

*THE FOLLOWING ARE SHORT EXCERPTS
FROM SELECT CHAPTERS. THE TABLE OF CONTENTS WINDOW
LISTS ALL CHAPTERS IN THIS VOLUME. ART CREATED BY ME.*

VOLUME THREE

THE STUDENT

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



When a bell is rung, it is not the initial strike that reaches to the far corners of the land, but the echoing tones carried by the peaks and valleys traveling out into the world to be heard and heeded.

Going to school is the building of *your bell*. Finishing school with a strong portfolio and great ambition is your mighty swing. The peaks and valleys are the successes and failures you must confront and conquer as the echo of that ringing swing becomes the worthy creative product of your inspiration and imagination as a professional Imagemaker.

Without a strong swing, or a bell that is not true in its casting, the resulting echoes will quickly fade. To give all you can to shaping your skills and vision, while tempering your fears and doubts, will forge an ironclad career that possesses great impact as it travels far beyond the horizon of your education and on to your most daring dreams.

DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR CAREER, OR DOES IT CHOOSE YOU?

What You Do for a Living, is Hopefully not only What You Will Do for Money. It's What You Will Do for Challenge, for Purpose...



...for Happiness

Few successful Imagemakers knew at an early age exactly what, where, and how they wanted to create. For many, the journey to success seems achievable only after some backwards process of elimination of those pursuits that don't challenge their most authentic potential. For those who rationalize or resist, only after being exhausted by their fears and doubts do they finally succumb to facing the truth to summon the courage, make the plan, and take the action to fulfill that potential.

If you tell your parents you want to be a doctor or a lawyer, you'll be rewarded with a proud smile and a knowing nod—but tell them you want to be a painter, sculptor, or poet—and you may be met with a dismissive roll of the eyes or a worried sigh.

Although many parents are supportive of their kid's plans to pursue a creative career, others refuse to even consider the possibility—offering nothing more than the dreaded, “*Do you want to starve?*” or “*Making art makes a nice hobby.*”

Even if your parents humor you with, “*go ahead—spend a year in Paris and paint,*” the next morsel of anxious advice could be, “*but why not get that business degree first?*” No matter how well-intentioned these parental pleas for sanity and security may sound, what echoes in your mind is the bleak warning, *you better have a way to get a real job when that artsy pipedream of yours dies.*

Although many kids in my high school possessed the talent and interest to crave a creative career, their parents, whether out of an abundance of caution or lack of knowledge, discouraged their pursuit of a life in the arts—causing them to settle for more traditional jobs. What could have been a lifelong career was demoted to a weekend hobby.

One of the most empowering and lasting gifts a parent can bestow is the unconditional and enthusiastic support of their child's passion—whether medicine, law, and yes—even art.

LESSON LEARNED

If you possess the confidence to harness your strengths, as well as the courage to face your weaknesses, you can begin a hopeful and healthy dialog with your future—*that essential give-and-take between your dreams and the world's demands that will determine the fate of your journey to success... and to happiness.*

WHAT KIND OF IMAGEMAKER DO YOU WANT TO BECOME?

*Granting Yourself Permission to Declare What You Really Want Can
Give Rise to the Fear that You May Not Achieve It*



The more confidence and optimism you possess when beginning any decision-making process, the more freedom you'll have in exploring your options. This open and positive attitude is rarely more empowering and calming than when choosing your career.

There are as many occupational options in the world of imagemaking as in the fields of medicine, law, and finance—whether it's the painter toiling toward their next gallery exhibition; the award-winning graphic designer laying out their latest advertising campaign; the daring photojournalist capturing their next global headline; or the visionary director filming their next summer blockbuster.

As you consider a creative career, the lofty and loaded question, *What do I want to do?* rarely offers a simple truth. It's more often countered with a cautious query, *What is the most practical career?*

If answered honestly, these two quandaries representing *desire vs. reason* almost never produce the same answer—nor should they. When honestly facing your potential, don't expect an obvious, quick, or easy solution.

To answer the following question can be the best first step to choosing your creative, educational, and professional path.

*If I could make a living by getting paid doing what I love,
what would it be?*

Remember that you're considering the commitment to a career that depends on *trusting your gut while following your muse*. Not the most practical approach to building a sturdy professional plan.

To allow yourself to be a free spirit of artistic expression, while also being expected to function within the confines and demands of the working world as a proven pro, you must be able to protect your intuition and imagination while also developing rational thinking and decisive action. This balancing act between creativity and strategy must begin as early as possible.

Through an alliance of gut feelings and clear thinking, this initially wide-open landscape of opportunities must be narrowed as you plot your trajectory to personal fulfillment and professional success.

WHAT KIND OF IMAGEMAKER DO YOU WANT TO BECOME? EXPLORES:

- *The Vast Range of Creative Careers for the Aspiring Imagemaker*
- *Deciding which Artistic Pursuit Serves Your Talents and Ambitions*
- *Establishing an Educational Plan to Pursue Your Chosen Career*
- *Researching the Marketplace Once Your Creative Career is Chosen*
- *The Courage, Strategy, and Passion to Join Your Profession*

THE IMAGEMAKER WITHIN



Michelangelo believed the divine masterpieces he was destined to carve dwelt inside the crude block of marble before him—and it was the obliging servant within him who had only to offer his gifts of skill, strength, and spirit to reveal the beauty or pain yearning to be set free from its stone womb.

