

Hey everyone! Welcome to a new edition of the podcast!

Before we get into the meat of this edition, I wanted to stop and say thanks to you, my dear readers and subscribers. I started this blog a couple of years ago and the response, well let's just say that it has been incredible!

Each week, many of you reach-out on the blog, Twitter and Facebook to let me know that you've taken something from one of my posts that has helped you on your journey to financial freedom. I can't tell you how happy that makes me and I'm grateful to be able to help you.

In fact, that's the entire reason my blog exists, to share what I know about achieving financial freedom in the hope that others can become financially independent. And to get feedback like that is wonderful.

So, thank you for reading and for subscribing to the blog!

Now, let's get into it...

I'm going to kick-off this edition of the podcast with a quote and it may surprise you to learn who made this quote. So, here's the quote:

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synth-a-size new things."

Does anyone want to take a guess as to who made that statement? It was none other than one of the greatest innovators and creators of our time, the late Steve Jobs.

Are you a little surprised that Jobs, being such a prolific **creator**, basically said that we don't really *create* things, it's more like we *connect* things?

Well, I couldn't agree more.

In fact, one of the first pages to be created on my blog was the My Story section. On that section, I state very clearly that I didn't **create** anything when it comes to building wealth. Rather, I mention on that page, that I simply connected the dots that were already **there**. To use Job's term, I just synth-a-sized things.

And that's the focus of today's podcast - The 3 C's- creating, connecting and copying.

Let's start out with creating.

For all the positives out there for creating something new, sometimes the very act of creating can be a hindrance. You see, some people get so busy trying to create a new path to success, that they ignore the existing path right in front of them.

These are just dots that simply need to be connected.

Let me provide an example from an unlikely source...

In 2004, Arno Min-kinen, a famous Finnish photographer, delivered the commencement speech to the New England School of Photography graduates.

As he spoke, Min-kinen shared a simple theory that, in his estimation, made all the difference between success and failure as a professional photographer. He called it The Helsinki Bus Station Theory.

Min-kinen was born in Helsinki. In the center of the city there is a large bus station and he began his speech by describing it to the students.

“Some two-dozen platforms are laid-out in a square at the heart of the city,” he said.

“At the head of each platform is a sign posting the numbers of the buses that leave from that particular platform. The bus numbers might read as follows: 21, 71, 58, 33, and 19. Each bus takes the same route out of the city for at least a kilometer, stopping at bus stop intervals along the way.”

Using the bus stops as a metaphor, he explained that each bus stop represents one year in the life of a photographer. Meaning the third bus stop would represent three years of photography experience.

Now what happens next, he said, is very interesting.

Many photography students work 1-3 years on something that they are 100% certain is original, unique work. Something that hasn't been done before.

But all too often, they later find out that the cool black and white landscape shots that they thought were unique have been done before. So had the color shots of people on a beach, shot from up high on a ladder. And so on.

So, what do most photographers do in these moments of revelation?

They hop off the bus, grab a cab—because life is too short—and then head straight back to the bus station looking for another platform.

Min-kinen paused and he looked out at the students and asked, “What should you do?”

“It's simple,” he said. “Stay on the bus. Stay on the damn bus. Because if you do, in time, you will begin to see a difference.”

“It's the separation of sticking with it that makes all the difference,” Minkinen said.

Why? Because you stayed on the bus.

You see, creativity is not **required** for success. Let me tell you what is – consistency. Staying with it.

Let me give you an example...

My beautiful girlfriend Cecilia is an accomplished runner. By accomplished, I mean she runs marathons and routinely places in the top finishers within her age bracket. She has a big passion for running and I couldn't be more proud of what she has accomplished.

And here's the thing – my girlfriend runs every day. And she runs every day even when she's not training for a race!

So, why does she run every day?

It's because she knows that the key to success in running is not just the work, **it's the re-work.**

You see, average basketball players learn how to play the game once. But the best basketball players learn and then re-learn techniques, over and over.

Average artists paint once. But Elite artists paint and re-paint again and again.

And people who are average with money will try saving or budgeting once and then gave up. Like the unsuccessful photographers they go back to the "money" bus station looking for something new and unique instead of just sticking with it.

