposite: they build up. They are life-giving. They are controllable because you can decide to control them by taking responsibility! When you live by your highest values, your life will be one where the decisions you make can give you life, kindness, a grateful heart, love, forgiveness, acceptance, patience, awareness, and self-control. Working from high values also ensures any work you do is bearable, do-able, and achievable.

Know your highest values! Research yourself and know your behaviors. Where do you spend time? What do you focus on? What do you think about? What do you enjoy doing, or not doing? Write it down.

Come back to the present. Live a productive life by operating by your highest values. Do. Not. Compromise.

CHAPTER 12

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

THE (REAL) LAW OF ATTRACTION

I'm blessed to have a couple of mentors in my life. One of them I asked to be my mentor, with the need to be business-specific. My other mentor pursued me for years. I leveraged his wisdom when I needed it, and I sought his guidance when it was favorable to me. He believed that he could change my life. It was when I took him up on his desire to help that he indeed changed my life. I shouldn't have waited over three years for what he had to offer: *a wholly new and better reality for my life.*

I believe in the law of attraction. I know it works, and my mentor showed me how. Most people misinterpret it or don't understand it fully. The lousy definition of the law of attraction is that whatever you focus on, you will attract automatically. First, nothing ever happens *automagically*. Second, the problem is that people use this idea shallowly (operating from lower values): a focus on money, or only wishing for good things to happen to you, or to somehow remove all negativity from life (impossible)!

I agree that the law of attraction is about focus. In the previous chapters, I've talked about what you think about all the time is what you'll become. However, you must wake up and be situationally aware. You must have your eyes open and see the opportunities around you.

Over many years my mentors have shown me the goggles I need to wear to see the opportunities around me. Through conversation and masterful questions, they can expand my mind and allow me to

see. What you seek is already available in the universe, and some individuals have done what you'd like to do and are already where you want to be. Your job is to open your eyes and see life through a new filter, engage with the world differently, and leverage it towards your goals.

The real law of attraction is about seeing the world through new glasses and new filters! Another way of saying this would be: *act as the person in the place you want to be. Be that person now.* Look at the world through their eyes. Ask the questions they would ask. Look in places they would look. Use the tools they would use to gain access, open that door, and win the deal. I've heard this sometimes called the "actor's trick," in that the actor behaves and responds to the world as the character would. It allows them to uncover a deeper understanding of how they can become more of the role they are to play and, even more so, understand the motivations behind the actions.

Let me give you a few examples using a scenario: A person eating at a restaurant. This person has just finished their meal, paid the check, and is picking at the last remnants of food. They look up, their mind wanders and scans the room. What will they be thinking about based on their current context?

- If this individual is a current university student who is severely anxious about finals because of the lack of discipline throughout the semester, he will see the world through this lower (emotional) value system, and his small panic attack begins. He wonders why other students don't seem as nervous as he is...
- If this individual is a mother with a nine-month-old baby at home and is socially obligated (but not *required*) by her company to join a holiday party, she will see the world through her (higher) value system. She'll also wonder why she compromised time with her newborn for this train wreck of a party. She'll wonder why other mother's don't seem as concerned about their kids at home...

- If this individual is a founder of a venture-backed startup who completed her Series A round to the tune of \$12.5M, she will be scanning the room, desperately looking for people to hire because it's past time for her to scale, her team should have been double by now. She'll begin to create assumptions around who may or may not be a great Ruby developer that she needs so dearly...
- If this individual is someone who is looking to take control of their brand, create a gravitational pull to themselves, and live a rewarding and authentic life, they should be trying on your new skin. They would be looking around as one who is already where they want to be. They'll begin to wonder who they should engage who may wish to know about what they're up to...

The law of attraction is an intentional and laser-focused worldview where the world around you is now your library, and you can access every part of this world by merely engaging it.

What are you seeing, engaging, and leveraging in your desire to attract what you want?

CHAPTER 13

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

TRUST YOUR GUT

Never, ever, second-guess yourself. The most valuable natural asset you have is your instinct, your intuition, your gut. Even the most conventional wisdom stands no chance against the innermost feeling you have when you know exactly what you need to do and what you're fighting is merely resistance. Most conventional wisdom is wrong anyway. It is never coming from the same context you are currently in right now. As a multiple-startup founder, I've learned this to be true. Nobody ever really knows what you need to do next except you. All advice about the future of your startup is just bullshit.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the gut as your second brain. It just knows things as it can sense and feel what your mind can not. It is often our gut that tells us precisely the truth of the matter, and we don't want to believe it because the decision is just so damn uncomfortable. So what do we do? We go to our friends, family, or confidants and ask them for validation, or even worse, dance around the questions and feel even more frustrated that we "don't know what to do."

You already know what to do. Your gut has told you.

You don't want to believe it, so you're wrestling with resistance. Stop it and do what you need to do. Pick up the pen, write that email, create that design, write that code, begin studying, finish the presentation, put in the work.

Your gut told you to do it 15 minutes ago anyway. Get to work.

Do the right thing and do it now.

I've gotten better at trusting my gut. The mind forgets details and situations, but my stomach always reminds me that I've been here before. I've seen the ending of this movie. I know how this is going to go down.

A couple of tips on leveraging your gut to save you from suffering:

- *Learn to identify things you can't change* - and not waste time on them.
- *Learn to identify patterns of behavior in yourself* - that can get you into trouble.
- *Learn to identify patterns of behavior in others* - that repel you or attract you. Both can be good and bad. Be wise.
- *Learn to remember the feeling* - you've been here before, haven't you?
- *Learn to recognize the story* - you know how this ends.

I'm a student of people. If you trace my multifaceted career, you'll see that at the heart of all of my work are massive amounts of people. I work for clients, I speak at conferences, I build communities around me, I interview tons of experts on video, and I communicate daily online to thousands through my online community and video platforms. My best gut decisions are rarely around product development, product strategy, or anything technical. My best gut decisions are always people. I love helping people succeed, but what I love the most is finding the right people. My gut has helped me find like-minded people to help me succeed in my epic quests and project ideas. I'm in the business of people, and you are too. If you're reading this book for your personal brand or business, it's time to trust your gut.

You're vibrating on the right level when you do.

CHAPTER 14

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE? - MASTERY OVER SELF

FINAL THOUGHTS

As you can tell, the question, "*Where do I want to be?*" is an opportunity for you to master your mind, which in turn allows you to have mastery over your actions, behaviors, and thinking processes. Remember that when it comes to the future vision of where you could be, it all begins in your mind: what you think about is what you become.

You must dream big and be big, but at times, you must be alone to do clear the mind and refocus your energies. Remember to operate from your highest values, which are revealed to you by what you do, not what you say.

The real law of attraction is one where you act as the person who is currently living in your future. Become that person and see the world through his eyes, engage the world through what motivates him, and find relationships that support your growth.

Remember that nobody will ever understand what you're doing. Trust your gut and be prepared for embracing a world of unknowns. Trust the process, train your mind, and stay positive. You are whatever you think you are.

Now that we've spent some time on masting the mind let's go to what you must *DO!*

CHAPTER 15

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY?

TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The second part of building a Gravitational Brand is answering the question of *what must I do?* This section is the undergirding discipline of your work ethic. It is the daily discipline of putting in a good day's worth of work every single day. It's mental toughness, so you can get your hands to work.

Now is the time. Your startup idea. Your business. Your career. Your future. Before you go and build the next phase of your life, be fully aware that it is yours to command. Variables and unknowns will emerge, but you shall conquer them. You are not a victim of circumstance, but rather, you are untapped raw potential energy.

"Victimhood gives us great moral superiority and entitles us to unquestioning sympathy while exempting us from examining any single one of our actions. A victim is utterly devoid of responsibility or blame. This, of course, leaves us vulnerable as we will carry on engaging in precisely the behavior which provoked an unacceptable response." - Belinda Brown, author of *Private Revolution*

Personal responsibility is owning your ability and personal power to:

1. **Attract** - good or bad people, events, energy
2. **Build** - good or bad relationships, systems, disciplines
3. **Choose** - good or bad relationships, thoughts, react vs. respond

Did you know that there is only one constant in all of your struggles in life? It's you. You are the only one who knows the full story of you. You're also the one who made every single decision. Taking full responsibility for your life is the beginning of creating an irresistible brand. You'll have a brand that has such gravitational pull that people are immediately curious about who you are and what you have to offer. They'll know there's something of value in you, instantly. People naturally gravitate to others who have taken command over their life. You know it when you see it. There is humility *and* confidence in their words, actions, and countenance.

I enjoy tough conversations about personal responsibility. Sometimes, being a friend means you're willing to risk that friendship for giving them what I call the "real real."

I remember having a real real conversation with a friend who slowly grew a victim-attitude, and it was beginning to affect his work and our relationship. He had worked in his family's business since he was 16, and at the time of our conversation, he was now 36. His father and mother both died two years ago. He inherited the company and had to sell it off within a year. For 20 long years, he never took personal responsibility to learn the trade. He was incapable of managing the business because he never took ownership of the opportunities to learn the family business or prepare himself for a future where he would have to! He was very good at blaming others — everything from employees to lawyers, to the stock market and the President. I simply told him it was time to take personal responsibility for his life. I didn't give him any advice on anything else, how could I? The only thing I know is that regardless of the situation, it is always time to take personal responsibility for where you are and act accordingly. He didn't like my advice and chose to cut off our relationship. I sincerely hope he's doing better now.

People who act like victims or have a victim-mentality are those who deny, blame, justify, shame others, and are serial quitters. People who take responsibility:

- *Take action and have an intentional life* - nobody will ever care about your life more than you. Since it's yours to live, do it boldly. You are not oppressed. You are not a victim. Overcome it. Be greater.
- *Are conscientious and aware* - learn to catch yourself in a victimhood mentality or when you're blaming others. Yes, life is unfair, and people make decisions where you lose. Be aware that you are weak, and you need support.
- *Become self-learners* - invest in yourself, read more, remove bullshit, and cut out time-bandits. Be continually learning and correcting oneself and confronting oneself.

When was the last time you self-corrected?

When was the last time you learned something new?

Where do you need to wake up and take personal responsibility for your life?

What do you need to stop doing?

What do you need to start doing?

What do you need to follow-through on?

Stop starting and start finishing.

CHAPTER 16

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY?

ASKING IS ALWAYS FREE

My father had a great quote that I've told my children and will undoubtedly remind them of as they grow older: "*Asking is always free.*" My father drilled that into our heads and for a good reason too. Asking is opening up the possibility of a new reality. I believe my father knew the value of asking - it comes from humility, in that you need help, or you're showing your assertiveness about what you want. Smart people will understand the context behind the question and the potential intentions of why you'd ask.

Asking questions builds respect between you and the other person. It involves the other in a mutually beneficial transaction or a potential relationship if they see value in who you are or what you do. You'll have to provide some value into the relationship, whether it is a product, service, or connection. Asking questions puts the other person first, ensuring that you're willing to hear them before you come in with your half-baked ideas and poorly formed assumptions.

Most human interactions are transactions like the ones you have at your local supermarket. You get your food, and you have a friendly but contextually irrelevant conversation as you pay.

Where interactions can have outsized effects on your future are the ones where you ask for help from someone who is already on the path you're on, or is far ahead of you in the area you'd like to be.

One of the great methods I use in scaling client work is asking great questions. It is a great way to grow my internal network within a company. I know that as an Agile coach and trainer, I could be of even more service within any company. I ask questions like: *"Who else needs to be part of this conversation? Who should I speak to next? Who needs to hear this message? Do you believe I can help with her situation? Is it possible for me to connect with them?"*

Here's a pro-tip to get you in the habit of asking more: On your next trip to Starbucks (or coffee shop), ask for a Grande in a Venti cup. You'll pay for the medium-sized coffee in a large up and fill the rest with more milk — tricks of the trade, my friends!

Asking questions:

- opens up doors
- opens up opportunities
- continues the conversation so you can learn more and make better-informed decisions.

The amount of examples I have where I've asked someone for something and they gave me even more than I ever imagined or introduced me to someone I really need to speak to, are countless.

I could write an entire book on how merely asking questions opened up opportunities I never knew existed.

Create a discipline of asking. You'll always win.

CHAPTER 17

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY?

EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

One of my friends is a car salesman. This particular individual is someone who has always asked me great questions around business, marketing, and personal branding. In one of our conversations, he told me that he wants to attract "bigger fish" in the car game. I get it. He wants to be known as the go-to guy for the bigger exotic cars. The only question I asked him was whether he was the #1 sales guy last year at his dealership. He said no. Then I told him he wasn't in a position to attract bigger fish.

You see, bigger (more influential) fish only want to hang out with other bigger fish. In other words, successful people like to hang out with other successful people. If my friend isn't capable of being the big fish in a small pond, how does he expect to attract clientele who only want to hang out with other successful people? I know this example is shallow but understand my point. My friend wanted to hang with the big dogs and sell exotic cars to people who have money. No shame in that. Here's the catch. He wasn't a big dog. He wasn't even close. He needs to go above and beyond if he wants to hang with peers of a higher social order. To do this, he needs to exceed expectations with the clients he has now.

Exceeding expectations is one of the hardest things to do in your work and life. It requires the very best of you, all of the time. It requires that you die to yourself and live for others. It means that you eat last and you rest last. It creates a lifestyle that requires you to change your behaviors to rise to the values you hold. You'll fall

short and make mistakes, but you'll become known as dependable, honest, trustworthy, and consistent.

As a consultant, this is my secret sauce. *Give it all away.* Give them everything I've got. Why hold it back? What good would it do me to withhold value where it can give it? I do my very best to give my clients everything they've asked for and more. To be on the top of a client's list of people to call when they need any assistance requires me to behave in such a manner that all of their other options are second. I make it a goal to bring more value to the relationship than I receive.

As a founder, this is the standard I want to have in my company. I know for a fact that when everyone is exceeding expectations in the role they have and in the work they do, everyone wins: *Customers win, users win, investors win, your team wins, and most importantly, you win.* A Gravitational Brand is one where part of the entire package is this very idea of exceeding people's expectations. It has to be.

When it comes to your profession, work with excellence:

- It creates inquiry opportunities about your motivations. People will wonder why you're giving so much.
- It facilitates advancement in your career. People are attracted to people who have a hard work ethic.
- People like to reward hard work. People want to help when they know their investment will pay off in you.
- People only want to work with winners. Especially if they know they can win with you.
- Be the best in the small pond first! Before you can believe your ability to take on the world, get excellent in your little world now.

You should always have a positive-can-do attitude. Not only is this a fantastic way to self-program positivity in your life, but it accrues interest as you learn the practice of positivity in all circumstances.

The more you create relationship deposits into yourself (self-programming) and others, the more people enjoy being around you. You can't control much in life, but you can manage your emotions and attitude. Go big in gratitude and generosity and exceed expectations on radical transparency and emotional maturity — model what you expect in others.

"How long can you afford to put off who you really want to be?" - Epictetus, Greek philosopher

CHAPTER 18

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY?

THE SUCCESS MODEL

Your success is directly proportional to the effort you put in.

The idea here is a model, a function. It has inputs and outputs like a mechanical system. It's knowable, but that doesn't make it easy to do.

I see the world through patterns and models, which bring sanity to my life. There are always multiple models running at any given moment. When I finally understood the simple model: *that effort is the lever you pull to increase or decrease chances of success*, I put this idea in frontal-cortex of my mind. Every decision needs to have this model in mind, and it creates a bias towards more action and less sitting around and thinking.

The model is transparent: *your success, rewards, outcome, is directly proportional to the effort you put in*. What is this effort?

- Experiment relentlessly. The more you are willing to be uncomfortable trying new things that could fail, the more successful you'll be.
- Work harder than everyone else, but at a sustainable pace for you. You may need to experiment to figure out what that is.
- Don't give up. When you're in hell, why the hell would you stop? The answer is always 'through.'
- Reprogram yourself every day towards your goal. Distractions are easy. Focus is tough.

- Remind yourself daily of the big goals you have. I write mine on my bathroom mirror and sometimes re-write them on sticky notes randomly at my desk.

Become your very own standard-bearer and your measuring rod for effort. You only get what you put in. The hardest part of the success model is *execution*.

I believe that perseverance is the key factor for investing in a startup. While venture capitalists and private equity investors like to look at all sorts of things that don't really matter in a startup, I've boiled it down to perseverance.

Are they willing to go above and beyond?

Are they willing to grind the hell out of this startup?

Are they willing to pivot and update their product based on market changes, new emergent customer needs, or variables outside their control?

Are they willing to never give up?

What I'm looking for is the function: *the amount of effort and hard work they're willing to endure to force their dreams into reality.*

Don't ever say you don't have the time. You make the time. Most would rather spend 3 hours a day on Netflix, and another 3 hours on Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Your success is directly proportional to your hustle.

What are you waiting for?

CHAPTER 19

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY?

EXECUTE TO LEARN - BEING SELF-EDUCATED IS THE BRAND

Ideas are a dime a dozen. The one who executes is the one who grows and gets paid. I find it so fascinating when people hold ideas, opinions, views, and beliefs so close to the chest. Who are you afraid of? From who are you keeping your thoughts? First off, nobody is going to execute on your idea because nobody else has the self-assertiveness, understanding, conviction, and hardiness to do it. And more so, your idea is probably pretty stupid to them anyway.

Second, if you don't speak your dreams to the divine matrix, you don't yell your ideas to the world and make your reality known, it will never happen. There is power in telling others what you're planning on doing. It'll hold you accountable, yes. But more, it'll require courage for you even to speak your idea to life to someone else.

