

Look Beyond the Beautiful

If a possibility is knocking at your door, it's very likely that the sound will get drowned out by a problem that's kicking at your door. It's common for people to expect opportunities to show up in the form of beautiful angels and inspiring muses, but most opportunities first appear as nagging irritations and unwelcome surprises.

There's an old saying that "everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to get there." I think the same is true of things like creativity and success. We all want the rewards of a life lived with imagination and ambition, but we have a hard time remembering that our perceived difficulties are the very things that make such a life possible. When life gets tough, we take that as a reason to stop trying. We ask "why should I try to be creative at a time like this?" What we should be asking is "why would I ever need to be creative in the first place if life granted me the immediate and easy manifestation of my desires?"

We were inspired to achieve transportation improvements like the automobile and the airplane because our desire to get around was exceeded by our natural abilities. We were inspired to achieve communication improvements like the telephone, radio, and internet because our desire to share information was restrained by our geographical limitations. We were inspired to achieve improvements in medicine because our ability to live healthy was constantly challenged by sickness and disease. Prior to these improvements, people experienced these limitations and challenges as harsh conditions to be resented. The people who changed the world were neither the ones who sat around complaining about the limitations nor the ones who settled for just being positive about the challenges. The difference makers were the ones who looked at problems as if they were promises of greater freedom and fulfillment to those who were committed to innovating around them.

In the bible, angels were seen as messengers of God. Yet, in most of the stories where they showed up to deliver a message, the recipient freaked out at the sight of them and was paralyzed in fear. The message was divine, but the packaging was perceived as dangerous. Sometimes in our moments of greatest despair, we're like the characters in the bible who entertain angels unaware. Progress is most often abandoned not because of the challenges that stop us from creating wealth, but because of the inability to see that challenges are the very source of wealth.

If you want more inspiration, imagination, and innovation in your life, you have to searching for hidden messages and overlooked advantages in the very areas where most people are freaking out. There's a lot of good left to be discovered in the world if you don't limit your focus to the things that look good and feel good.

To find the beautiful, look beyond it.