And what about the people who've achieved financial freedom? They constantly improved their knowledge of money and investing over and over, bettering themselves each year. Work and re-work. Work and re-work until they mastered money.

My friends, here is the point- it is the revision that matters most. The constant revision. Michaelangelo's David wasn't made with one strike of his chisel. It takes many, many revisions to create a masterpiece.

To continue with the bus metaphor, please know this - the photographers who get off the bus and then hop on a new bus line **are still doing work.** What they are not doing, however, is **re-work.** The re-work that would enable them to become photography masters.

They are so busy jumping from bus line to line, in the hopes of finding a route nobody has ridden before, that they don't invest the time to re-work their ideas. And by not re-working their ideas they never get to see something that would allow them to synth-a-size their work, as Jobs said. In other words, they never get to a place of enlightenment.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you ignore new ways to become successful.

I think it's OK to look at new ways, as long as you don't get pre-occupied with the novelty of new. Because here's the good news – you don't have to invent anything when it comes to being successful with money.

My advice is to focus on the classic success principles related to wealth building.

Read books and articles that have stood the test of time.

You see, the classics are not just great ideas. They're a collection of great ideas that have outlasted **hundreds of bad ideas.**

So, point number one is to focus more on connecting versus creating. If you need more dots to connect, don't spend time on trying to build new, original dots. Just focus on learning the classic dots and soon you'll be able to connect them in your life.

Now, let's move onto the second "C" – copying.

Now, if you're a school teacher, the word "copying" probably sounds a like four-letter word!

Let me explain.

By copying, I mean modeling. Modeling others who have achieved the success you want to achieve in life.

You see, modeling others is a great way to become successful at something — be it your values, your skillsets, or even your entire career.

In a way, modeling is a fancy word for copying. It's a way to take someone's recipe for success, copy it, and then even improve upon it if needed.

I think it's good to take someone's success principles, someone's mental dexterity and someone's personal success boundaries and rules, like a Bill Gates or a Warren Buffett, and use them yourself.

After modeling those traits, you can build your own personal style on top of them and make them unique. You can make them yours.

Now, for those of you who may be concerned about becoming a clone of someone like Bill Gates or Warren Buffett, don't worry.

I would argue that it's impossible to truly copy someone exactly because, regardless of how badly you want to copy a person, you will never be truly able to become identically like him or her.

You will copy said person with your unique approach and your unique flair over it.

In a way, trying to copy someone else will lead you to discover "your version" of his or her traits. So, it's already an improved, or at least customized, copy from the beginning.

Diving into more practical terms, if you want to model people in order to be rich or successful, you need to model things like, their values, communication style, beliefs, decision-making processes, and yes, feelings like excited, empowered, and motivated.

And here's something that you will find out when you start to model successful people - most of them are very similar!

And why is that?

Because they all copy one another!

Most successful people do exactly this. It's not a unique thing at all. When everyone is fighting to be his or her best self and everyone is aware of everyone else's traits, the champions end-up seeming pretty similar.

The formula is to take someone whom you admire and emulate their traits and then improve on them. Don't be afraid to do this; don't be embarrassed, as everyone else does this, too.

I'm not saying no one is original nowadays, but if you think you're the only one modeling others and taking traits to improve yourself, you're wrong. Personalities and philosophies are fluid.

Look. We all want to believe hard work pays off. And it does. But at a certain point, you can't work any harder. You have no more time than anyone else. So what do you do? You have to learn how to work smarter.

And that means learning from someone who's already been there.

When I started down my path to wealth, I didn't know much about personal finance. It wasn't being taught in my school and certainly not in the house I grew up in.

What I needed was someone to show me a path. It didn't have to be a shortcut. I was just wanted to be on the right road and I desperately wanted to know what I was missing.

In any great story, there is a point in the journey when the hero meets an obstacle he cannot overcome. This is the moment when the guide arrives. This is the essence of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey: you cannot succeed without someone wiser to show you the way.

Jim Rohn needed Earl Shoaf. Buffett needed Ben Graham. And Luke Skywalker needed Obi-wan! Everyone can benefit from a mentor whether that mentor is a formal mentor or just someone you model virtually.