It is DO or die.

Here are seven ideas on execution so that you can live a life of learning and grow daily:

#1 - You only need to know *where you want to be*. Not *how* you'll get there. The faster you execute, the quicker you'll learn. The quicker you learn, the faster you can make better decisions on how to proceed.

The idea of executing-to-learn is the primary tenant of everything that I teach executives, managers, and teams at fortune companies and startups as a consultant: *Execute quickly*. When it comes to the corporate product and service context, none of your customers know what they need until they see what they don't want! The faster you show progress (or working code), the quicker you get feedback on how to improve and proceed. For a startup, the swifter you execute, the sooner you can verify the correctness of your hypothesis, and course-correct because you have limited burn (whereas most large companies have an almost infinite amount of money to waste on long development cycles)!

You don't even know what you (*really*) need to do until you get your hands dirty and have a better understanding of what the project, hustle, company, client, or new endeavor looks like on the inside. You have to execute to learn.

#2 - The best way to predict the future is to create/build it for yourself over time. Have you created a goal? Do you have a vision for your life? Do you have a deep desire to do something that you've wanted to do for years? Write your goal down. Take intentional steps daily to continue to move towards this goal. Remember, what you think about all day is what you'll become. What you think about all day is also what you'll end up doing with your time.

Brick by brick. Build your future, brick by brick.

#3 - The consequences of a single poor decision mean nothing, and it is utterly insignificant in the light of eternity. I often hear the phrase, "*Be open to failure, give yourself permission to fail.*" I see this as a passive stance on outcomes. I say, expect failure and execute with no hesitation. Failure is the only place where we truly learn anything!

Do you remember a time you succeeded? What did you do? Did you sit down with a single malt in front of your fireplace and

retrospect how awesome you were? Of course not. When you succeed, you just move on. It is only through our failures that we truly become introspective. We don't want that pain again or suffering. We need to learn and adjust. We need to pivot. We need to change from this experience. In many cases, you'll now know what *not* to do!

Making one single mistake will not kill you in the larger scheme of your brand or business. There is also not a single brand that requires any death-defying feats of human prowess. While the mountain climber may endanger their lives while working, their brand only requires thoughtful execution, leveraging all of the content and stories the climber will tell. The only mountain you need to conquer is yourself. Learn to be mentally tough. Tough people last and tough times don't - becoming resilient through failure is more important than managing success!

#4 - Get ruthless about trying something different. Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, so get serious about pushing yourself into new territory and uncomfortable situations. Putting yourself into new conditions and circumstances opens up new pathways in the brain and requires your brain and behavior to work in new ways. Get excited about the process of learning.

For myself, the best way to begin is always having a conversation with someone new in the area that you'd like to learn. You may have noticed from my [YouTube](#) that I interview a lot of people. That's my strategy! I talk to people who are farther ahead in what I want to do! It is also why networking is so important while building your brand! You must overcome your fear of communicating with people on many different levels — the future demands a socially adept individual who can deliver on many different platforms and express themselves through multiple mediums.

Execute through your fear. We are all afraid. Use fear to galvanize your actions. You'll get better at facing your fears and the unknown.

The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Just because you've never heard something or done something before, does not mean that someone *else* hasn't already. You merely lack the evidence in your realm to give you the confidence to do something. Someone has already gone before you and proven it's do-able. Rarely does anyone build or create something wholly new, most products and services are just unbundling or re-bundling of other products or services.

FEAR = *False Expectations Appearing Real* - Not a lousy saying.

#5 - Don't go the road alone. Always have a beginner's mindset and seek out those who have gone before you who can help. Email your friends, your family, and your network. Let them know you're doing something different. I promise you will receive support! For those that never write back or never respond, don't worry about them. You'll never know the real reason, so get over it and move on. Sometimes I like to think they don't respond because they are ashamed that you're doing something with your life, and they haven't done shit with theirs.

I don't have to tell you the value of networking. We'll spend more time on this subject in the chapters to come. Know this, the wider the web you weave, the more surface area to catch what you're looking for.

#6 - Shoot for the moon - If you don't make it, you'll land among the stars.

- Set goals you cannot achieve in this lifetime.
- Your big goals should transcend time.
- Do not set time limits on goals. You cannot control much in this world, nevertheless timing. Leave that to the gods.

The real goal is to have something that reminds you of why you need to beat whatever resistance has emerged today. Your moon-goal should be so heavy and weighty that it spurs you to action, exactly when you need it most.

Don't ever compare yourself to others and what they have achieved. Their goals mean nothing to you, and their Instagram is just a curated highlight reel. They're never as prosperous or happy as it looks.

#7 - I have heard it said that motivation comes in two forms: *inspiration or desperation*. I despise both. I choose *motivation through perspiration*. Be motivated to work. Work is noble, and it is respected. It does not matter the job title or the position. You know a good worker when you see one, and you recognize that.

Let me tell you one of the biggest struggles in my life. It is the fact that the muse never comes when you want it. She never shows up on time when I need her. She never drops in on me and serenades me with tons of motivation, energy, or inspiration. Most days, it is the humble grind of knowing that I am living with purpose, and I am striving for a noble goal long in the future. It is an honor to realize my future as I build it progressively over time. I am also aware that it is only after a long period that actual progress can be seen and understood for what it is.

Hell is a video of your life without risks and passion, on repeat.

What video are you going to play?

CHAPTER 20

WHAT MUST I DO DAILY? - DISCIPLINE OVER TIME

FINAL THOUGHTS

The hardest period of my life was also the most productive period of my life, and it lasted nearly four years. During these years, I was building my consultancy, teaching Agile and Scrum, and I was taking night and weekend classes to complete three graduate degrees. I wasn't married, but I did have a beautiful motorcycle and a fast car. It's incredible to me that I even had time to drive them on the track and the road! How was it even possible that during a time when I was creating a company, taking classes after work, and studying into the early morning that I could accomplish so much?

It's because I was the most disciplined I had ever been in my life. Every minute counted. I took personal responsibility for my time and my life and made my goals my priority over anything else.

I also asked for help—tons of it. From meetings with my mentors to asking my professors for help, I leveraged any open hands that I could to ensure the chances of success increased in my favor.

When I delivered, I made sure that I exceeded expectations from those I owed. I was proud of the work I could do, and I wanted people to see me as more than just someone who could 'do the work,' but someone who understood that my success was a function of the effort I put in. I wanted to impress people with my work ethic.

Life is about DOing, not BEing. Those that DO are those that win. Anyone can be an armchair theorist or philosopher. Everyone has an opinion or idea on what they think you should do or be. None of them will ever understand why you're doing what you're doing, but they will clearly see your discipline and hardiness. You will earn their respect through your diligence, hard work, and productivity.

If anything, they may see that you are an investable asset. Your perseverance reveals that.

Successful people want disciplined people by their side. They know they can trust them to get the job done, do it with excellence, and improve their game over time.

You want to be that person that other people want on their team.

You want to be the person that people need.

Keep going, don't quit. You can do this.

CHAPTER 21

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

EMPATHY > CONTENT

We will be spending a lot of time in the future chapters discussing the type of content you should produce for your Gravitational Brand. While content is king, what differentiates your brand from others is how to affect people with your content.

We are now at the outer ring of your Gravitational Brand. We begin first with *where you want to be* as the center of your universe. It is your target and the gravitational center of everything and everyone you engage with digitally or in the real. The middle ring is the work ethic and discipline of *what you must do* to create enough influence and gravitational pull. The outermost circle is your megaphone to the world. It's how people will come to know you. Sure, there are thousands of people out there that are already communicating what you will be talking about, but they aren't you. They certainly don't have your unique experiences and life stories that make your voice valuable.

How you communicate with your audience will be a reflection of your emotional maturity. What you're communicating is that you value people, first. What you're *really* communicating is love.

Your ability to connect with your audience requires your ability to evoke emotional responses within people from the content you provide. You must be an excellent communicator on multiple platforms, which require a different communication angle and approach. We'll need you well-practiced in the art of

communication and how you say something is far more critical than what you say.

A Gravitational Brand is one that is irresistible because you've been able to communicate what you value most, and what you value most are the relationships you'll build.



CHAPTER 22

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

MASTERY OF EMOTIONS

When I was living in Japan in 1996, the movie *Romeo and Juliet* released in movie theaters, and I witnessed one of the most significant cultural shifts before my very eyes. Every single female student in school became an instant Leonardo DiCaprio fan, swooning over this blond-hair blue-eyed bombshell of a young man. I never knew mass hallucination was a thing until I saw how an entire culture and class of young girls immediately and permanently changed for the worst (for us, young boys). It is just and right that the movie was a tragedy. Every single girl compared all of us young men to Leo. How the hell could we compete with that?

Mercutio, Tybalt, and Romeo. All destined to perish from their passions. It was a movie about emotions, and it was a perfect movie for the times. Consumerism was on the rise, and traditional values were eroding as more MTV-type of shows, and social trends emerged. We now had big booties shaking on the TV. I lived in a time in the past when that wasn't the case, and Michael Jackson was the pinnacle of offensive content for shaking his legs... or was that Elvis?

Emotional decision making was the name of the game. Emotional drama! All of it! In today's world, I need to remind my children that they *never have to act on the way they feel*. They need to learn to manage and master their emotions.

Those individuals who can master their emotions are ones who can leverage emotionality to convey powerful words beyond merely the content of the message itself. They are able to create emotional moments that matter, ready to lean into storytelling with emotion, and give their listeners more than just information, but a full experience that is super sticky.

People who can successfully leverage emotion as a powerful medium that surrounds your words, you stand a far greater chance of connecting with your audience in powerful ways.

How do you become a master over your own emotions so you can leverage emotional storytelling in your content?

1. Recognize your emotions. When we are children, we are unable to recognize our feelings and often react to things emotionally. As an adult, you can hit the "pause button" before you act.
2. Recognize *why* you feel that way. Whenever my kids get into a fight, we do our best to help them understand and recognize why they feel the way they do. It often comes in the form of: "I feel like" something is unfair. I have unmet expectations or unmet emotions. Once we can identify the feelings and why we feel that way, we can re-adjust and change our attitudes and mental state to one that is useful for correction, improvement, and learning.
3. What is a positive response? We always have the option of choosing a positive response in any situation. We can always choose to act in love, kindness, and patience!

You cannot always choose what happens to you, but you can always choose how you want to respond. The more you can manage your emotions in life, the more you'll be able to leverage emotionality in what you say and do.

It is easy to spot an individual who has mastered their emotions. The more time you spend with them, the more you see their

consistency in how they respond, react and engage with others when emotions are high.

Nothing will test your emotional maturity more than engaging with the world on video. People who watch you are able to leave comments on your content. I've often said that if you genuinely want to understand the entire spectrum of humanity, all you need to do is make a YouTube channel and post videos daily. You'll receive comments from people who will tell you that your video changed their life, and they're so thankful for you. The next day, you'll receive a comment from someone that will shock you because of outright vitriol and projected-hate due to something you said.

To create a video on the internet takes a thick skin. Are you ready to show the world who you are? If so, be prepared for the internet trolls and those that will want to bring you down. You must be more powerful and more resilient now more than ever.

Let's begin.

CHAPTER 23

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

GIVING SELF-ESTEEM AWAY

The more self-esteem you give others, the more you have. The more you have, the easier it is to give away. No matter what you say, how you say it should always be on the *positive* side, even when you're spitting harsh truths or being radically transparent with your failings in life. Your color commentary should always bring life to the receiver, and you'll almost always be in 'giving-mode.' That's why they are listening to you rather than some other individual.

I find it amazing how many people I meet that don't value themselves. There are way too many people who have low-self-esteem. How did that start? How did it come to pass that an individual has low self-esteem about who they are? Low self-esteem comes from either:

1. Your parents - They fucked you. Harsh words, lack of emotional and physical support in your formative years, poor parental discipline, and being terrible examples as adults. Forgive them and come back to this book.
2. Some disapproving authority figure - During a critical period in your life, you bore witness to some authority figure who intentionally or unintentionally demoralized you. It's the past, time to live your future for you.
3. Epic failure or disappointment - You survived your childhood with health and balanced self-esteem. However, you got shanked in the kidney later in life, and it wrecked your self-worth and confidence. I get it. I've been here. Life

didn't go the way you planned. Re-write that experience in your mind and make it the reason why you can succeed today.

If you have negativity or self-worth issues, here are five ways to improve your situation:

1. Surround yourself with positive people - Be ruthless about removing negative people.
2. Get to know yourself - Learn to be alone, in solitude. Re-read the previous chapter on being alone.
3. Acknowledge your strengths/weaknesses - You'll always be a beginner at something. Have a beginner-mindset always.
4. Don't compare yourself to others - The images you see of 'successful people' have no bearing on your goals in life. Most of the internet isn't 'real.'
5. An attitude of gratitude - Be a person who gives yourself positive reinforcement and program yourself to choose positivity over any other emotion.

Three simple ways to boost self-esteem and give others self-confidence whenever they engage with you or consume your content:

1. Smile - Begin every conversation with it and remember to smile throughout the discussion.
2. Practice giving to others - Practice positive actions—practice appreciation. Open door, give compliments. Do you have a significant other? Learn to serve them when serving them is the hardest, mostly because of familiarity over time.
3. Focus on your strengths - You are at your best in your innate strengths. Leverage the positive strengths you naturally have and forget about your weaknesses. They're not worth improving, ever.

It's a lifelong discipline to give self-esteem to others whenever you engage with them. It's something you'll need to practice, keep top-

of-mind, and something that will pay you more significant dividends in the long run. Some of the best compliments I've ever received from people are the ones that describe that because they hung out with me, they received positive reinforcement, encouragement to go and execute on their dreams or project, or feel like they have a cheerleader on their side.

People will never remember what you say. They'll only remember how you made them feel.

Practicing positive communication takes time and intentional effort to improve. I remember one person I was coaching on communication, and his biggest hurdle was learning to smile while communicating. After a while, as he practiced and caught himself going back to his resting-bitch-face, he found that his pace of communication picked up. His energy improved, and the smoothness of his narrative became more natural and inspiring.

He was finally having fun while communicating. It only took him about 4 months of constant practice.

I know for a fact that if he can do it, anyone can. He was a complete curmudgeon in the beginning. Later, he quit his job and now he's teaching and training others in his field of expertise and having the time of his life doing it.

Can learning how to communicate with love and passion change your life? Absolutely.

Let's get you there.

CHAPTER 24

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

DISPENSING COURAGE

One day, I was in a mechanic shop reviewing some of the improvements to one of my race cars. Later, one of my friends came in with his colleague, who had recently purchased a new race car sight unseen. I'm sure the purchase price was excellent! I'm also sure that both of them were very hopeful that there was going to be some positive news from the mechanic that the track car was in good condition and only needed a bit of TLC. What he received was bad news after bad news about his new purchase. I watched him, and I was able to catch the subtle flinches every time he heard something terrible. It wasn't a dramatic flinch, oh so very slight. But it made me think, what can kill a man slowly over time and create twitches to be full-blown neurosis?

I have born witness of many men, who I believe have died a death of a 1000 cuts, or 1000s small deaths of discouragement over time. The most considerable evidence of this is in the corporate world, where men of courage, men of action, and men of pride have turned into spineless passive-aggressive-order-takers who no longer have the autonomy or self-mastery to be themselves. One too many slaps on the wrist and emails and conversations riddled with, "*No, you can't,*" "*It won't work,*" "*You're not allowed to,*" and "*Don't worry about that*" can suck the courage out of anyone. Maybe that's the point of the corporate experience. Maybe that's what school prepared us to be...

This is the conventional experience of any corporate employee who is working in a role that is not leveraging their passions, skills,

internal-incentives, and motivations. Essentially, working in a position that is not leveraging the *whole* of them. How long are you going to wait to be who you want to be? How long will you wait until you do what you want to do? Are you going to do it in your next life?

We all need courage from time to time! When we go to the movies, we want to see a protagonist who is just like us, struggling with the world and the decisions that pit themselves against what is easy and what is hard. Doing the right thing requires bravery. We crave courage because our world today doesn't have enough of it. Today, we live in a world utterly devoid of courage. We've gone soft.

When you are communicating with others, remember that you always have the opportunity to dispense courage to a world that dearly needs it:

- Don't underestimate your ability to distribute courage.
- Your kind words and warm smile are encouraging.
- Your generosity and listening ear are encouraging.
- Your investment of time and knowledge you dispense is encouraging.
- Your encouragement builds up others, and it builds you up too!

The world's media tears us down. I don't need to tell you that the majority of news is all negative. Turn the TV off. Cut the cable. The goal of that world is the demoralization of humanity, love, kindness, family, hope, faith, and spirituality.

Courage is food for the soul. It's satisfying but exhausts quickly! Encourage others! One of the many reasons I'm writing this book is so that I can encourage you to get more encouragement back! I'm selfish like that!

Who can you encourage or give courage to, today?

CHAPTER 25

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING?

SEEKING TO UNIFY

Humility unites, pride divides. Families, friends, communities, companies, and nations all lose when there is division amongst people. Battles between people build walls and ruin the opportunity for peace to prevail. To divide people is one of the most insidious tactics of the world, of the devil, because it leads people to worry and fear. Consider once again the undertones of mainstream media! When there is a side to support, there is an enemy to fight.

When people see each other as the enemy, the real enemy has won. You've become deceived. Thinking that we cannot work together, that we must fight it out, and that there must be a winner and a loser. To see the world divided is an irrational and irresponsible worldview to have because it leads to more separation, creates an obsession to win, and unnecessary human suffering is the outcome.

