

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Your Life Purpose, One Million Strong

Adam Leipzig · Wednesday, March 12th, 2014

What is life purpose multiplied by YouTube?

When, a little over a year ago, the organizers of TEDx Malibu asked me to give a talk, I realized that many in the 200-seat auditorium would be creative entrepreneurs, so I tried to come up with a talk they would find useful.

Recently the video of my talk surpassed *one million* YouTube views. In the grand scheme of billions of streaming videos, a million views is probably insignificant, but still I am humbled by it and sense the power in over a million people thinking deeply about their life purpose.

Here's one thing YouTube does right: It can bring a million people together around an idea.

As with the people in Malibu, the YouTube audience is full of creative entrepreneurs— a term that carries special meaning because it joins together two groups of people who are not generally placed in the same category: entrepreneurs and artists. Entrepreneurs are artists because they have the artistic ability to envision something that has never been done before; artists are entrepreneurs because, in addition to being creative, they must craft the business principles for their success.

Creative entrepreneurs have a deep creative drive; they are writers, designers, developers, architects, painters, filmmakers, musicians, poets, choreographers, composers and more. Because their expression forms the chosen environment in which we live, creative entrepreneurs are the foundation of our culture; their provocations make us feel joy and empathy and reflect profoundly on our lives.

Yet, they are often frustrated at the difficulties of their journey, and how hard it can be to forge a living from their art. They fear, at times, if they truly know their life purpose and wonder if they should abandon their work.

For my talk, I decided to adapt a series of questions I'd developed in my business consulting practice, when I work with companies finding their way and developing new products and services. For these companies, the challenge is to get out of their self-enclosed bubble and reach out to their market. Would the same approach work for creative entrepreneurs? Because artists need such congruence between their life purpose and their work, they can become too inward-facing, more focused on their own process than on their audience, and audience that hungers for brilliance, passion and the sublime.

In the talk, entitled *How to Know Your Life Purpose in 5 Minutes*, I asked everyone to answer five questions:

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- Who do you do it for?
- What do they want or need?
- How do they feel as a result?

Over the past year, I've received emails from creative people all over the world who have watched the video. While some ask me their own questions, most share their answers, telling me what they do, who they do it for, and how their audience feels. Many viewers resonate with a story I tell, about my 25th college reunion, and the gulf between people who planned careers versus those of us who studied for the joy of learning and to pursue our passions.

To carry further the theme of the talk, what's the next step for creative entrepreneurs? Once they have identified their audience, and know how the audience feels as a result (which gives you a way to talk to your audience), the next step is to build that audience bigger.

Today's game-changing dynamic is that all creative entrepreneurs can increase their audience and be in direct communication with them. While this used to be the job of publishers, gallery owners, studios, record labels and marketing companies, and doing this job is certainly a lot of work, there is an immense benefit: Now creative entrepreneurs can "own" their audience themselves. This is, in fact, what *makes* them entrepreneurs.

The audience you carry with you brings value wherever you go... even if the studio puts your project in turnaround, the record label drops you, or if you get fired from your design job.

Having your audience wherever you go: That spells success.

Speaking of spelling, a number of viewers have pointed out that the video and YouTube don't agree on the spelling of my name. As it turns out, YouTube is correct. That's another thing they do right.



Spellcheck! YouTube has it right; it's Adam LEIPZIG

Top image: Photography by Benjamin Edelstein © 2013, all rights reserved. Used with permission. Benjamin Edelstein is a renowned international award winning photographer. Born and raised in Miami, Florida, he is a self-taught photographer who specializes in both fine art and commercial photography.

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