Sure enough, in my own journey, that's what happened. I adopted a group of successful people who acted as guides in helping me learn how to build wealth. My dream became a reality within a matter of years. Yes, this was because I hustled, but it's also because I found guides to help me.

And you know what? I didn't work any harder after I started modeling these successful people than I did in the previous years. But I did work smarter — not because I was any smarter, but because someone showed me a better way. I met the right people, connected with the right networks, and practiced my craft in the right way. In other words, I synth-a-sized what they taught me with what I already knew.

So how do you do this? How do you model successful behavior? Here's a few suggestions:

#1. Surround yourself with successful people. The best way to become successful is to be in the proximity of success on a daily basis.

This may seem pretentious, but the reality is that successful people lead the kind of life that you want to be a part of, so it is essential that you too be surrounded in such a lifestyle.

How do you find these guides? It's not as easy as everyone would like. First of all, successful people tend to be busy people. So getting in front of them will take work. People move around so much these days, and so many things, including careers, are constantly changing.

Here's my best idea: Pay attention to your life and the people who are in it. You will find there are those around you right now whom you can learn from. In that sense, the best guide may be the one that's right in front of you.

Now, if that sounds a little too simple, let me say this – Everyone has a successful friend or two, or they know someone who knows someone successful. The problem is that they just don't tap into that person's knowledge.

And why don't they?

Maybe they're afraid of the work that will be involved. Or maybe they are afraid that they'll get rejected.

I'll say this about getting a mentor - when push comes to shove, they're going to invest in people with promise, not takers who seem to make everything about themselves or people who think they know it all. Your best bet is to be remembered as the ambitious person with lots of questions who was eager to learn, not the know-it-all who was more interested in herself than the person with experience.

#2. Watch, listen to, and learn from the successful so that you can recognize how successful people talk, think, and behave. Additionally, you will come to identify the cause and effect of certain actions and certain ways of thinking. This is a major learning tool if you want to be successful yourself one day. I always say that the successful people don't just think different from unsuccessful people, they think opposite. You'll see what I mean when you watch and listen to other successful people.

#3. Emulate the habits of successful people so that you too get positive results. Successful people have a certain way of doing things and if you copy these habits, they will become ingrained in you and eventually become second nature. For example, talking a certain way or interacting with other people can be habits that lead to certain successes.

#4. Read the success stories of others, especially those that you admire who rose to the top from poorer or less successful beginnings. By doing so, you will recognize a similarity between you and the successful, thus making your own success feel more plausible in your own eyes.

#5. Learn even from the failures of others. Success is often followed by numerous occasions of failure, so find out the bad and the good behind each success story. With such knowledge, you will be less likely to get disappointed if you fail on occasion, and you may even be able to avoid certain pitfalls by seeing them foreshadowed in the stories of others.

#6. Continue to learn, and never assume that you know everything. Such arrogance can easily cloud your ability to remain ahead of the game. A successful person is always learning from their mentors. When you feel you have gained as much knowledge from your circle of successful people, expand your social network by inviting even more success into it.

So, before we end this edition, let's recap what we've learned:

#1. You don't have to create or find a new way to become successful. Study the old ways and connect the dots.

#2: You can get to where you want faster if you follow in someone else's footsteps. Find a guide or mentor you can learn from and emulate, even from afar. This is the difference between those who continuously struggle and those who find a faster way to succeed. Humble yourself and trust that there are those out there who want to help you.

#3: Invest in opportunities that grow your capacity. In other words, don't waste years trying to figure things out. Instead, sacrifice time to accelerate your learning. That might mean reading a lot of books, taking a course, hiring a coach, or working for free for a certain period of time in exchange for experience.

Do these things, and you will see your progress increase. I promise. You can't just sit around and wait for things to happen — for those mentors to come find you or for opportunities to fall in your lap.

Luck, of course does happen on occasion, but it's better to look for luck than wait for it. Because luck is often hiding in the hard-to-reach places that most people are too timid to approach.

So, don't create, connect instead. Copy and emulate the successful and accelerate down your path to financial freedom.

Be free. Nothing else is worth it!

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