Dividing people through rhetoric is the consequence of pride. I don't mind having a strong opinion on a subject. It often means that the individual is deeply invested in that topic or has a personal passion for it. I do not see this as a problem until it leads to unreasonable demands, irrational thinking, and absurdity. If movies had reasonable people, then there wouldn't be much of a plot, nor would there be any drama. Drama and action are driven by polarizing personalities who often do not listen to advice, rationale, or wisdom. These characters create winners and losers and lasting regrets.

Who are the real enemies of communities of people? - Pride, fear, and selfishness.

- Forgive first, listen and discuss second.
- Unity requires that we assume the best of one another. I use this with all of the leaders and teams that I work with as a startup consultant. If we're not going to assume the best in people, we may as well quit.
- Past failures fade away in the light of humility and forgiveness.
- Unity makes room for healing to take place.
- Don't go to bed mad.

It is understandable to have an opinion or even scientific data to support your position. However, your goal is to bring people together in all of your words. You can undoubtedly grow an audience of one-type of individual and be a polarizing figure, but how much more influential would you be if you could unify people instead?

To build a community that you can indeed be proud of, you'll need to be a gravitational center of unity, bringing people together and encouraging them to follow you, learn from you, and grow with you.

How you communicate unity is critical to expanding your Gravitational Brand.

After all, one of the best ways to win is to have as many view points as possible injected into your decision-making.

Being able to bring them all together for your purposes is how you succeed.

CHAPTER 26

WHAT AM I COMMUNICATING? - RELATIONSHIPS OVER CONTENT

FINAL THOUGHTS

What you communicate online and on video is much deeper than the content itself. It's revealing to the world part of your life, your innermost feelings and thoughts, and how you interpret the world around you. While having unique content is excellent, what your community and subscribers will care most about is that you are someone they can empathize with, connect with, and engage with on a human level.

They'll want to know you're a person who has mastered your emotions and is relatively consistent in how you behave and act on video. They'll tune in to your show, podcast, or video channel because you give them the courage, self-esteem, and the hope they need to be something nobler than who they are today. They'll rally around you because you are someone who brings people together instead of dividing people. They will see that you are someone who is led by your values and principles, and most importantly, is a clear example and role model of someone who shows up to work every day.

People are naturally attracted to others when they can see themselves in you, warts and all, but yet still persevere. In many cases, you'll have more than just followers or subscribers. You'll have raving fans that want to see you win.

What could you do if you had thousands of supporters who want to see you succeed?

What would be possible?

What is achievable?

What infinite possibilities could emerge from being able to get thousands of inputs into your system?

Selling is all about relationships. The trick is to never have to sell anything, but merely communicate love of people.

People buy from those that show they care. The internet is a game of relationships and content.

You can do both.

CHAPTER 27

THE GRAVITATIONAL BRAND

PRELUDE

When I wrote my first book on Agile, I did not have any of my peers or respected individuals review it before I got the book published, and it shows. Yes, my publisher put my book through the gauntlet of reviews, edits, and changes. But there was something I learned that I needed this time around. I needed a peer review first, and I wanted to do it differently this time.

It wasn't hard. I just sent a PDF version of my draft and asked for the real deal, the good and the bad. Aside from some specific questions on supplying better context, what fascinated me most was the fact that much of the top-level feedback I received fell into three questions:

1. *"You spent a lot of time at the beginning of the book on the subjects of mastering the mind, daily disciplines, and messaging. Is it all necessary?"* - The answer is yes. A Gravitational Brand is built over many years of disciplined and intentional work. The future is coming, and you'll want to be prepared. Your brand will change as you change, and you will be able to see it all on video. *How* you think is far more important than what you actually do.
2. *"There is a lot of information to take in."* - Yes, I know. I told you I was going to give you everything I have from my experiences over 20 years of building brands. You can mix and match ideas from each chapter, take it at your own pace, and break it down into small chunks. Look at this book as more of a resource and framework than a linear

storyline. Make sure to bookmark chapters you need to focus on or review for later. Leave it by your desk or keep it digitally on hand for quick reference. Remember, this is a long, worthwhile journey where your most significant investment is in yourself. I'm glad you've started!

3. "*I'm convinced, how do I start?*" - I remind them to go back to Part 5 and begin communicating on video, who they are, and go from there. The shortest answer is that you just have to start now. What they were *really* asking for was if I can help them. The answer is yes! Do the things in this book. Feel free to email me, let me know how you're doing!

Thanks to all who took the time to give me feedback, some of which were multiple pages long! I love you all, and I'm glad you're part of my life story.

Let's get tactical!

CHAPTER 28

THE GRAVITATIONAL BRAND

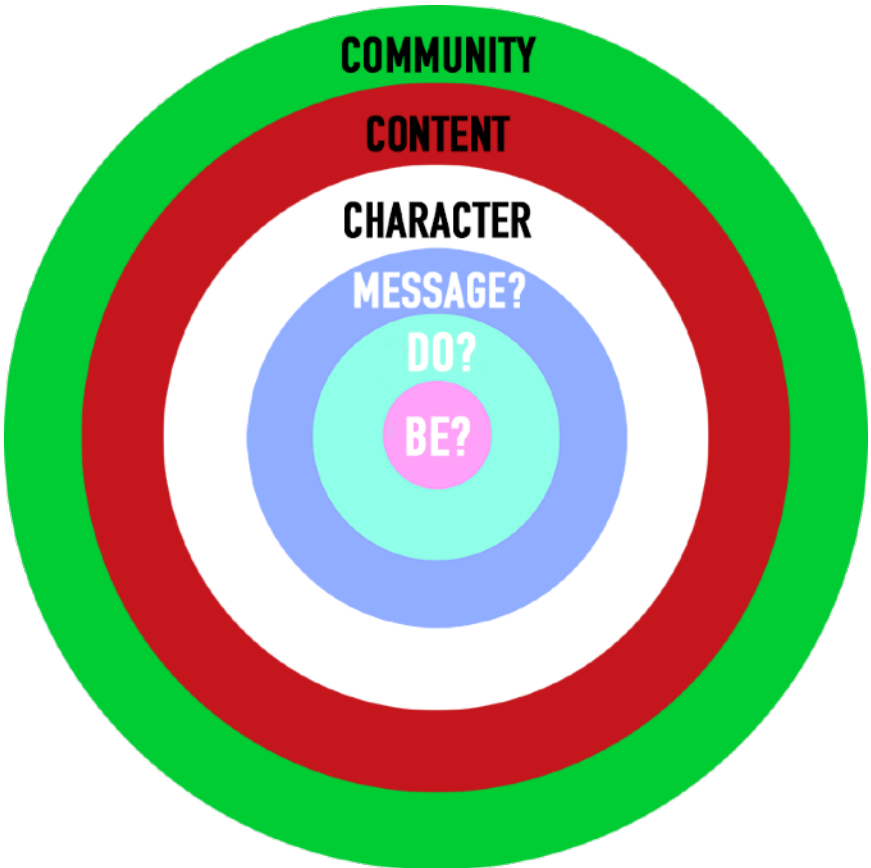
LEARN TO COMMUNICATE ON VIDEO

People will sometimes tell me that I'm an excellent communicator and interviewer. Little do they know, this wasn't a natural gift. I spent many years practicing and putting myself in positions where I had to speak in public. Whether it was reading the Old or New Testament readings during Sunday worship at my parent's church as a middle schooler, or engaging in debates in high school, I began practicing the art of communication early in my life. As a professional, I spent thousands of dollars on Dale Carnegie Public speaking courses and had my fair share of Toastmasters meetings. I invested in speaking and communication, and it has paid off in many ways as an international speaker on software development, consultant to companies, and internet marketing and branding. Of recent, I've been spending more time learning the art of the dialectic, or the ability to set a premise or thesis and use language to defend the idea after it's been posited to an audience. This type of master-level communication style is that of the great apologists of the day and debaters in the public square. It's a linguistic style all it's own, and it's amusing to practice with my behind-the-scenes community online.

Establishing a Gravitational Brand requires that you invest significant time and energy into learning to communicate who you are on various mediums and platforms, specifically video. It requires that you watch and listen to yourself, however distasteful it is in the beginning so that you can become better at presenting yourself, your value proposition, and your personality. People will only buy from people they know, like, and trust. You'll need to be

able to help people learn about you, like you, and trust you for your Gravitational Brand to be effective. In the future, it'll all be video.

At the beginning of this book, we focused on the meta-game of your Gravitational Brand. The BE, DO, and SAY. From here on out, we'll be focusing on the next concentric circles: Learning to communicate your CHARACTER (who you are and what you represent), CONTENT (how to deliver content from your heart), and COMMUNITY (how you'll make money providing value) to the world.



CHAPTER 29

COMMUNICATING YOUR CHARACTER

WHO ARE YOU?

I'm a big believer in understanding the "whole" of a problem. When I work with my clients, I leverage my understanding of Systems Thinking to help them see the broader context of their issues. In Systems Thinking, it's essential to know the constraints and dependencies that are connected with their problem and understand what category of problem they have! Is it a simple problem, complicated, complex, or chaos? Likewise, for your Gravitational Brand, it's vital to know where you want to be in life. Secondly, it's imperative to understand what will be required of you to achieve what you want and appreciate the work ethic and discipline necessary to obtain it. Finally, you must realize that while the type of content you produce is important, *how* you communicate your message will differentiate you from all of the rest. Establishing the first three inner circles of your Gravitational Brand is the "whole." It creates the foundation and context for communicating who you are, the content you'll create, and the community you'll grow.

Now that we've had time to think about where we want to be, what we must be willing to do, and how we should communicate, it is time to take stock of who you are. Who you are (currently) is a matter of writing down your skills and credentials, your passions and interests, and your core values and beliefs. Your digital persona will be the 'character' you portray to the rest of the digital world. Just as we create user personas for software development work to better understand the traits and behaviors of our users, so

too will you need to clearly define the attributes worth focusing on and communicating to your audience.

Mapping out your skills and credentials are a great start to identifying those things that you've grown and improved on in your life and career. Writing these ideas down allows you to have a fuller picture of what you have to offer the world and to remember to leverage them in what you do. Questions to ask include:

- What skills have I focused on that I frequently leverage in my work?
- What credentials or certifications have I achieved that have grown me personally or professionally?
- What skill have people complimented me on or have noticed in me?
- Which credentials am I proud of achieving?
- What about my skills or credentials are worth sharing or talking about to other people?

While your skills and credentials are vital for the business world, your passions and interests may be different from what your job is or what employment activity you're engaged in currently. Write down your passions and interests. You may be surprised at how misaligned they are to your current work. You may also be amazed at how you may be able to leverage your passions more in the ongoing occupation you have.

Questions to ask include:

- What subject or interest naturally attracts you?
- What is an activity you enjoy doing where time melts away?
- What ideas pique your curiosity from time to time?
- What do you wish you could do if money weren't an issue?
- What type of work have people complimented you on in the past?
- What type of activity do you wish you could explore further?

There is a very powerful saying: *"If you want to know what people value, observe what they do and say."* I completely agree with this statement as I have seen numerous times the difference between corporate values and what the leadership actually does at work. There is a common joke that all of the inspirational posters hung at your office are merely wishful thinking. I believe that in many cases, it is wishful thinking, as the aspirations and intentions of corporate leadership are real, and your leadership likes those posters, even if the pragmatic reality is that your company culture doesn't actually live it! The more accurate and realistic understanding of what your leadership values as a culture is how management behaves at work. Some of the best moments of profoundly understanding a person's values are during times of duress and stress. That is when self-preservation and self-interest take over and reveal the belief structure behind their decisions and actions. Please do not skip the independent exercise below. Every time I sit down with an individual or client and go through these questions, it amazes me how little time people have put into really understanding the core of who they are. Often, through questioning from myself, we can find apparent misalignment between what they say they value and what they do.

Questions to ask yourself include:

- What do I say I value?
- What do I say I believe?
- What is important to me?
- How do I want to be remembered?
- How often does what I value make me pause before I make a decision?
- How have I made decisions in the past?
- When have I decided to operate in conflict with what I say I value?
- When it comes to engaging with other people, what role in that engagement am I most comfortable?
- What drives me to action or motivates me to act?
- When do I feel the most alive, most satisfied, or happy

- What factors contribute to feeling good about the work you do?
- When have you felt that you were at your peak performance?
- What do I believe about the world?
- What do I believe about myself?
- What are the qualities of your heroes or role models of the past or present?
- What have others said are your strengths and virtues?

Now that you've successfully written down all of these ideas, it's time to reaffirm them. Prioritize all of them and pick a top skill, passion, or value that you hold dearest.

Identifying and understanding your values can be a challenging but essential exercise. While your values are a central part of who you are, how you act out those values will eventually become who you will be. Personal values are not intentions. By becoming more aware of what you believe versus what you do can allow you to be more intentional in aligning your behavior closer to what you say you believe. The most significant life decisions will always reveal and determine who you really are, and the more aligned you are to your values, you can use them as a guiding force to ensure you're making decisions that will propel you forward to where you want to be.

I'll give you an example from my own life. Whenever I had the wind knocked out of me in my business, my default reaction is to get immediately back to work. This natural inclination reveals what I truly value: *work is the cure for pain*. Whether it was a job loss, a contract dropped, or getting fired from the startup I founded, getting back to work was always the salve. For me, it soothed the beast of anxiety, stress, and pain. I'm not saying that this is a good response, but it is how I respond. I'm fortunate that much of my work is content generation and hosting workshops online, so there is a good chance that if I incur a hiccup in my business, I just go back to creating content!

Some of my most significant changes in life were when I found out I was lying to myself about my values. These realizations only come in retrospect, which is why retrospecting life is a great habit!

The scenario generally follows the same pattern:

- Something happened.
- How did I respond to the tough situation or moment?
- How should I have responded if I were truly living according to what I say I value?
- Did I genuinely act following my beliefs, or did I merely react based on my carnal nature and animal brain?

These moments have severely shaped my personality as they have taught me to be more faithful to myself, allowing me to be unashamed about the authenticity of who I am and why I do what I do.

Do not sleep on this exercise, and I expect your values will change as mine has throughout life. We must establish some baseline for how we'll begin to craft your Gravitational Brand. Start writing your lists!

Going bigger? - Answer all of these on video in one take. Talk to the camera and do your best. Hit record, keep going till you're through all the questions, stop recording.

Grab some popcorn and review! You'll learn something, I promise.

Go deeper! - Share your video with someone. You'll definitely learn something.

CHAPTER 30

COMMUNICATING YOUR CHARACTER

TELL ME YOUR STORY

Every main character has a background story, a narrative that gives context to the reasons why he acts the way he does, and the reasons he is pursuing some goal. We need to craft your story into something concise, accurate, and emotive.

Have you ever been to a party, gathering, or social event where the most common question asked of you is, "*What do you do?*" - I hate this question as it has the highest chance of leading the conversation to a dead end. If the person isn't interested in what you do, has no experience in that field, or is merely lacking knowledge or context about what you do, then the response is often, "*Ok, cool. I don't know much about XYZ, but it sounds interesting.*" - No, that person is lying to you. What you "do" isn't interesting at all.

The better question to ask is, "*Tell me your story.*" - These types of conversations are the ones that engage the mind and require audience participation. A good story requires characters (people), a setting, the plot, some conflict, and invariably a resolution. To become known, you must become a master storyteller, and you must tell your story over and over.

What is the story that you want to create, and the narrative that you would be excited to tell others? Whenever I ask people at a social gathering to share their stories, I am never surprised when they have a hard time articulating their narrative. They have simply

never been asked or tasked with the challenge of communicating who they are through stories and why I should *really* care.

What is your story? How do you want to be known? You'll need to write down ideas so you can piece it together. Don't worry about making it perfect. Your narrative will change and evolve as you grow and change, and aesthetics of what you want to communicate changes. I can tell you that I'm always crafting and revising my narrative based on how my vision for my future emerges and becomes more evident.

When it comes to crafting your brand's story, ask yourself the following questions, and write your ideas down:

- What is the vision for your current life? - A brand vision can simply be the place you want to be.
- What is the current mission you're involved in now? - A brand mission is what you're doing now to continue on the path towards your vision.
- What is the core message of who you are and what you're interested in doing or becoming? - A brand message is how you involve others in what you're doing by inspiring them and motivating them to be involved in your story, interest them in what you're doing, or persuading them to want to buy your product or service.
- What is the brand personality? - A brand personality is how you express yourself and how you behave. Brand personality is something that all of your listeners, supporters, followers, clients, or customers can relate to and connect with. What types of feelings do I want my listener to have when I tell them my story?
- Go bigger by recording all of this on video and then sharing it with someone!

In the previous chapter, we focused on the descriptors of who you are. Now, we must be able to know our audience, choose the voice and emotions you'd like to elicit from whomever you're talking to, with a clear and concise narrative of you and your Gravitational

Brand.

Do not be deceived here, for you to articulate who you are and what your story is with emotion and attractiveness to your audience. You'll need lots of time in the seat. Practice as much as you can on video or in person. Find opportunities to share your story with strangers in contexts that are unfamiliar to you. Invite questioning as it allows you to fill out gaps in your narrative. The better the storyteller you become, the more irresistible you become.

I enjoy finding opportunities to craft my narrative in public areas that require me to stand in line, like the DMV. There is an immediate connection with anyone there: *We all hate the DMV*. This shared context can allow you to more easily initiate and engage with someone who has just as much time to sit around as you do. Oh, and the best part? If you didn't do a great job communicating yourself, you could use this opportunity to tell them why you're practicing. If you're memorable, they might just go and look you up later. Either way, you've made significant progress in your ability to converse!