Just as with the inherent yet dormant power and beauty of marble, much of what you will become as an Imagemaker already exists within you. The essence of your creative soul has always been there—seeking, growing, hoping.

Just as the sculptor must toil and trust in the journey to create their masterpiece, school can be the time and place to empower your inspiration and ambition to chip away fear and doubt by polishing your talent and vision into a career and life that will reveal to the world all you have to offer through your art.

FINDING YOUR VOICE



As a student developing the creative product that you'll carry into the professional world, you may be trying to fathom how your work ever could rise up and be heard above the chorus of brilliant, ambitious, and established Imagemakers.

You may believe you have much to say with your creative voice, yet dare not speak up for fear of being silenced by insecurity, rejection, or simply repeating what has already been said. Congratulations. You're in the right spot.

Although it's understandable to be intimidated by the prospect of testing your work against the pros, the best defense to avoid this crisis of confidence is to make choices that will declare you as a one-of-a-kind creative force.

To wield the power of an independent voice, you must strengthen your technical skills, refine your visual style, and most importantly, *embolden your mind and heart to confidently express what your creative product has to offer.*

THE CONTACT

Seeking Approval of Your Creative Product from an Actual, Real-Life, Working Imagemaker



Along with the aspiring rock star fortunate enough to play their demo song for Mick Jagger, or the high school basketball player who gets the chance to have LeBron James critique their jump shot, for me to have had the opportunity to seek advice and insight by presenting my work to a professional artist who may not be a household name—yet possesses no less talent, stature, and awe in their creative fields—has been an equal thrill in improving my skills and building my confidence.

So like the young rocker and baller, every ambitious Imagemaker with hopes of being amongst the best should seek out those pros who embody their wildest dreams—no matter how distant they may appear.

As corny as it sounds, it's even truer that *when it comes to rising to your highest potential, everyone needs a star to reach for.*

THE CONTACT EXPLORES:

- *Be Curious, Thorough, and Open Minded to Discover the Best Pros*
- *Study the Habits and Projects of Those Pros You Most Respect*
- *The Challenging Process to Contact Your Favorite Pro*
- *The Questions and Concerns When Preparing to Meet Your Pro*
- *Make the Most of the Information and Inspiration from Your Pro*

THE TORTURE

Taking a Small-Business Class



I took one business class at ArtCenter College. It nearly killed me.

Not because I busted my ass mastering the finer points between a *sole proprietorship* and a *limited liability company*. I nearly went insane just trying to sit through the first forty-five minute class.

No matter how much you may want to avoid it, the truth is that if you want to make money by making art, you'll have to be a businessperson as well as an Imagemaker. This fiscal fact of professional life should compel you to seek the instruction and information that supplies the practical tools to handle the nuts-and-bolts reality of your creative career.

THE TORTURE EXPLORES:

- *Facing the Reality that Understanding Business is Essential to Success*
- *Taking a Business Approach to Your Educational Adventure*
- *Learn as Much as Possible about Business while Still in School*
- *Take Advantage of Any Business Classes Your School Offers*
- *Connect with a Working Pro to Gain Insight into the Business World*

THE GOAL

Imagining Your Future Success



In front of you awaits a new course to chart—a creative journey where your career will be full of transcendent opportunity—as well as overflowing with the everyday bullshit that must be faced to achieve success.

After another day of hustling to scrape up your next paycheck and sending out your portfolio to another batch of long-shot clients, you'll power down your devices, plop down on your couch, and while you ponder the next day to peddle your wares, you may find your emotions wavering and your thoughts wondering, *what am I doing?*

As an aspiring professional Imagemaker facing the challenges of starting a career—regardless of where you decide to live and work—there is a far more important place in which you must dwell... Your mind.

Will this brain of yours be the safe haven where you'll welcome rest and resolve worry by retreating into the sanctuary of your intelligence and intuition for clarity and comfort? Or will it be a *mindfield* of self-defeating mantras of doubt indulging every worst-case scenario of self-fulfilling failure? The choice is yours.

To allow your thoughts and emotions to serve your potential, check in with yourself to nurture the positive and temper the negative. It's obviously healthy to give yourself the freedom to allow genuine feelings of potential failure to play out, but *only* for the purpose of preparing you to avoid them and ultimately *prevail*.

During the formative and often unstable time of building a career, doubt and fear are the unavoidable yet natural emotions capable of serving as a helpful warning sign of a deeper concern that must be addressed.

Despite the reality that troubling thoughts and feelings are a part of life, if you do find the stress and struggle to succeed too hard to handle, it might not be enough to talk with teachers, classmates, or family. A psychiatrist, psychologist, or spiritual mentor may support the process of coping with extended or deepening confusion, dread, depression, or hopelessness. Therapy also can unleash the insight, joy, and drive to empower the healthy emotional state needed to pursue a purpose with passion.

THE GOAL EXPLORES:

- *The Importance of Having No Limits when Determining Your Goals*
- *The Guts to Declare Your Goals to Those Who can Make Them Real*
- *Don't Be Afraid to Change Your Goals Along Your Educational Path*
- *Study the Achievements of Respected Pros to Help Define Your Goals*
- *Dealing with the Pressure that Comes with Reaching Your Goals*
- *Success is an Organic Process that Must Be Free to Grow*
- *After a Goal is Done, Use the Pride and Thrill to Pursue the Next One*