



“The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation.

It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another.

But above all, try something.” — *Franklin Delano Roosevelt, May 1932*

“But above all, try something.” I can’t think of a more appropriate message for today’s business leaders and entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, most are simply not used to it. Yes, it may be common sense to take a method and try it, but it’s an uncommon practice. Why? Because of fear; fear of failing, fear of getting our hands dirty, fear of looking stupid, fear of losing our jobs, status or money. Fear, plain and simple.

So what does it mean to be *fearless*; to experiment in a bold and persistent manner? Here are some insights from one of the 20th century’s most audacious artists—Paul Jackson Pollock—which align perfectly with today’s very modern and chaotic marketplace.

“When I’m painting, I’m not aware of what I’m doing. It’s only after a get acquainted period that I see what I’ve been about. I’ve no fears about making changes for the painting has a life of its own.”

Don’t let anyone fool you; it’s the same with business success. Genuine, persistent and caring interactions are what bring relationships, organizations and brands to life. So instead of tapping away at your keyboard all day long or brooding over choices of slogans, taglines, fonts and colors, get reacquainted. Take a client or colleague to lunch. Pick up the phone and thank them. Ask what you can do to help. Have no fears, for the relationship has a life of its own and will steer you in the right direction. Assuming, of course, that you let it.

“Abstract painting is abstract. It confronts you.”

Today’s *marketplace* is abstract; an ever shifting mass of products, services, people, connections and transactions—like a Pollack in process. It will eventually confront you with its complexity. But if you step back and pause, you’ll experience the beauty and simplicity of its patterns. You’ll become aware of what’s truly important in people’s lives—what drives their decisions and behaviors—as well as how you can play an integral role in helping bring their pictures to life.

“Every great painter paints what he is.”

Apple is Steve Jobs. Amazon is Jeff Bezos. Patagonia is Yvon Chouinard. But my bank is Donna. My insurance company is John. The USPS is Gene. If you're great, if you're bold and persistent, you'll bring your uniqueness to your work each and every day. Don't listen to critics. Don't paint a static, contrived image in an unnatural attempt to influence people or make them happy. Paint what you are, splatter and all. Live your life with purpose and passion. Because in today's paint-by-numbers world, if you really stand for something you're sure to stand out.

“I continue to get further away from the usual painter's tools such as easel, palette, brushes, etc.”

What are your usual tools? Brochures, PowerPoint, email, blogging? Move away from them. Use a stick. Use your fingers. Create a game. Get out on the street. Produce an event. Write a book. Make a documentary film. Give a speech. Success is not about how smart you are or even how well you communicate. It's about clarity of thinking and dogged determination. The only true source of clarity is experience. And true talent? It emerges from combining the power of perseverance with the richness of possibility.

“I have no fear of making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own.”

We all want to know what our efforts will ultimately produce, don't we? We purchase a beautiful leather journal, but we're afraid to write in it. We want everything to be perfect and pretty; to be a flawless representation of our “voice” and “vision.” Forget perfection. Start! Drip paint all over your large, well-primed canvas. Technique be damned. Your goal is not to make an image. It's to make a statement! Remember, to get what you've never had, you must do what you've never done.

“It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well.”

Many people and businesses have lost contact with what matters, and the resultant mess is creating a lot of pain. In fact, they've splattered *their* paint all over *us*, haven't they? It's time to get back to the real work; to the easy give and take of collaborative inquiry, and the adventure and harmony of spirited innovation. Life isn't about finding yourself; it's about creating yourself. So stop focusing on what is (it is what it is, after all), and instead, visualize what should be and move passionately in that direction.

“New needs need new techniques. And the modern artists have found new ways and new means of making their statements... the modern painter cannot express this age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture.”

“New needs need new techniques.” Try saying *that* five times fast. So here's the deal: the modern organization cannot express this age of savvy, skeptical and connected people with last century's dispassionate and manipulative

techniques. Our new “always on and always questioning” world, along with people’s new needs, demand a new approach. One that cares deeply about their circumstances, concerns, challenges and dreams. One that respects their intelligence and desire to participate. And one that is real, meaningful, accessible and inclusive. It’s up to you to discover new ways to express this age and connect with today’s participants.

“When I say artist I mean the man who is building things; creating, molding the earth, whether it be the plains of the west or the iron ore of Penn. It’s all a big game of construction; some with a brush, some with a shovel, some choose a pen.”

Today, some choose a business. Some choose a cause. Some choose a computer. Some choose their skillful hands and others their sweet voices. Some choose their homes and children. Some choose ideas and equations. Some choose more than one. But all artists choose creation, passion and progress. They’re all molding things, events and people. They try, fail and move on. They’re the audacious few who move us forward and make life better. And we need them more today than ever before.

Note: To create your own Pollack, visit www.jacksonpollock.org. To create your own life, go to the edge of the cliff and jump off. Build your wings on the way down.

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Tom Asacker writes and teaches about radically new practices and ideas for success in chaotic times. He is a much sought after keynote speaker, an independent brand adviser and author of critically acclaimed books including *A Clear Eye for Branding* and *Sandbox Wisdom*, and his latest, *A Little Less Conversation*. Visit www.aclareye.com to learn more.