One example in my life is when I decided to introduce myself to one new person every time I went to the gym. This simple discipline not only allowed me to practice my story, but it enabled me to meet great people, some of whom I've ended up doing business with! You have nothing to lose when practicing with strangers, zero, zilch!

Here are some great adjectives and descriptors you can use to help craft your story:

- Accountability
- Accuracy
- Achievement
- Adventurousness
- Altruism
- Ambition

- Assertiveness
- Balance
- Being the best
- Belonging
- Boldness
- Calmness
- Carefulness
- Challenge
- Cheerfulness
- Clear-mindedness
- Commitment
- Community
- Compassion
- Competitiveness
- Consistency
- Contentment
- Continuous Improvement
- Contribution
- Control
- Cooperation
- Correctness
- Courtesy
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Decisiveness
- Democratic-ness
- Dependability
- Determination
- Devoutness
- Diligence
- Discipline
- Discretion
- Diversity
- Dynamism
- Economy
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Elegance

- Empathy
- Enjoyment
- Enthusiasm
- Equality
- Excellence
- Excitement
- Expertise
- Exploration
- Expressiveness
- Fairness
- Faith
- Family-focused
- Fidelity
- Fitness
- Fluency
- Focus
- Freedom
- Fun
- Generosity
- Goodness
- Grace
- Growth
- Happiness
- Hard Work
- Health
- Helping Society
- Holiness
- Honesty
- Honor
- Humility
- Independence
- Ingenuity
- Inner Harmony
- Inquisitiveness
- Insightfulness
- Intelligence
- Intellectual Status
- Intuition

- Joy
- Justice
- Leadership
- Legacy
- Love
- Loyalty
- Making a difference
- Mastery
- Merit
- Obedience
- Openness
- Order
- Originality
- Patriotism
- Perfection
- Piety
- Positivity
- Practicality
- Preparedness
- Professionalism
- Prudence
- Quality-orientation
- Reliability
- Resourcefulness
- Restraint
- Results-oriented
- Rigor
- Security
- Self-actualization
- Self-control
- Selflessness
- Self-reliance
- Sensitivity
- Serenity
- Service
- Shrewdness
- Simplicity
- Soundness

- Speed
- Spontaneity
- Stability
- Strategic
- Strength
- Structure
- Success
- Support
- Teamwork
- Temperance
- Thankfulness
- Thoroughness
- Thoughtfulness
- Timeliness
- Tolerance
- Traditionalism
- Trustworthiness
- Truth-seeking
- Understanding
- Uniqueness
- Unity
- Usefulness
- Vision
- Vitality

Becoming a good storyteller will take time. It's great that we can leverage video that allows us to learn quickly and review ourselves. We also have infinite opportunities to practice our story and narrative with strangers in public places. It will seem awkward at first, but imagine if you merely learned how to quickly grab the attention of any stranger in a non-threatening and entertaining way.

What could you do with that type of superpower?

What if you practice talking with strangers so much you figured out how to read them and befriend them quickly?

What would that type of influence garner you?

For you to be able to fully communicate the content of your character to a video audience, you need seat time and practice in conversation and storytelling. Take every chance you get to practice using your words and telling your story!

An audience awaits. They just haven't heard of you yet.

CHAPTER 31

COMMUNICATING YOUR CHARACTER

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

The protagonist in any movie must have an audience that empathizes with them. If you cannot connect with the main character, their story means nothing to you, and what happens to them is of little consequence. To ensure that the audience is engaged, the setting of the story must be crafted meticulously by the scriptwriter and director, and they know who the audience is. The actors can then leverage all opportunities within this setting and context to bring the audience into the story.

When you take an inventory of yourself and are better able to describe who you are and the journey you're on, you'll want to figure out who your audience is. What makes this so easy is that your audience will be much like you, at least in one or two aspects. It's a good thing you have notes on yourself and your story already!

It doesn't matter if you're a basketball superstar or country singer, both need personal brands and have a particular audience that they cater to and engage. These are also not good examples to use as they are relatively extreme cases. Regardless, you will attract like-minded individuals who are either attracted to your personality or are interested in what you do. Did you know that every single hobby, product, idea, interest, passion, or service has a fan base? Search for anything (you may want to turn on private mode), and you'll find websites, forums, videos, and entire communities dedicated to that one singular idea. Often, there are multiple moderators or loosely-banded individuals that function as leaders

within that ecosystem. In the decentralized world of the internet, anyone can become a leader. You just have to go out and try or be the first to start the community.

A common theme in many movies targeting teenagers and the youth have a familiar trope:

- A high school setting
- Stereotypical clubs and sub-cultures in the lunchroom
- Enter new kid
- He shakes things up
- Drama, misunderstanding
- He has to prove he is worthy, becomes a leader, and wins the day.

I'm sure you could conjure up some of your favorite high school movies. The formula is clear because it works, and it can work in your life too. For you to create gravity, you must enter into the world where you want to be. You'll be the newcomer, and you'll have to prove your worth to the market, community, or culture you're entering. You may go through all of the phases of acceptance: *first they ignore you, then criticize you, then 'tolerate' you, then accept you, and finally, they will respect you and trust you.* I've experienced these stages many times throughout my startups and companies. I even have digital proof of people who criticized me online and now, years later, partner with me in my work! Amazing!

Solving the needs of your people isn't an easy task. If you're making a movie, the requirements are relatively simple: believable characters, a clear plot, a defined theme and context, and a universal struggle worth supporting. These are all things that are necessary to consider when reaching your audience and future customers, users, or subscribers.

To solve for the needs of your audience, we need to consider who they are and what their context is currently. To do this, you can ask three simple questions:

- What are the demographics of my audience? - What are the characteristics of who they are?
- What are the desires and aspirations of my audience? Do they want to learn, earn, or be entertained?
- What are some of the pain points or challenges they have? - How can you be the answer to what they are seeking?

You will want to attract an audience that fits your personality and communication style. Don't worry. Everyone has an audience, and you just need to go out there and make yourself known so people can find you!

Go deeper by recording yourself on video, answering these questions, and posting them online! Being able to communicate to an internet audience who you want to attract may seem self-serving and redundant at first, but in reality, you can never repeat yourself too much online. You may think people have heard your story many times before, but you're just plain wrong. You'll have to repeat your story, your value proposition, and who your target audience is almost daily. Just because you're bored of hearing yourself repeat the same things over and over, doesn't mean people have actually heard it. In many cases, it takes 10+ times for an audience member to listen to the call to action to convert to a paying customer.

Just because you've shared it once, doesn't mean anyone has actually heard it. Never stop communicating on video the types of audience, customer, and community that you want to attract to yourself. Repeat it consistently in all of your videos and collateral with no shame. If you don't communicate these things, no one will know about you anyway!

Put your theme on repeat. Practice it daily. Make it known!

CHAPTER 32

COMMUNICATING YOUR CHARACTER

CREATE AN IRRESISTIBLE OFFER

Everyone on the planet has something they can offer another. There is no shortage of individuals all over the world who need help, a desire for self-improvement, or looking for someone who they can connect with and watch. We are now in the 'attention-economy,' where eyeballs are the currency. There are thousands of people who have gone before you and are already doing what you want to do. No need to compare as it is a validation that what you want to do is possible and real. Everything you seek to do already exists in reality, and it's your chance to do it your way.

People are attracted to those that they resonate with, whether it is a shared experience, a shared culture or industry, or those with a story that simply makes them feel good. What makes this particularly fantastic is that no matter what niche you choose, there will always be people who are obsessed with that idea. It could be video games, corporate consulting, yoga, unboxing new tech gadgets, or watching people eat food online. There are thousands of people who absolutely love that niche just as much as you do and would embrace a guide, partner, or helpful resource to feed their appetite.

There is real power in being able to sell to your fans directly. Over a decade ago, *Wired* editor Kevin Kelly wrote a groundbreaking article about "1000 True Fans" (<https://kk.org/thetechnium/1000-true-fans/>). Kevin says that to be a successful creator, you don't need millions. You don't need millions of dollars or millions of customers, clients, or subscribers. To make a living as a

craftsperson, photographer, musician, designer, author, animator, app maker, entrepreneur, or inventor, you need only thousands of true fans.

A true fan is a fan that will buy anything you produce. These diehard fans will drive 200 miles to see you sing; they will buy the hardback and paperback and audible versions of your book; they will purchase your next figurine sight unseen; they will pay for the "best-of" DVD version of your free youtube channel; they will come to your chef's table once a month. If you have roughly a thousand true fans like this (sometimes called raving fans or super fans), you can make a living — if you are content to make a living but not a fortune.

Here's how the math works. You need to meet two criteria. First, you have to create enough each year that you can earn, on average, \$100 profit from each true fan. That is easier to do in some arts and businesses than others. Still, it is a good creative challenge in every area because it is always more comfortable and better to give your existing customers more than it is to find new fans.

Second, you must have a direct relationship with your fans. That is, they must pay you directly. You get to keep all of their support, unlike the small percent of their fees you might get from a music label, publisher, studio, retailer, or other intermediates. If you keep the full \$100 from each true fan, then you need only 1,000 of them to earn \$100,000 per year. That's an excellent living for most folks.

You must find those 1000 people. However, it can also be even less as Li Jin, editor of a16z blog, has proposed (<https://a16z.com/2020/02/06/100-true-fans/>). As the Passion Economy grows, more people are monetizing what they love to do and talk about online. The global adoption of social platforms like Facebook and YouTube, the mainstreaming of the influencer model, and the rise of new creator tools have shifted the threshold for success. Li believes that creators need to amass only *100* True Fans—not 1,000—paying them *\$1,000* a year, not \$100. Today, creators can effectively make more money off fewer fans. I would agree.

We already see this shift, according to creator platforms as Li has documented. On Patreon, the average initial pledge amount has increased 22 percent over the past two years. Since 2017, the share of new patrons paying more than \$100 per month—or \$1,200 per year—has grown 21 percent. On the online course platform Podia, the number of creators earning more than \$1,000 in a month is growing 20 percent each month, while the average number of customers per creator is increasing at a rate of 10 percent. Likewise, on Teachable, the average price point per class offering has risen roughly 20 percent, year over year. In 2019, nearly 500 Teachable course creators made more than \$100,000; of those, 25 averaged more than \$1,000 per sale.

So, what is the bottom line here? People are willing to pay more for exclusive, ROI-positive services that are constructive in their lives, whether it's related to health, finances, education, or work. In the offline world, people hire experts across verticals (think interior designers, organizational consultants, public speaking coaches, executive coaches, and SAT tutors) and are willing to pay premium prices for the promise of measurable improvement and results. In the digital world, content creators are king, and you no longer need to be physically in the same room to provide value to your customers. You can reach those that need you from your office at home.

The 100 True Fans concept isn't for everyone, nor is 1,000 True Fans. Creators that have more substantial, more diverse audiences with weaker allegiance or engagement are likely better off monetizing through sponsorships or branded products. For many, that path will be more lucrative—and require less heavy lifting—than designing the sort of high-value, personalized program 100 True Fans demand. As the tech analyst and blogger Ben Thompson once said, "*The internet enables niche in a massively powerful way.*" For creators who earn the trust of a niche audience and who deliver what those users crave: self-improvement, connection, recognition, or belonging. Regardless of the size of your audience, you'll want to ensure that you create an irresistible offer that pulls

people towards you, your properties, and the value you can provide them.

Create a Gravitational Brand with an irresistible offer by answering the following three questions:

- What do you do? - What is your value proposition to the world?
- How do you do it? - What is the unique way in which you'll create content and connect with people?
- How can others be a part of it? - How will you entice people to buy or join you?

Go deeper by answering these questions on a video and posting it online!

CHAPTER 33

CHARACTER - WHO YOU ARE

SUMMARY

As you grow in your ability to communicate effectively on video, you will bear witness to some of the most life-changing developments of your entire life. You'll be able to witness yourself go from being a complete newbie at talking on video, to becoming fluent, entertaining, and a fun personality to watch.

Some of the most powerful feedback I've ever gotten from clients and community members is that they're so amazed and proud of the fact that they have a library of content that they created over time. They also have an audience now, people around the world that appreciate their content. In all cases, they get to see the drastic improvement in their communication abilities from the beginning to now. What a powerful opportunity to document life improvement while *actually* improving your life and the work you do!

It's simply amazing how learning to communicate on various video mediums online effectively can have such trickledown effects in your personal and private life outside the internet. It's almost as if becoming a better communicator allows you to be happier, purpose-driven, and influential in so many other areas of your life.

Maybe it's because humans are naturally social creatures, and it's merely a function of those that communicate the best, reap the rewards of such intentional practicing and improvement in socializing. Whatever the case may be, I know for a fact that the best communicators I've ever met are never without opportunities

in the world. It's as if they become an irresistible magnet to people who want to hear what they have to say.

That is what a Gravitational Brand is all about. Becoming a fuller version of yourself, for the world to see, so you can create opportunities to leverage.

CHAPTER 34

CONTENT

THE KEY TO PERSONAL GROWTH

In today's knowledge-based economy, you don't need heavy machinery to create a product, and you certainly don't need a mature process to create a service for others. The digital landscape we inhabit today allows us to create value digitally for others, as the barriers to entry are gone. Anyone with a connection to the internet can make money, sell a service, or provide help and support to others. Those that create with intention and purpose over the long run are in a far better position for the future of their brand than allowing consolidation systems to develop a brand for them.

When I embarked on the journey to build my first startup in 2009, I knew only one thing: *I must get eyeballs*. At the time, the two best platforms that I knew I could leverage was Wordpress and Twitter. Twitter had come out in 2006, and Wordpress (started in 2003) was growing strong and steady as a powerful self-serve PHP blogging system. A template ecosystem and marketplace were burgeoning for Wordpress, enabling the average user to spice up their blog, and applications to make Twitter more useful for the power user were emerging as much needed systems to schedule and manage content. These were the high times of social media, and the attention-economy had just begun.

I started with a Wordpress blog called AgileScout.com and started by changing my Twitter handle to @AgileScout. AgileScout became my home base for doing the only thing I knew to do at the time: *Write and create content so that people could come to know*

about me and my journey as an Agile coach and trainer. I created content every day, and over a decade later, that discipline still sticks with me. Producing content for other people and the world to see is the core of creating a Gravitational Brand. People must be able to take what you create and be able to make a judgment call on whether you are trustworthy, valuable, relatable, or useful to them.

Creating content requires patience over time to continue to experiment with different ideas, topics, mediums, and methods. The content you create will evolve and morph in multiple ways. Be prepared and open to the fact that you don't know which material will resonate with your audience best. Know this: *you must create to be known.* For many, this is the hardest part of the work, and I know of many who have fallen away because they simply cannot create content, daily, or at least regularly.

People are always looking for great content that fulfills their desire for information, learning, or entertainment. The websites they choose and the content creators they buy from are those that can communicate effectively, connect emotionally, and create consistently.

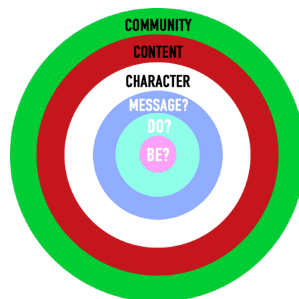
Are you ready for daily content creation?

— — —

Want to have a laugh? Watch a video of me from over a decade ago interviewing people in the Agile software development world.

You'll clearly see how I've improved since then!

<https://vimeo.com/agilescout>



CHAPTER 35

CONTENT

DOCUMENT, DON'T CREATE

The most common objection I get when working with people around the content they could leverage for eyeballs is the exclamation: "*I don't know what to talk about or write about.*" -

That's when I hit them with the single most crucial idea you'll need to remember when it comes to content: **Document, don't create.** You see, creating something requires you to think about the purpose, the narrative, the story, the characters, and the setting. To create something requires lots of time thinking about the flow of the content, perhaps a script, or at least a theme that has a focus.

All of the above takes too much time, and frankly, too much work.

It's far easier just to document what is happening now.

Documentation requires no preparation, no thinking ahead, and zero script. You just record what is going on. When it comes to video, the purest form of this is an ad-hoc video blog or vlog. The vlogger points the camera at themselves and begins to talk, as simple as that. They may spend some time in post-processing editing some of the footage, but in terms of content capture, they just press record and go.

For some of you, this sounds frightening, to record yourself talking into a lifeless camera lens about what you are doing now. For many of you, you even imagine it to be ridiculously boring. You're probably right. It may be exceptionally dull and awkward if it's the

first time you're doing it, as with any trade, skill, or craft. It takes many repetitions and experience to get to the point of mastery.

Remember, you will always be your most prominent critic, and you'll want you to quit many times because the quality and content isn't as good as so-and-so's content. Do not compare. You're on your journey of self-discovery and purpose in creating a Gravitational Brand. I said it would take years, and you knew that coming in, so let's get used to being a beginner now.

When it comes to writing, documentation can take another (and much easier) form. The easiest way to begin documenting who you are is merely writing commentary about other blogs, articles, or content that addresses the same market that you want to establish yourself. Let's say you're in the field of Marketing and Sales. Coming up with blog ideas requires you to spend time creating, but reading another Marketing Expert's blog and writing about your initial feelings, and critique of his main points is something far more manageable. I do this in the beginning of ALL of my startups! Massive amounts of commentary on other people's content!

Many of my first blog posts were color commentaries of other more established bloggers and experts in the world of Agile. The format can take multiple shapes, but it's mostly the following:

- The original author wrote about A
- They posited XYZ ideas around A
- I believe A is good or not good
- If not good, here is my alternative B idea

What makes this format of documentation so great is that not only do you learn, but you also get to write down how you think differently (or not). By merely writing your ideas down in a blog form and smashing the publish button, you're learning not only the discipline it takes to deliver content consistently, but you're learning how to express yourself. You'll need to learn how to express yourself in multiple ways to be the best communicator of

your irresistible brand.

Consider the following ideas when it comes to documenting your journey instead of getting stuck in 'creation paralysis':

- Document what you are working on or doing now
- Report an experience you recently had
- Review an article, news item, or event
- Discuss current trends or distinct market ideas
- Record a reaction to something market-sensitive

"Document, don't create," should be the best reminder whenever you feel stuck with the content you are producing. In the future, you'll be far better at creating content that is engaging, insightful, and entertaining. For right now, just begin writing or talking on video, just go, and do. Nobody is paying attention in the beginning anyway.

Go deeper by sharing your experiments and videos online with our community!

CHAPTER 36

CONTENT

CONSISTENT CADENCE TO DELIVERY

For you to build any type of following, there is an unspoken agreement between you and your viewers: *They will stick around as long as you consistently provide value to them in some form (entertainment, information, education, etc.).* Think about your favorite content creators whom you subscribe to or follow. How did you come to be a subscriber? What kept you from unsubscribing or unfollowing? There was probably some initial intrigue in them as you found them for the first time. You subscribed or followed, and they became part of your daily feed of posts and became part of your consumption habits every day. Over time you saw they were either consistent or inconsistent in their posting of content. From here, you made a judgment call to either consume their content on a known schedule or accept the fact that because of their inconsistent posting behavior, you may miss some of their content or just have to catch up based on your schedule.

I don't know about you, but when I find a content creator that I enjoy, I want content from them daily. For me, it doesn't matter what time they post as long as there is something from them that I can watch, read, or consume during my night-time routine of catching up with subscriptions and people I follow. I just want to *know* what they are doing!

I may not be the best example, but I default to the daily delivery of content as my cadence of work. It requires a ton of mental discipline as well as a reprioritization of focus, effort, and behavior every single day. If you're going to be delivering content daily,

you'll need to change your schedule and routine to accommodate and prioritize time to provide content to your subscribers and followers over other extracurricular activities. I've heard before that when you find something that grabs your heart and mind's focus, time with friends will reduce. Mileage may vary, but I find this to be 100% true. When you focus on producing content, the activities you enjoyed with friends will take a back seat, at least, until you find a sustainable pace and cadence that allows you to enjoy worldly-activities and social engagement with others to stay sane.

Choose a cadence for content delivery. I recommend starting with daily as that requires a massive shift in your thinking and behaviors. It'll also give you the perspective of what you'll need to change in terms of your lifestyle to support a daily content schedule. Experiment with it. I generally do 90-day tests because it is when I get close to the 80-90th day do I wholeheartedly despise the work but also fully appreciate all of the learnings I've earned throughout the investigation.

*See two of my experiments on [Marketing and Branding](#) and [Things You Didn't Learn in School](#).

Delivering content every day is hard, and most will quit. Whenever I have encouraged others to try to do daily content, almost all of them cannot do it. One of the goals of regular delivery of content is to etch the discipline of acting intentionally daily towards your goal. If you're not willing to put in any effort, daily, into your dreams, you don't deserve to achieve it. Remember the previous chapters, document, don't create. At the very beginning of your journey, don't spend too much time thinking about your material. It's all about the reps, time in the seat, and creating muscle memory. Through the activity of providing content daily, you'll find out some mighty things, including:

- what type of content your community appreciates
- how your communication and content has changed over a small period

- which parts of content creation you enjoy, and facets you dislike
- how your life will need to change to include consistent delivery of content
- how hard it is to build a brand
- how hard it is to create a company
- how hard it is to discipline yourself to do a new daily routine
- learning how to master your emotions, your force-of-will, and tenacity to not quit
- learning how to use video, podcast, and blog technology
- learning to stretch yourself and challenge yourself to solve problems that emerge as you grow
- learning to use powerful internet tools, post-processing programs, and syndication systems

One of the essential parts of anyone's success story is usually the most boring to talk about or tell. It is a simple fact that the founder didn't quit. They didn't give up. They persevered and delivered content daily without fail. How do you summarize years of grit and discipline into a story? It's almost impossible to fluff it up more than it is. Interviewers of successful entrepreneurs spend most of their time asking questions about the tactics and strategies of the entrepreneur, focusing on decisions made by the founder when the most critical decision they made was really at the very beginning of the journey! The founder chose never to stop delivering content to their community, user base, or customer market. That's the real reason they have so much influence and brand awareness online.

Want to know the single common denominator for the most prominent content creators out there? It's simple. They have been producing content consistently for over 10+ years. Imagine what influence you'll have in 8-10 years of content production.

Will you last that long?

CHAPTER 37

CONTENT

WHAT IS YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY?

Content strategy documents are for managers who don't understand the power of social media and need an overview of what the content marketer will do for them. We have already discussed who your target audience is, and you've spent time figuring out your narrative and story. Now we need to ensure that you *deliver on your values consistently*.

When I began my first startup, I didn't have a content strategy. All I knew about was Wordpress blogs and Twitter. These tools are not a strategy, but what they do create are focus and constraints. In today's world of internet marketing, you can find a whole slew of experts who will tell you that you need to be spraying your content over the entire web, on every single content platform possible. While this is certainly possible with tools and automation, it's not a very good strategy for a beginner.

What I recommend to individuals who are just starting their brand is to constrain their content to the tools they understand and enjoy using. Become a master at leveraging one social tool to begin. It could be Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Wordpress blog, Medium blog, Facebook, Youtube, Pinterest, etc. Pick one or two that you want to master and get proficient at using fluently. There is a lot to learn about each social tool, as each of them has different ways of formatting and displaying content. Spend some time finding the ideal sizes and dimensions of how content is formatted in for each tool. A quick google search for

"correct size for twitter image/video" will avail you simple dimension guides for any type of social media system out there.

As you grow in proficiency and mastery in one social platform, you can always add more syndication platforms to your schedule as appropriate!

A simple content strategy for a client includes the following ideas:

- Who is the target audience?
- The problem it's going to solve for them
- What makes you unique?
- Content formats (Video, blog, infographics, memes, pictures with quotes, etc.)
- The distribution channels
- Management of creation of content and process

We have spent some time so far, discussing some of these ideas, and this list is a great start that can help gather your thoughts. However, the real goal is to deliver on your values consistently. What does it look like to deliver on your values? Simply put, the essential value that you can always show your audience is that you *show up to work every day* and your dedication to your craft. Do not miss this. The example that you will set and the model that people will recognize from you is that you consistently (whatever your cadence is) deliver content to them when you say you will. This behavior alone is worthy of praise and appreciation! People recognize someone who is a person of their word and lives with integrity. Now is your chance to prove to the world that you are serious about the dreams you have and the goals you've set.

I cannot tell you how many times people have said to me that they simply admire the fact that I deliver content every day, and they are grateful for that. For some, they simply enjoy allowing me to be a part of their daily routine. For others, they enjoy listening to me during their drive to work, or as background noise during work, or as a mechanism to relax after the kids are down and the individual has time just to be still and chill.

Delivering on your values starts with delivering consistently, creating an expectation of content-cadence, and merely modeling that you're not a single-season athlete. You'll be here for a good long while, and people can trust that if they integrate you into their life, it'll be worth the addition to their daily consumption habits. I know of no better way to create the fastest reach, the fastest audience, the quickest feedback, and the most rapid growth than to deliver content every single day with a smile.

What is your content strategy again?

CHAPTER 38

CONTENT

AN INFINITE SUPPLY

When most people start considering how to manage and grow their brand, many of them are fortunate enough to be in a position where the brand aligns already with the type of work they do. For example, a project manager who wants to establish a brand to work for a consulting company, an executive who wants to go off and build their small practice or an artist who needs to expand their reach for customers. Most of these conversations focus on tightening up the goals of their brand, the problem they can solve for their growing community or market segment, and the unique narrative of their story that they will weave into each syndicated piece of content as indirect marketing.

There are a few primary personas of a brand appearance:

- **Influencer** - an individual who is well known because of some behavior, schtick, trope, leveraging a previous success story, or merely the vanity of physical appearance (e.g., Kardashians)
- **Expert** - an individual who is well known because of some deep expertise in a specific market, demographic, or trade (e.g., Steve Jobs)
- **Celebrity** - an individual who has success in a traditional market of the arts, entertainment, or sports (e.g., Kobe Bryant)
- **Show** - an individual who has created an online show around a topic where they have found person-market-fit (e.g., Joe Rogan)

It isn't vital to figure out which type of online brand persona you will be in the beginning. What is most important is that you begin creating content, ideally on video on YouTube or some other video platform of your choosing. Again, we live in a mobile-first video-first world where your future customers and community will be looking for you on video platforms before they will search Google. In many cases, search engines around the globe are now prioritizing video results before plain text results! You may as well be on video and go pro.

To ensure that you have zero excuses to create content, below is a list of content formats for you to try out. Note that all of the following ideas can be in both written mediums and video formats!

- Article/blog commentary
- Book summaries/review
- Cartoons
- Case studies
- Charts/graphs
- Collage
- Collaborations with other content creators
- Company news
- Conference review
- Content curation*
- Dictionary
- "Day in the life of" post
- eBooks
- Email newsletters
- Event coverage
- Experts
- FAQs
- Gameplay
- Game review
- Giveaways
- Guides*
- Helpful application/tool review*
- How-to's*
- Infographics

- Interviews*
- Lists*
- Mind Maps
- Meme
- Movie commentary
- News review/curation*
- News commentary*
- Online course
- Online game review
- Opinion post*
- Original research
- Photo reviews
- Photo collage
- Pinboards
- Polls
- Podcasts*
- Predictions
- Press releases
- Q&A session*
- Quotes
- Quizzes
- Reaction video
- Resources review
- Series
- Show and tell
- Slideshows
- Surveys
- Templates
- Timelines
- Tool reviews
- Tutorials
- Unboxing
- User/community-generated content
- Vlog*
- Videos (multiple formats on different platforms)*
- Webinar
- White paper review

*My favorite content ideas

The list is only a starting point, and you'll never try every experiment on the list. The goal is to begin, to create, and to learn through execution. As you take ownership of your Gravitational Brand, you should always start with what you are experienced in and talk and write about what you know. For a fortunate few, this is why you are reading this book. It's time for you to level up and get to the next level of your career, and you desire to begin creating content so you can differentiate yourself from the thousands of others that will be vying for the next job you want.

Excellent! Your first pieces of content should be communicating and documenting the basics of your industry. Not because there isn't already enough content of people explaining the basics, but because the world hasn't seen *you* teach the basics of your industry yet! The opportunity to practice communicating something you already understand helps ease you into creating video content or written content. Just talk about or write about what you already know!

When I was building my first startup, all of the first pieces of content I created were simply stories of software development experiences I had and the short lessons that I learned from interacting and working with people. My content generation funnel was massive, as I had many stories and experiences to write and discuss. As I grew from writing about my adventures, I began experimenting with commentary on the news within the software development space. After that, I began creating content curation posts where I highlighted top news stories in my market segment and commented on them. From there, I started creating lists (people love lists) and then inviting people to come on and be interviewed by myself for a show.

As you can see, my content changes over time as I learn and grow as a content producer, host, and storyteller. Your audience will enjoy it when you try a new format or a fresh new way of giving them information. In most cases, your audience just wants to watch you have a good time!

For some of you, it is your intention of creating a brand to help you get into a new market, a job outside your expertise, or to do something that you've never done before. If this is the case, you should begin with the basics of the industry you're trying to get into and becoming a dictionary, glossary, and resource for other novice entrants as well.

When I began building applications in the cryptocurrency space, I knew I needed to build a community, create a gravitational pull to myself, and cover the basics. How did I start? I began by merely creating videos describing the basics of cryptocurrency. My very first videos were introductions on "What is Bitcoin" and "What is Ethereum" to "What is the Blockchain" and "How does Mining Work?" - The goals of this were twofold: *I needed practice in communicating the fundamental tenants of the market I was entering into as an engineer, and I needed to attract my target audience of newbies like me who are interested in the technology of Bitcoin.* What happened? Within nine months, I had built a community of 90,000 subscribers with 2500 power users who were involved in co-building cryptocurrency applications together and helped me build enough agile-prototypes to receive just less than \$5M of venture funding.

I believe that creating content daily, at scale, is the cheat code to getting to the place you want to be:

- You're a 15-year experienced employee in X and want to get to the next level? - Produce content about what you know. People will show up that value your experience and knowledge, and you can leverage them and your net network to help you get there.
- You're an absolute newbie in Y industry and want to break in? - Product content about your journey into the industry. People will show up who are just like you and want to be there too. Why don't you lead them through radical transparency in your documented journey?

- You're a full-time employee at a company but would like to make your hobby Z into something more? - Produce content showing off your hobby and discussing it with passion. People will show up and root you on, give you ideas, and maybe even partner with you to co-build something epic.

You have zero excuses in terms of not having an idea for what type of content you can create. There are countless content ideas out there. You just have to fight off the demons of resistance and ship it.

CHAPTER 39

CONTENT

QUALITY IMPROVES OVER TIME

Don't worry about the quality of your work in the beginning. It's all going to suck anyway. A significant aspect of history is that nobody remembers your early days except those that were close to you. Since they don't remember much from your origin story anyway, when you're successful, they'll only recount the great things you did back then and add their romantic flare to it. If people ever go back to view your OG content from years ago, they will be filled with humility as they realize what humble beginnings you started with and will regret that they did not understand the power of video for the future of work.

Your past doesn't define your future. Remember this idea and remember it often. Every day that passes is a new day to create, build, or begin anew. Your past experiences are all building blocks to today. Yes, the quality you delivered yesterday wasn't your best. You have another day to try again. In a week, you won't even remember the little mistakes you made.

As you grow more proficient in delivering content, you will become more comfortable in your skin. You will become more natural in front of the camera, and your writing will improve. Remember, kaizen means "continuous improvement." That is the goal of quality that you continuously improve the style, design, and delivery of your content incrementally. Some weeks you'll learn a ton, some weeks you'll need to trudge through and feel like nothing is improving, and some weeks you'll feel like quitting.

Quality work isn't something that just happens. It emerges over time with intentional action and behavioral change as feedback and repetitions increase. As long as you are ruthless about experimentation, you will always find the next idea worth trying to improve some aspect of your content.

Expect to go through many iterations of what you believe is quality work. In my experience using video, the quality of my work plateaus often as I get more fluent with the format and cadence of delivery. When I have robust processes in place to help optimize my workflow, content delivery, and post-processing automated, that's usually the time in which I need to try a new format, new segment, or small experiment with my community. Another way of saying this is that when my content segments get too easy to do, it's time to try something new.

Optimization of my content systems saves me time, and this allows me to spend more time doing creative work. Sometimes this involves upgrading hardware, software, or even taking an online course to learn how to do what I want to do with my content. Expect your experience to be the same as you educate yourself to higher and higher levels of proficiency.

So don't worry about the quality of your content ever. Quality is merely a byproduct of purpose-filled work and daily discipline to show up and deliver. Deliver without ceasing, and the quality of your content will improve.

Quality is simply an outcome of your dedication to daily delivery and your intentionality to improve.

CHAPTER 40

CONTENT

THE ANSWER TO ALL YOUR PROBLEMS

I may sound like a fundamentalist when I say that content is the answer to all of your problems, but hear me out. While I'm only one person, one example, and one personal anecdote, I have sincerely found that the answer to all of my problems has always been the creation of content:

- Building my first web development company as a high-schooler required material in the form of fliers and paper advertisements to my friends and network.
- Getting accepted into many great universities needed an overabundance of extracurricular content to prove that I was the better asian to choose than the one who got 1600 on the SAT (I needed to look more well-rounded whatever the hell that meant).
- Building my first consultancy required that I deliver content to the web to show that I could do the work. I created video tours of the companies that I helped, showing off not only the results but the awesome people who did most of the hard work.
- Becoming an international speaker was enhanced by my second book picked up by the #1 business book publisher in the world, John Wiley and Sons. They noticed all of the conference speaking content I created while doing an average of 16 conferences per year!
- Whenever I want to learn about a new industry for a new company I want to build, I create tons of online content

about what I'm learning, who I'm learning from, and lessons I'm learning to my community for support. Communities require content.

- Finding my wife required that I put content in an online profile on eHarmony.com and fill out every text field with as much radical transparency as I could so that the system could work. My wife of 10+ years was my 6th match.

You see, every single massive problem in my life can be solved by delivering content to the web.

- First, it's the only way people will ever hear about who you are. If you never put yourself out there, they'll never know about you.
- Second, it's the only way people will be able to determine if they want to help you or support you, even if it's as little as a retweet.
- Third, they have to believe that you want to solve that problem in your life. They have to be able to trust that you're creating this content to not only help yourself but to invite others along in the journey.
- Fourth, the need to know that you're in for the long haul. If you want your audience's support regularly, you'll need to show up on their mobile device daily.
- Fifth, they'll need all of this time to build a relationship with you, inviting you to be a part of their daily routine, life, and consumption schedule.

Now, you won't be having an intimate relationship with all of your viewers, just a select few (we'll get to this in later chapters). Still, you will have to deliver content regularly and consistently for your viewers and supporters to be able to build a model of who you are and establish an emotional response to the value you provide.

Today and forever in the future, any problem you want to solve will require the generation of content. I know of many people whom I've interviewed where the creation and delivery of content was precisely the mechanism that got them the interview, got them

the network connection, got them the dream job, or for me, the dream girl.

As a startup founder, I've created companies that we bootstrapped with my own money and companies that we received venture capital. The venture capital game is one where I've spent most of my time on the 'asking' side of the table, usually for investment money or support. At one time, I wanted to learn more about the venture capital world, and I knew of no better way to get a world-class education in venture capital than to interview the best VCs out there. For six months, I interviewed over 40 venture capitalists for a personal project called VC Hunting. I can tell you that I learned more about the venture capital world in six months than I would in any other training or classroom setting. It was a masterclass in the investment world. What was the problem I wanted to solve for myself? I wanted to learn more about the venture capital world so I could understand how to be a better angel investor and potentially a venture capitalist. The strategy was simple:

- Ask venture capitalists to come on my show VCHunting
- The value to them was international syndication of our interview to 20+ platforms worldwide, on video and podcasts
- The benefit to me was an entertaining interview, and the opportunity to ask the real questions I had before and after the meeting.
- The only requirement I had of the interviewee was that if they enjoyed the interview, they gave me direct contact with another venture capitalist who they think would be a great addition to the show.
- By doing this, I created a funnel where I was able to interview about two VCs/week.

Didn't I say that the best way to solve any problem is to create content? Creating content for others is the mechanism in which you can build your world around you. For me and my quest to be known more in the investment world, I created content that people

found valuable and entertaining. I was able to expand my network of venture capitalists and generate a ton of gravity to my brand as a not only a founder and angel investor but also that I'm well-connected in the venture capital world. Creating content is a great way to expand your network and reach quickly!

Want to know another outcome of your delivery of content to the world? Do it long enough, and it can solve all of your money issues too.

CHAPTER 41

CONTENT

PERSON-MARKET-FIT

How do you create stickiness in your content so that you can consistently grow a broader audience? What is the secret sauce to creating gravity towards yourself? The answer is person-market-fit.

We've all heard about finding product-market-fit when it comes to startup and their products. Rarely, if ever, does a startup begin with an idea fully baked and builds it flawlessly for its target audience. In most cases, the startup begins with a compelling vision and a light framework for how to achieve the functional hypotheses of the product or service. The more feedback the founder gets, the more she can incorporate changes and improvements on the product as venture capital and time burn away at the chances for success.

For your Gravitational Brand, we need to find the right person-market-fit for you. It is entirely possible for any type of personality to 'work' within any market segment. It only requires a dedication to master yourself, find your voice, and be worthy of attention.

Mastering yourself will take a lifetime. Finding your online voice will emerge through years of practice, but being worthy of attention can be established quite quickly. The best way to find your person-market-fit is through producing *edutainment*. This is the combination of educational material delivered in an entertaining way for the audience. While there will always be a place for pure entertainment and shenanigan videos, you're probably not built for that type of work, and neither am I. In

reality, I think most great pure-entertainers are born that way. For the rest of us in the new world, we have to learn to be engaging, entertaining, and helpful online.

When I started building applications in the blockchain space, my very first videos were on the basics of Bitcoin. I began by creating videos of myself discussing the fundamentals of cryptocurrency and explaining the basic theories of Bitcoin. I was serving myself and others by merely creating videos that taught the basics. Not only did it increase my confidence in my understanding of Bitcoin, but it also grew an audience of individuals who wanted to learn as well! From there, I decided to expand my content into the news segment, giving my opinion on the cryptocurrency market and overall ecosystem. As my viewership grew, I found a small viewership of consistent people who would always show up to my daily news bits. After a while, I began live streaming on multiple platforms, expanding my reach as well as my experience in various formats. When certain forms didn't work out, I axed them and tried others. Nothing is sacred, and nothing can be held too high in esteem or on an altar. You haven't found your final form yet, and you're just beginning!

Talking about your journey can seem like a daunting task, but imagine how many people out there are thinking about doing something similar. You can be that person who can encourage them and be the person they need to help them overcome their fears of starting. In many cases, those individuals will be your biggest fans.

Always start your content journey by documenting your experiences, being educational and helpful, and over time, finding natural nuances and quirks that make you entertaining. My first videos are rarely enjoyable, but they are always informative. That is where you start: *By providing value to your listeners*. They are there because they believe you may be able to help them. After all, they typed in something they are interested in, and here you are talking about it now on video, or they're reading something you

wrote. Being helpful is the first requirement to find person-market-fit.

People don't fall in love with a simple educator or trainer of information. They can get the education or information they need from thousands of other people online. People fall in love with a personality, flawed, just like them, with peculiarities and personality traits that they can connect to, however awkward or unusual or unique they may be. People want to connect with people, well-versed people, and well-practiced in the mediums of video and online communication. Being well-practiced doesn't mean you lose who you are. You'll simply be a better communicator of your ideas. To be an irresistible brand, you're going to have to put in the reps to become an excellent communicator of your knowledge, experience, and personality.

Edutainment is the best way to increase your value to your audience through content that is educational and fun. Begin writing or communicating your world and share what you're learning. Just press record and talk.

Go deeper by sharing examples of edutainment content that you've created online!

CHAPTER 42

CONTENT - DELIVERY FROM YOUR HEART

SUMMARY

What I love most about being a content creator is that I believe I am living out my role as a human being on this flat earth. I believe that every single person was born to create, build, and grow, till the day they die. I have met so many people who have given up on life, riding the train of passivity to death. I believe that some people live their entire lives scared of failing, making mistakes, and de-risking life so that they can arrive safely at their deathbed.

In our knowledge-worker economy, those that create content will never stop growing, never stop improving, and never stop receiving opportunities as their content reaches more and more eyeballs and interest. It's not hard to start. Just document what you're doing, dedicate yourself to deliver consistently and keep going until you find out how to solve your problems or find your perfect voice and audience.

Simply put, the answer is 'through.'

You keep going every day.

CHAPTER 43

COMMUNITY

THE VALUE OF YOUR BRAND ARE PEOPLE

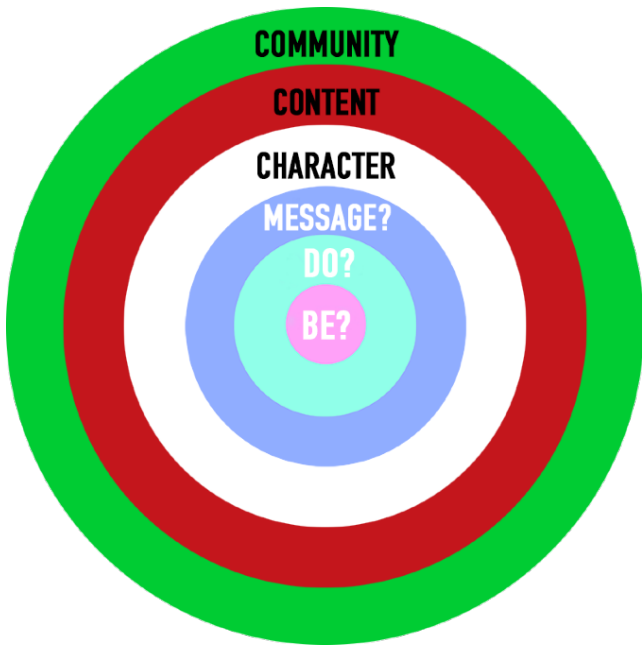
The value of your brand isn't the products or services that you market, but on the intangibles - your broader mission and vision, your personality, and your values. Audiences, in general, seek brands that align with their values and individuals that are more personable and human. Today's netizens want to consider online influencers as friends, who they can interact with like any other friends they have, and need to have ideologies that align with their own. Your brand cannot clash with the millennial and Gen Z audiences, or your brand won't get very far. Your brand must be socially conscious, culturally relevant, and must have a strong and unmistakable mission statement.

The value of your brand is the people that steward your community. In many cases, these people are doing it for free. You've given them something to talk about, and they are now part of something bigger than themselves. Loving on your people, your community, users, and customers will enable you to create a Gravitational Brand of storytelling. Where the type of marketing people do one on one with others is telling stories of how you are more than just an influencer, more than a leader, or champion of a cause. The stories people will know about you are ones where you loved on them, cared for them, and became human to them. As much as I despise the "socializing of charity" and people selfies while doing volunteer work and virtue signaling to others, this type of marketing works. Some of the most effective Gravitational Brands ensure that when a leader loves on someone, it is more than

just videotaped. The whole scene is cut-up, edited, and formatted for multiple platforms, showing the emotion, the connection, and the feeling of being able to have someone powerful and influential pour into another for two full minutes. You'll see one angle on Instagram, another perspective on TikTok, and the reactions of the crowd on YouTube. Is the moment real? Absolutely. Are the cameras ready? 100%. The reason this works is that it shows the power of connection, relationships, and the power of caring for others.

Caring for your community and brand is a daily practice, and extremely hard to do long term. You'll need to learn how to scale your services, create touch-points with your community members, and delegate responsibilities as you build your business. Remember who has helped you become who you are today.

Flesh and blood. Flesh and blood.



CHAPTER 44

COMMUNITY

THE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

I got into Bitcoin in October of 2011. I read an Ars Technica article describing how a protocol and tech stack could lose 70% of its value in a month. As an engineer, I couldn't comprehend how a tech stack like Java, C++, Ruby, or PHP could lose monetary value. I had so many questions: *Why were people invested in this? How does this work? Why is this a thing?* I spent nearly a full month down the rabbit hole and lost over 10 pounds in the process. I finally invested my first digital dollars into Bitcoin in November 2011, and I've been a vocal advocate for its use ever since. I began my education into cryptocurrency by educating others about it, and I started with video.

Over time I grew a subscriber base and following. I simply did what I previously leveraged in my other startups: *create content and build community*. I wanted to create stuff for the new cryptocurrency economy, and I needed to know what to make.

Below is a simple timeline of my journey as a startup founder in the cryptocurrency space:

- January 20, 2017 - I take a sabbatical from training and consulting to bootstrap a cryptocurrency company.
- February 26, 2017 - First video on cryptocurrency and gaming. I grew a small but loyal following on Youtube and Twitch.tv.
- July 13, 2017 - Killed the gaming content and Twitch live streaming and just focused on crypto.

- I grew BiteSizeBitcoin YouTube channel to 30,000 subscribers in just a couple of months. The focus was edutainment on the power and potential of blockchain technology and the implications of personal financial sovereignty. My corny introduction tag line was, "*Welcome to BiteSizeBitcoin, where we discuss and demystify Bitcoin and blockchain technologies!*"
- August 10, 2017 - I built TheBitcoin.Pub forum as a response to the overwhelming need to create a centralized place for my growing community.
- August 31, 2017 - I created the Bitcoin 90-Day Challenge (b90x) program on TheBitcoin.Pub - A 90-day free video course on Bitcoin, cryptocurrency trading, how to build a product, how to master yourself, how to learn personal responsibility, and how to have a killer life. Thousands participate from around the world.
- October 2017 - We had our best month from advertising revenue at \$56,000.
- October 2017 - BiteSizeBitcoin YouTube channel gets censored, demonetized, and YouTube removes over 1500 videos. In response to this, I started a new YouTube channel, and DecentralizedTV was born.
- October 2017 - I purchase the world's first Lamborghini Huracan with 45 Bitcoin. Estimated 300M views worldwide on mainstream news, print, and magazine.
- November 2017 - We receive our very first interest in venture capital. We begin the process of being a venture-funded crypto startup.
- December 2017 - The Bitcoin 90-Day Challenge is complete. Thousands were educated on Bitcoin and how to build a personal brand. This program subsequently became the first iteration of the book you're reading now!
- December 2017 - We publish 10DaysOfBitcoin.com as a response to community needs. It is a free educational course on the power of Bitcoin and blockchain technology to your email. We wanted to lower the barrier to entry into cryptocurrency for people who don't like to read blogs and news or watch videos. Learn about Bitcoin in your email.

- January 2018 - We create a community-only paid-group for direct feedback on product development and hit \$15,000 MRR. Articles were written about us on how to grow and monetize the community successfully.
- March 2018 - We create CryptoYum, a Feedly-style of news, and RSS feed pulling in articles from all of the voices in cryptocurrency, big news companies to blogs. The community wanted to read what I was reading, so we built an app only for crypto news.
- March 2018 - We begin the venture fundraising process.
- May 2018 - We create CoinPuffs, a CoinMarketcap.com competitor focused on community features, better customization tools, and raw data (not manipulated like many other systems). Our community enjoyed having the ability to see raw data from multiple sources with customization filters.
- June 2018 - YEN Community Tool conceived - A community system that combined all of our favorite features of other chat systems with multiple-exchange trading built-in (Meta-Exchange).
- August 2018 - DecentralizedTV grows past 80,000 subscribers with a team of 12 community members, all creating content and live streams every day for a global audience.
- October 5-7, 2018 - First YEN Retreat in Atlanta, GA - Our community from all over the globe came to Atlanta to celebrate the launch of YEN beta and support us in continuing to co-build with us an excellent community system and meta-exchange.
- December 2018 - Seed Round Closed at \$4.7M from LINE Corp, Cherubic, HustleFund, Sterling Road, and selected partners.
- May 2019 - San Francisco Global YEN meetup - A venture-backed cryptocurrency startup with a global community.
- November 2019 - I resign as co-founder of YEN. As a 0-1 founder, my job was complete in getting YEN to traction,

venture capital, and a robust community of co-builders. It was time to move on and build something else!

- 2020 - Venture capital fund, start new venture funded company, and a cryptocurrency mining/staking operation. We going bigger!
- 2022 - Completed another 0-1 company. \$38M in revenue in our second year, over 60 people in the company.
- 2022+ - Time to go even bigger...

The recipe works. I've done the same thing since the early 2000s when I created my first digital videos and putting them online for the world to see. Bringing people to yourself and surrounding yourself with people who believe in you is an unfair advantage. Why do I say that it's "unfair?" Let me clarify. It *was* unfair. Today, anyone with an iPhone can be a rockstar, go viral, or create content that the world talks about for weeks. Anyone with a phone can now create a community. How did this become possible? With the rise of mobile, video-first, and social media. It was this trifecta of technology and human behavior that created entirely new markets, products, and communities that love them.

Now that we're here, and mobile and video are only growing exponentially, those that are on video educating, entertaining, and providing value will be the titans of the future. It does not matter that your quality sucks today. It will get better. It doesn't matter that you stink at speaking. It will get better. You must begin today.

A Gravitational Brand is where you put yourself out there, to be found, by people who enjoy what you enjoy and desire to connect with others about that idea. Be a humble but driven mouthpiece of your goals and desires. Do it on video.

Your community awaits you.

Your unfair advantage is that you started today.

CHAPTER 45

COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT BUILDS COMMUNITY

People come for the content, but they have to stay to build a community. Remember, consistent content on a schedule creates the trust necessary and the glue to keep people to you. As you create content, you will also find opportunities to productize your efforts.

You must experiment with content, content styles, delivery, events, ceremonies, giveaways, live streams, and more. All of this experimentation serves as opportunities to find out more about yourself, what you enjoy doing, and, more importantly, what you don't like doing. One of the joys I get from experimentation is the fact that I will learn what I don't enjoy doing for content. I have stretched my personality, tried bringing in different parts of my personality and interests, figure out what wasn't compelling, or not attractive, and enabling me to create content that is comfortable for me to do on a longer-term basis. With all of this experimentation, there is only one way to grow an online community: *you must engage them directly.*

Live streaming has enabled us to engage directly with the person on the other side of the planet.

Creating content will grow you an audience, but engagement builds community.

Now, building an audience isn't a bad thing, and there are many ways to engage with an audience asynchronously, like replying to

comments and engaging with hearts, thumbs-up, and emojis. An audience works very well for many different types of mediums, and there are undoubtedly many ways to be successful with an audience alone.

Communities are harder to build. They require a rallying point and deeper engagement with their minds and time. These are the type of individuals you want if you desire to create a startup or company. You need raving fans who will come to meetups, volunteer for digital duties, and manage the broader community. They will also give you invaluable feedback that allows you to build and iterate through your product to find product-market-fit faster. Community is an unfair advantage, but it comes at a cost. The cost is your time, effort, and emotions.

Engaging with your audience to become a community requires that you are radically transparent with who you are (as best you can be as you grow in your fluency of communication to people). This will require a relationship between yourself and your audience. Thanks to the power of the internet, your community never needs to be large to be useful. There are many ways to keep your community as private or public as you desire, depending on your Gravitational Brand strategy.

You never need to have a plan to begin to live stream and engage with your audience. You simply need to try a platform. YouTube is a fantastic platform for any beginner, and the YouTube community for content creators is excellent and helpful. There are many other platforms that you may be familiar with, start with YouTube. You can be live streaming in minutes even as a beginner. All you need is a webcam and a microphone.

When it comes to engaging, I learned very early on that the only thing you need to do in the beginning is just to keep talking. If you're live-streaming a game, talk about what you're doing. Start there. As you get more comfortable, talk about why you're doing what you're doing on the screen. The goal is simple: *keep talking*. If your live stream is about a topic, idea, or professional practice,

talk about a small aspect of it. Dive deep into an explanation. As your audience shows up, engage with them. Say hello, ask them questions. The nerves will shake off with practice. If you stream consistently enough, you will find regulars who will show up. These regulars will be the backbone of your community. It's time to serve their needs.

Creating a living and breathing community requires that you are the heart of it. If you're not grinding (showing up consistently), the community will die. It will take time to grow your community, but you must be willing to be the model of what it means to build a relationship with another person halfway across the world. It requires intentional engagement with the human soul. The time you put into it will create the bonds possible for the community to breathe on its own, and therefore, take on a life of its own. Your community will be able to live on its own and begin creating value for you back as you take on a facilitator role as opposed to *the* leader. Now, you'll be cooking with gas.

Engaging consistently with your audience is the recipe for community building. Choose your platform and medium and begin. The real journey has only just begun!

CHAPTER 46

COMMUNITY

CREATING A COMMUNITY MISSION

As I began creating the framework for my community in the cryptocurrency space, I regularly used language that brought in the context of an adventure, a quest, or grand exploration. We were explorers, after all, going to the moon on our spaceship with our Bitcoin gains. We were the few who would dare journey into an untested world of blockchain, where scams were abundant, and influencers and personalities became sell-outs of shitcoins. It was uncharted territory. We had the banks and major financial institutions and financial gurus speak out against the monetary systems of cryptocurrency. There were politicians, media giants, and tech billionaires telling us that cryptocurrency is a fad and that blockchain doesn't work. Big corporations and tech companies began to censor those who spent time spreading the gospel of Bitcoin (like me). What emerged was something fantastic, personalities willing to speak out to the world about the power and potential of blockchain—the good that was happening and the new technologies that were being explored. Digital communities popped up, and one of those was mine. We grew by the thousands, and a very distinct mission emerged: *To build a community platform so that people could trade, socialize, and develop their applications.*

I have found that people come to communities that reflect their values and principles. That means you do not focus on what you're selling, but rather become a networker and people-connector. Our guiding mission that became the glue for people was that everyone on the spaceship had a role to play. We created different titles for

different levels of service, like Cryptonauts and Crypto Pirates. Each level of service was determined by how much volunteer time people were willing to bring to the table. It was self-organizing and decentralized. We appointed moderators for TheBitcoin.Pub forum, Slack channels, Discord channels, YouTube channel, and other social applications. We told our community that there are many seats on the spaceship and lots of room. They got to choose their position and determine what they wanted to do on the trip to the moon. It was a simple metaphor and story. It resonated with the people in our community because they were people who also wanted a system built for them to belong.

In many ways, we were test driving our journey into building community tools for the future of the web. We knew first hand the power and potential of the community to help startups find product-market-fit and also offset startup costs when the founder has to bootstrap. The key is finding a mission worth striving for together. You must learn to communicate that mission daily, over and over to yourself, to your audience, and your community. It will remind your people of why it's worth investing their time in what you are building, while also receiving value from the time you put into creating content and connecting with them. It may seem odd to consider this type of transaction, but it will be more and more prevalent as we move into a mobile-first video-first world.

I see a world where education is democratized completely. Where learning and physical trade schools are the norm. Gone are the days of the monolithic university with endowments that support four-year programs worth nothing when the student graduates. Online education is the norm, which can translate to physical learning as necessary per the trade the student is interested in learning. Specialty schools dominate the landscape, and co-ops and internships become even more prolific.

Entire communities will build and grow around these decentralized platforms of interest. Entire economies will rise, and commerce between digital community members will be made easy by cryptocurrencies or other digital tokens. These communities will

require leaders, willing to share their voices with the world. Those that have compelling mission statements and a persistent voice will survive and triumph.

*Update - Thanks to the recent pandemic of COVID-19, the world is moving even faster towards a mobile-first, video-first, remote-work world. Businesses are scrambling to understand how to use remote-teleconferencing technologies and create environments where all of their employees are working from home. Traditional service companies like sit-down restaurants and boutique shops now face a need to go mobile, online, and even using video as a means of surviving. The forcing mechanism of COVID-19 created a new reality for businesses around the world. The surge in remote work and the establishment of remote as the norm had just begun.

In the wake of the Corona Virus came many great new ideas and missions to rally around. New techniques in face masks and filter technology began in earnest, and technology platforms like Zoom got a real chance to prove their efficiency at scale. Powerful ideas were born out of tragedy. Purposeful missions helped grow the communities and causes.

What is your mission statement for your tribe?

Where are you posting your journey today?

CHAPTER 47

COMMUNITY

BUILD A SPACE FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

As my audience and community quickly outgrew the YouTube comments section, I needed a place for people to gather and discuss their ideas. Communities need a space to grow, and you need a place where you can engage directly with the community members to create deeper connections. There are many systems that you can use to allow for multiple chats: Telegram, WeChat, Discord, Slack. Discord and Slack will enable an administrator to provide different channels for different types of discussions. You can also create moderators and permissions that grant committed and "trustworthy" mods to take on more responsibility.

I didn't like any of these as they did not allow for google SEO to be leveraged nor historical conversation context to be preserved. I wanted people to be able to learn from each other and have those conversations documented. I wanted Search to be a primary behavior before people engage, and I wanted the ability for people to create their own threads and conversation topics. The choice was clear. We built a forum called TheBitcoin.Pub powered by Discourse (<https://www.discourse.org/>). By leveraging a powerful forum platform, we were able to allow our community to have full conversations with each other, asynchronously. We enjoyed receiving so many community member contributions in the form of guides, tutorials, onboarding new people, facilitating local meetups, ensuring proper hygiene of the forum, and even testers and engineers to help us improve the forum.

We soon found that there was a different type of community member, one who enjoys sporadic conversations and jumping in and out at their leisure. For this community, we chose a different kind of moderator who enjoys this faster-paced communication style. We used a system called Discord (<https://discordapp.com/>) to allow people to chat unhindered with each other without the desire to revisit old conversations. We also gave them the ability to live chat with anyone else who was willing to talk. Possessing the ability to have real conversations with real people at any time and brought together by a common goal is very powerful. We received many exceptional feature requests and ideas from conversations we were never a part of and merely received the notes after the fact!

Do not be fooled, though. Building a community isn't easy. It's a grind. In the very beginning, you have to be the single most prolific poster and provider of the content, daily. You have to model what type of engagement and interaction will be the norm in the community. People from afar can only be excited to give their time when they know it is going to a good cause, purpose, or person.

For myself, I had to post on multiple platforms every day, sometimes, well-thought-out responses and questions to my community that can take hours of my time. Remember, community-building will always be a relationship game. That will never change.

As you grow your audience, begin thinking about what type of place you'd like to grow your audience into a community. Consider what kind of engagement you prefer, chat-style, or posts asynchronously? Will you be doing video chats? Live streams? Voice only? What about artifacts, documents, and memes? You can begin your search by looking for the best platforms for community. Currently, there isn't a perfect system out there that can provide for multiple personalities of a community member. However, the market for community tools is growing exponentially, and founders are getting closer every day.

Understand who you are and how you enjoy engaging with your current communities today. Don't forget to consider how you will manage these community members and what superpowers you can give them. Engaged community members are great, but evangelist members are aces.

Your gravity is growing. It's time to add gasoline to the fire.

[For those wondering about my community]

My community is everywhere. Multiple YouTubes, Multiple Twitters, Multiple TikToks, Multiple Instagrams, Pinterest, Medium, Substack, LinkedIn, and more. I'm a machine. You don't have to be like me, but if you are willing to put in the work, it pays. Period.

Read from my most active blog here: <http://theagilevc.substack.com>

See my personal YouTube here: <http://youtube.com/thebitcoinlambo>

CHAPTER 48

COMMUNITY

LET THE COMMUNITY DRIVE THE BRAND

The fastest way to grow your Gravitational Brand is to find subscribers or followers who consistently show up in your live streams or feeds and engage with them. It isn't hard at all. Simply find a way to message them or get in touch with them and ask them questions around why they are here and what value they are getting out of your content generation. If you are running a community system, forum, or chat system, you can easily direct message people and ask them for their feedback and willingness to step up their volunteer game even more.

As you engage with more regulars on your program or community system, you will find more opportunities to engage with them on a more personal level. Reaching out and making a connection can seem daunting at first. However, it is no different than meeting a stranger at a party. The position you want to be in is the one with the questions. You need to figure out why they are here and whether they are interested in helping you accomplish your mission.

These should be fun and exciting conversations as you dive deeper into who they are and what excites them in helping themselves by helping you out. The conversations you'll have with your closest community members will help you tap into the heart of the community. The amount of knowledge and feedback you can gain from having many ears to the ground will allow you to find other individuals to help you on your journey. The more people you

have, the more ideas you'll receive on how to increase your audience and the value you can personally bring to the community. It's a win-win for you and the people you help.

Communities involve communication and collaboration among equals, not top-down directives. While this is true, you'll still need a thin hierarchy to manage the masses. For some of your community members to become ambassadors and evangelists for your brand and mission, they must receive three things: *access, recognition, and status*.

As your community and brand expand, you'll eventually have to choose individuals that you have grown to trust to help you on your mission. These individuals require a higher level of access to you and your leadership. I have found that weekly to bi-monthly video calls give exclusive community members enough access to you and your leadership. During these times, you can give them tasks to complete, discuss community goals and objectives, as well as field feedback on your growth. Volunteers enjoy being close to the leader, and this is your chance to allow them into the inner circle. Give them your heart, tell them your dreams, and share your life with them. There is no wrong way to do this. However, I will tell you from experience that the more radically transparent you are with your life, the more influence you will have with your community leaders.

Community leaders can take many forms. In my experience, you'll want to stay away from any strong personalities within your community who also want to be community leaders or ambassadors. You'll have to choose wisely here. Strong-willed individuals can be intimidating to new members or curious individuals taking a peek at what your community is all about. It certainly depends on the context of your world, but you'll always want to bias yourself towards individuals who love on everybody. *Individuals who ooze inclusivity and togetherness are the best*. Find those types of people.

I always enjoy a kind word, no matter where it comes from and regardless of intentions. Many times, an encouraging word comes precisely at the moment when I need it most. I'm sure you've been there too. These types of positive comments and support are too short in supply, and your community members need your positive voice from time to time. I'll admit that I'm generally not great at this, and I forget to pop my head up from long days and take a good look at the community. Remember to not only encourage people in the community but also recognize people who consistently show up and always give back to the inhabitants.

Digital communities are transient by design, with many floating in and out of these digital hubs once they receive the value they need or find what they were looking for. Make sure to recognize those that continue to show up and give of their time. This will encourage them to provide even more of their precious time to helping grow a community that gives back to them. I've found that when you find the right people who show up consistently and appreciate your encouragement and recognition, these types of people can be your internal moderators, the peace-keepers of the community, and those willing to love on others within the community. These are the people you want as part of your Welcome Team when new members arrive. They are also your people who will help you organize a live event when you get there.

There is something very egalitarian about the idea of earning status. "Status" is not something I care much about, nor consider as an entrepreneur. As a founder, I'm always starting from scratch, beginning anew, and creating from nothing. In every project I pursue, I'm the lowest on the totem pole in the beginning. What I have learned in community building is that not everyone is built like me or incentivized like I am. Some enjoy having the status of being part of a community, being part of something greater than themselves, and being close to someone (like yourself) who is leading the charge. They may never be brave enough to start a project like you are, or create something new, or create a Gravitational Brand like you are now. But they are willing to

support someone willing to bear the risk of trying something new and appreciates the status and honor that comes along with that support. In my experience, these can be the most significant outside marketers of your brand, message, or product. They take great pride in being able to say that they are part of your community and know the founder of XYZ. There isn't anything wrong with this, but you need to recognize that these types of people can be your greatest ally in the expansion of your brand.

As your community grows, it will be imperative that you begin to delegate to expand. You'll make plenty of mistakes as you build your tribe into a community. I have a thousand examples I could give you from growing communities: from harassment to internal hacking, removing scammers to banning accounts (we also had over 3000+ daily active users on our properties with millions of views per month on our forum). The goal over time is to create artifacts and readme's that define your community guidelines, mission, and values. Let this be an emergent process; don't rush it. There is no point in pre-building any of these ideas. You'll know when you have the right volunteers and active community to co-create those things with them. It'll be a great community event that can galvanize even more recruitment.

Your Gravitational Brand can only grow in size if you let the community speak for you. They must know the message, and they must have a place for people to gather. When you have thousands of fans communicating your message and inviting outsiders to a location to chat and learn, you'll create a flywheel of community growth, driven by those that care about you.

CHAPTER 49

COMMUNITY

ON SUBSCRIPTION MODELS AND PRICE TIERS

I have experimented with both subscription models and price tiers for exclusive content in two of my communities. For one of my communities, we became a Patreon success story, growing our subscription to 750+ paying customers at an average of \$15/month (<https://blog.patreon.com/monetization-strategies-bitcoin-pub>). I know for a fact that subscription and price tier models work, and if you read the full Patreon article, you'll realize how much work it is to do it well.

The reason Patreon and subscription models didn't work for us in that startup is that it required too much time. We weren't full-time content creators now that we had venture funding. We were building a product. As such, we needed to focus on all of the business and product development work. As the chief evangelist, I was speaking at conferences, working with investors, and traveling to roadshow our product. I was also the primary content creator for our community. As all of our startup duties mounted, we had to remove the subscription model and just focus on the community leaders so that they could manage the broader community. We also hired a full-time community manager to help as well.

I would highly recommend investigating subscription models and platforms that can serve you best. There are plenty out there for any type of medium, whether it's art, video, podcasting, shows, newsletters, books, or anything where you can differentiate value

from the services you provide your community. Four options to consider when creating tiers for service:

1. Premium digital content - behind the scenes access or early access to content
2. Delivering tangible value and results - providing a product or coaching/consulting
3. Accountability - 1 on 1 with community leaders or focus group
4. Recognition and status - pay for digital badges or achievements

If you are getting to a point where subscription models are required for you to go full-time into your project or brand, then simply begin by asking your community what they might want or experiment with a new offering. No need to be too creative, just try something and see who shows up!

"It is good and right for a person to earn a wage serving others, lest they come to despise those they serve." - Me

The above has been my mantra for a long time when it comes to community-building. To grow a community means to serve people, and with that, over time, there should be compensation that is commensurate with the effort you have put into creating a shared space for others to connect and gather. You can also leverage monetary support from your community to off-set any costs of running the community or use the help to create swag, prizes, or tokens of appreciation.

Over time, a Gravitational Brand will always allow you to establish a community with the audience you have gathered. Creating tiers of access and going more in-depth with a select segmentation of your collective makes natural sense. Don't feel bad if your experiments don't work out. You must experiment many times to figure out what types of paid services your community is willing to support and purchase. With enough

experimentation, you will be able to find service offerings that are sustainable for both you and your customers.

Do not be afraid to ask for compensation for your efforts. It is right and fair.

CHAPTER 50

COMMUNITY

IN-PERSON EVENTS CREATE PERMANENCE

As your Gravitational Brand and community grow in size and influence, invariably, you'll want to establish even deeper roots to ensure your community expands and brings in even more people. During 2017, we organized with several leaders in our community to develop outposts in multiple cities, including Atlanta, New York, Dallas, and San Francisco. I flew out to these locations to host the first community meetup in these areas and encourage all of the individuals who came. The usual format was relatively simple:

- Small encouraging talk about how they can help expand cryptocurrency to their networks
- Eating Korean BBQ together
- Passing out swag and getting to know each person
- Paying for drinks and food and making sure people had a great time

The outcome of this type of effort was incalculable. By 2019 we had expanded internationally with Global Community Meetup locations at Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Dallas, New York City, Philadelphia, Tampa, Tuscon, Washington DC, Berlin, London, Seoul, Tokyo, Sydney, and Beijing with many other locations in the works! The mission was clear, help me in expanding the reach of cryptocurrency to ever corner of the globe and grow our international user base for our product. We had hundreds of individuals working with us, spreading our message and expanding our influence in the cryptocurrency market. Thanks to our

international community, we were able to create many different prototypes of our applications and software to localized tastes and preferences. The feedback we received was influential in helping us find product-market-fit quickly due to the speed of feedback we got from our international partners and community leaders. Not only that, but we had several volunteers help translate my videos, content, and workshops to multiple languages including, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, Russian, French, German, and Chinese.

What could you achieve with an army of volunteers who believe in your mission, have been visited and shook hands with the leader (you), and are willing to go out and evangelize your message? What could be possible when you scale your efforts and allow for the self-organization of your community? What would emerge when your volunteers become your salespeople, and suddenly you are receiving inbound requests for your services or product from countries you've never visited? What would you do with such an army? What if you equipped them with templates, guidelines, frameworks, and materials to be intentional in their evangelism of your brand? What if your trips to meet your community physically was more than just a check-in? What if your trips were well-designed coaching engagements to consult to and teach your community members on how better to communicate the value propositions of your brand and message?

No matter how cool it is to connect with people across the globe digitally, the real competitive advantage is to meet with them in the flesh, give them hugs, shake their hands, and tell them that you appreciate all of their support face-to-face. Meeting people in the real world allows you to touch their soul, stir up emotions, and equip them with materials, tools, or knowledge to improve their efforts or bolster their resolve. Creating community meetups in strategic cities will also give you the ability to mobilize a group for a conference or event in those cities where a community presence matters. Imagine going to a meetup and having 150+ members of your community tweeting about your arrival, socializing on Facebook that you'll be here for a limited time, and inviting others to meet you and join the community.

For many of our readers, you are not at a place where you'll need to travel to establish outposts and meetups, but you can still leverage the strength of video to connect with your community in powerful ways. Consistent live streaming and digital meetups can be powerful ways to grow relationships, explore opportunities to mobilize individuals to execute on their ideas to help spread your Gravitational Brand. I suggest a bi-monthly or even weekly engagement schedule depending on the type of strategies you have for leveraging your community leaders. You can use these digital meetups for coaching, getting feedback, or AMA (ask me anything) sessions.

Regardless of how your community forms and grows, you'll still want to seek out individuals for in-person relationships. You can quickly start by simply asking the question if there is anyone in your audience that is local to you and if they'd be interested in meeting up. Often, these individuals can be the very thing you need to get your message out to the next ring of influence. In some cases, these individuals not only become your staunchest supporters but people who make things happen for you, going out of their way to serve you because you first served them and were willing to meet up in the flesh.

I find it unfortunate that physical meetups are required to get to the (next level) of community. Consider it a human-constraint that we haven't been able to overcome. While I speak somewhat tongue-in-cheek, we humans are really that frail and needy. The digital world can give us everything we desire except a feeling of fulfillment, a deep sense of belonging, and connection. These human constraints are the most powerful, and maybe that is why those who go above and beyond, spend time and resources to meet the people that support them physically, are the ones who end up on top and are the most successful with a Gravitational Brand. I can think of many great examples of men and women who have created unstoppable gravity towards their brand. All of them started small, with local gatherings. Now, some of them fill up entire stadiums with 3-day conferences. While this may not be the goal of your

brand that you have in mind, do not forget the value of real relationships. They will be the unfair advantage you need to create more abundant opportunities for your brand awareness, influence, and scale.

Seek out physical relationships. They'll be the secret sauce in the narrative of your story of winning.

CHAPTER 51

COMMUNITY

AUTHORITY IS RELATIONAL CAPITAL - GO DEEP

The human experience is to be shared. Now that we're in a mobile-first, video-first, and remote-work world, to get attention, you have to get out there regularly. Part of creating gravity is you have to get in front of people as much as you can. Whether you're sitting on panels, speaking at conferences, offering your perspectives and advice on Twitter, or streaming behind the scenes content to your customers or community, you've got to put yourself out there enough that people begin to recognize your name and what you have to offer.

Just because you can create a social media machine and syndicate to 30+ places with your content (I do) doesn't mean you have any authority or voice in people's lives. You're only as useful as your audience deems you to be. Creating a Gravitational Brand is more than just being in the news cycle or speaking on stage in front of hundreds or thousands of people. I can give you many examples of YouTube videos of 'experts' speaking at conferences, and only 14 people have watched the video online. Visibility and cultural relevance are important, but they aren't the most critical aspects of personal branding.

It may seem counterintuitive, but in many ways, a Gravitational Brand shouldn't be all about you - it should be about your audience. It is your audience and community that decides whether you're an authority or not. All types of digital press appearances are great, but it doesn't mean you have any actual power to speak

into people's lives, and even more, have them take your words seriously. Being in the press only gives an impression of authority and clout. It's your audience's job to provide you with the ability to influence them, sell to them, and to be a part of their lives. By showing your community that you're willing to offer not only your knowledge and experience but also the insides of your life, allows your community to connect with you on a human level. Your humanity is your genuine authority.

The best way to grow authority in a community is to understand that your private interactions matter as much as public relations and your outward persona. It will be the individuals in your community that you're willing to go deep with, invest in, and pour into that will trumpet your authority to the rest of the community as you give these individuals more opportunity to self-organize and help grow your community with you. You'll have to be wise as to whom you go deep with, and the great thing is that you don't have to do it with a lot of people. A Gravitational Brand has a lot to do with your public persona and how much an expert people perceive you to be. Still, it's also how good you are with working with individuals one-on-one daily that will be the firm foundation of growth for the long term.

According to a Gartner study, 80 percent of your brand's future revenue will come from just 20 percent of your existing customers and community. The Pareto Principle strikes again! I've found this to be 100% true as my consulting work is more word-of-mouth than of outright advertising. I focus on giving my very best to my clients, customers, and community. I give them my all, everything I have to create meaningful relationships beyond just the advice and coaching I give. I always remind myself that while helping people achieve something is excellent, but to do life with them and be a part of their narrative is far more critical to me. People will rarely remember what you do for them, but they will always remember how you made them feel.

The more that you're willing to show and reveal to your community about your imperfect life, the ups-and-downs of your

company, and transparent insights to how you do work will be the glue that keeps your community secure, healthy and growing.

CHAPTER 52

COMMUNITY

MICRO-INFLUENCERS ARE TRUST AT SCALE

Growing your Gravitational Brand can be understood as increasing trust at scale. When big businesses think of influencer marketing, they often imagine paying influencers with millions of followers or subscribers big bucks to shill their brand—outdated and old-world thinking. There are plenty of articles you can find online showing that while big influencer marketing is still very much a thing, the trust factor and effectiveness of these big names are waning and diminishing. Consumers are looking for people who are more relatable and personable.

Micro-influencers (defined by having around 5,000-15,000 followers or subscribers) is the real secret sauce to growing trust at scale. These micro-influencers have earned the right to speak into their small community of followers and have garnered the trust and authority to have their voices and opinion heard. In every single startup I've made, I've done two things that have helped me grow my trust at scale:

- Interview other micro-influencers
- Collaborate with micro-influencers

Identifying, contacting, and offering collaboration opportunities with hundreds of micro-influencers is not only a less costly approach to growing your Gravitational Brand, but it's far more effective than paying a big influencer to push one post out about you. It's neither sustainable nor authentic.

Your community will be built on relationships, trust, and continuous value that you provide to them. It's a hard-earned dollar, a time-tested relationship, and an honest day's work. I've seen more than my fair share of content creators blow it by shilling products, partnering with the wrong businesses, and accepting advertising that is off-brand. Sure, if you can get a big influencer to promote you, do it, but do not ever sacrifice your character and principles for a short term dollar. It's just never worth it.

I've found three powerful ways to engage with micro-influencers to help scale your brand and trust to a broader audience:

1. Find influencers that are already posting content that aligns with what you need to be promoted - If you're just starting, be prepared to write a ton of emails and slide into a ton of DMs, only to be ignored or deleted. This is the game. You must keep asking until someone gives you a chance to do a collaboration, interview, or cross-promotion that makes sense. It will be viewed as a networking opportunity that is in alignment with your values and principles and does not disrupt the growth of your community. In other words, your community should have no qualms with you expanding your network. If your community asks questions like, "*Why are you partnering with him?*", then you know you're out of alignment.
2. Do your research and leverage social tools - Finding micro-influencers is not complicated at all. Do simple searches on social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram for keywords that relate to the content you are producing. An excellent hack I've found is to create a new brand account and begin subscribing to influencers and let the social media system give you suggestions on who else to follow. You can leverage this brand account to allow the system to continue to suggest other individuals to follow, connect with, and collaborate with!
3. Create digital 'mana packs' for your collaborations and provide them with a clear brand message you want to be

communicated. Once you have secured some partnerships and cross-posting opportunities with other micro-influencers, equip them with a zip file or a page on your website that allows them to download all of the branding collateral you have. This allows them to use it in any promotion or communication out to their audience. You want to reduce as much friction as you can when it comes to them helping you out. I like to ensure that all of my micro-influencers and my community have access to all of my branding materials, pictures, logos, designs, fonts, and more so that at any point in time, they can grab what they need to add to their thumbnails, posts, or videos. Make it super easy for them to promote you.

With every single startup I've built, I've made it a mission to reach out to the most influential people as well as micro-influencers to help me scale my brand. Be prepared to white-glove your collaborators and do most of the heavy lifting so they can spend more time socializing your brand and less time creating collateral to help you. The power of multiple influencers is a crucial ingredient in expanding your community to other new members and markets who haven't heard of you yet.

The biggest win is that if you dedicate yourself to serving other influencers, your Gravitational Brand will grow in ways you never conceived of and surprise you daily in how truly remarkable network effects are.

The internet is fantastic.

CHAPTER 53

COMMUNITY

GENERATIONAL GAPS AND TECHNOLOGY

It is simply impossible to be a Gravitational Brand to every marketable demographic out there. We must choose our audience and the technology systems they enjoy using. Many factors contribute to the success of your brand. These include quality content, understanding search algorithms, engagement tactics, posting times, syndication, and more. The best strategy for success is knowing where your target audience resides on the social playing field and catering heavily and consistently to those platforms.

It's important to understand where each generation lives on the internet and being able to target them directly so that you can turn all of those likes, follows, and subscribers into conversions and sales. While the following breakdown of generations isn't prescriptive, it's up to you to decide whom you will target. In my opinion, I find it to be just as essential in determining who you will NOT market to, as it is who you will.

- Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964) - Love Facebook over other social media platforms. They enjoy sharing and reading articles and other forms of text-based content. Marketing to them using traditional advertising on Facebook works wonders. The boomer's second favorite application is Pinterest. Higher spending power and homeownership allows for more time to find home improvement projects and the DIY generation.

- Generation X (Born 1965-1980) - Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter are their weapons of choice because Generation X witnessed the invention of the internet and the gap between traditional and digital media. They also appreciate both written and video formats.
- Millennials/Generation Y (Born 1981-1996) - Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube are where the majority of Millennials play. Since this generation was born in a time of exponential growth in technology and media, they have the broadest usage of a whole spectrum of preferred channels. Online reviews and word of mouth recommendations are a big deal for this audience, and they also are the most significant users of LinkedIn. Currently, it is used by 60% of people ages 25-34.
- Generation Z (Born 1996-2012) - Loves Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube. Gen Z prefers video and visuals and short, motion-based content. They grew up playing with their parent's iPhones and are drawn to applications that allow for hyper-personalization. Gen Z is more willing to make purchase decisions based on the impact the brand will have on the cause they support. This demographic of users want to consume as much content as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Knowing your audience is a powerful filter for what types of platforms you should use. Trying to advertise equally across all social media platforms will cause average or below-average conversion rates.

Generational gaps do exist, and they consume content and respond to marketing tactics differently across the board. Spend time doing more research on the specific generation that your content will cater to beyond the overview I've written above.

The basic rule would be to play into where your audience is active and spend enough time in those systems to adjust your marketing tactics as you run experiments on how to engage best, entertain,

and serve your community.

If you want to try experimenting with other social platforms, do it! Just remember that you'll need to adjust the format and delivery of your content to fit that generation's appetite best. I haven't always been good at this, but I do love using multiple platforms!

CHAPTER 54

COMMUNITY

A WINNING BUSINESS MODEL

I've been a follower of Salesforce since it first arrived on the scene in late 1999 and watched as they went public in 2004. I had the unique opportunity to be one of their first Agile coaches training ScrumMasters and Product Owners as they grew with what seemed to be unstoppable and endless growth post IPO. Thanks to the massive infusion of cash, I was able to train and coach at multiple Salesforce locations over several years. One of the things I loved the most was watching the worldwide community grow. While global participation in civic organizations continues to decline, Salesforce is an example of the booming online community ecosystem that is more than just vibrant. It has become a business model all on its own. I remember when Salesforce tried to trademark "social enterprise" in 2012 and got shot down by a European company. It made a lot of sense at the time. Salesforce had become more than just a "customer relationship management" tool. It had become a social phenomenon of how people interacted with each other at work.

Two million strong and growing. These Salesforce community members do more than just support each other and answer each other's questions. They organize events, produce original content daily, and engage with Salesforce management and leadership to help expand global reach and to share in the success of Salesforce. The company's annual "Dreamforce" conference, which attracts 200,000 raving fans to San Francisco each year, represents a mecca for its ecosystem to convene, build relationships, and advance its domination of corporate tooling for all. While this type of

conference may not be your type of scene, spend some time watching videos of what it's all about. You'll not only be amazed at what this global community can do in terms of generating tangible value to the Salesforce business - content, local events, global events, online advocacy and marketing, technology production, customer support, education, coaching, and training. All of this is free, for the community, by the community.

Salesforce did it right by focusing on the community as a business model, and they created all of the precise mechanisms for human connections to happen and be supported. Behavioral economics and psychological research have taught us that the real stickiness, the actual glue that can keep communities alive are connectedness, belonging, mission, and meaning, especially when we are at work.

Human beings are fundamentally social creatures, and communities deliver on these benefits, creating a sense of shared accountability and shared mission while preserving individuality and autonomy.

When you dig deep into the community and go even deeper with selected community leaders, you can transition from delivering a service or product to supporting the community as a business. If you can do this, then you'll reap the benefits of an endless flywheel of income, emotional support, and relational fulfillment for life!

1. Customer Acquisition Costs (CAC) decline - Enthusiastic members help acquire new members in a tight viral loop.
2. Increased Retention - Community members are reluctant to abandon the community, especially if you've created a community platform where they have delivered unique content and received awards or badges for participating and giving of their time and efforts.
3. Higher Gross Margins - Costs of service decrease as members support one another, coach, and in my experience, train one another from a template training system I created once!

The future of your brand and business is a function of how open you are to the community at large. The more open, connected, and engaged you are with your community, the more sustainable your work becomes. Your people will work with you and for you, driving brand awareness and communicating their member experiences to the rest of the world. The ways we are interacting with brands, products, and companies are changing in drastic ways. Those who care the most for their community will create systems and platforms for them to connect and will reap positive network effects. As the population grows, the community will get smarter, better at creating content, finding needs to fulfill, become a global force, and generating more gravitational value to you, day in and day out.

Caring for your community and people is like exponential growth. In the beginning, it's slow and intentional. When the community is small, it is your time to set the right foundations of a shared purpose and values as well as clearly defined incentives and rewards for those that decide to go deeper. You will have to help them craft accountability and frameworks for how community leaders will work together, and ownership and responsibility for their part in the growth of the community. It won't be easy, but when there are opportunities for community members to play an active role in governance and of reshaping the growing community structure, bring people together and let them go and grow. The conversations will be tough, and you'll have to grow up too. Part of caring for your people is allowing them to shape the world they are a part of and support.

As you grow your community team, you'll want to measure just a few things to ensure you're getting the most out of your community leaders:

1. Content creation and consumption - You'll want to track participation in members consuming content or producing content. For example, measuring community traffic, sign-ups, individual contributions (e.g., helping onboard new

- members, answering questions, running digital or in-person events, improving content, or creating new content).
2. Execution of more significant ideas - You'll want to track the effectiveness of the experiments your community leaders are embarking on and ensuring that all messaging, branding, marketing, quality, and customer/user experience matches your expectations.
 3. Community guideline creation and business needs - You'll want to retrospect and review the evolution of your community continually and how community members are creating models for moderation, conflict resolution, building, and delivering content and incentives. As you grow and scale your community and brand, you'll want to know what works and what doesn't!

The results are mind blowing when you have built a digital community from the ground up. I love the fact that I've been doing life with some of them for over a decade, and many of them I'll never meet in person! I'll forever be a better person for endeavoring to build a community that I can now transfer to every new project I move onto next.

How's that for *real* lifetime customer value?

CHAPTER 55

COMMUNITY - HOW YOU'LL MAKE MONEY PROVIDING VALUE TO THE WORLD

SUMMARY

The value of your Gravitational Brand will be the people who join you in your life's story and journey. Your willingness to engage with them and extend your humanity into their lives by providing not only content to them but engagement with them through video. It is a better way to experience life and an unfair advantage in life to have a community to do it online and even in person.

You can make a great living by consistently providing value to people who care about what you have to say. Before they can care about what you say, you have to be able to communicate who you are. To do that, you have to put in the required reps and improve your communication skills.

There is nothing better in life than to experience this once-in-a-lifetime journey for 90 years with lots of other great people, whether they are digital or not. Life is hard enough on its own.

Don't go the road alone. Be the first person you know to create a Gravitational Brand around you, and you'll never be without friends, opportunities, and amazing experiences.

My life is fuller because of my internet friends.

Search for me and join one of my many platforms I'm on! :)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



- Peter Saddington is a 4x Founder [@Emritio](#) [@welcomecatena](#) [@VINwiki](#) [@AgileForAll](#) (acq. 2014 prev. Action & Influence)
- Angel investor & Venture Capitalist
- Author of The Agile Pocket Guide (Wiley 2012)
- Agile Coach & Certified Scrum Trainer
- ~~Pro Amateur Enthusiast Hobbyist~~ Wannabe racecar driver – SCCA Race License
- Read the [Peter Saddington User Manual](#) – If you'll ever find yourself working with me!
- **1997-2004** – I began my career as an engineer helping Johnson & Johnson create it's first online education platform for eye-doctors in the late 90's (Java/Perl/Actionscript). I then completed 3 Master's degrees while working as a contract scientist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- **2005-2017** – I built a software development company and spent 12 years (acquired 2014) traveling the world coaching and training thousands in [Agile/Scrum as a Certified Scrum Trainer](#) and even published a few books ([The Agile Pocket Guide](#), John Wiley & Sons 2012).
- **2016** – I built a [car app](#) and media company with [1M subscribers+](#) doing over \$2M in ARR!
- **2017** – [I took a 2 year sabbatical from](#) consulting and built venture-funded [cryptocurrency apps](#). During this time I went internationally viral (est. 300M+ views) for buying the [world's first Lamborghini Huracan with Bitcoin](#) (CNBC, Yahoo, Dupont Registry, Business Insider, Popular Mechanics, Tech Crunch, GQ, Forbes, Maxim, KBS Korea News, S.China Post, and many more).
- **2019** – First acquisition in 2014, building a \$100K+/MRR automobile app in 2016, and in 2017 I built a venture-funded cryptocurrency company. I know how to build community and gravity and I want to share my experiences of community, creating gravitational influence, and how video is going to change the world. I write Gravity book.
- **2020** - Built a now \$38M+ revenue company in the IoT and blockchain space, with a \$10M Venture Fund focused on investing in blockchain projects, and started a cryptocurrency mining/staking operation that is doing extraordinarily well. :) Let's goo~!
- **2022+** - We onto the next one... who wants to ride with me?