Reflections On A Career At The Nexus Of Brands, Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship (Or, A Manifesto-Like Object)

Over many years, we at Earle & Company have encountered pretty much every kind of creative and business adventure one could imagine. The combined experiences have led to the formation of a set of values and principles relative to the keys to creating great work that matters. Given that these beliefs guide what we do today, we figured it would be a good idea to write them down. We hope you enjoy the read.

For a complementary downloadable version of this little book, and more about Earle & Company generally, please go to PaulEarle.com.
An A+ story wrapped around a B+ product will outperform the inverse.

The more things you try, the luckier you get.
Innovators must always honor their instincts, even in the face of muddled data. Potter Stewart had it right.

Emotion is the ace of spades in innovation. If you can’t really feel the idea, form and function don’t matter that much.

If you simply focus on doing cool things, and being good to people, financial success will follow.
You must infuse ideas with something that is strangely anomalous, unusually strong, oddly contradictory, even ever-so-slightly... peculiar. Then celebrate it.
[8] The opposite of love is indifference, not hate. A toxic, polarizing idea may be thisclose to awesome.

If you’re close to greatness but not quite there yet, ask yourself: what would be the equivalent of bringing in Merry Clayton?
A smidgeon of hustle and a dash of opportunism will get you further than 25,000 pages of planning.

Innovators must dismiss “but we tried that before” as rationale for inaction. Key external factors change over time. (Plus, you can make it better.)

Anything worth doing is worth overdoing. (Well, mostly)
If you’re stuck on a problem, call five interesting people. Your pathway will be illuminated quickly.
Optimism is potent. And required for progress. There are no examples of a cynic who groused his way to success.

The closest you can get to a “sure thing” in business is the insertion of an inspired story and design into a space without any.
If you want to achieve real impact, establish a wildly impossible goal. Declare it as a choice, openly. Entirely new behaviors may emerge.
Creativity is impossible inside a cluttered mind. Remember, “know it all” is a pejorative term. Embrace your own naïveté.

Consumers are generally a forgiving lot. As long as you’re honest, you’ll get a second chance. Maybe a third. So go for it.
The brands that obviously enjoy their craft will win almost every time. Consumers can tell, and it’s attractive.

The difference between $0 and $1 in sales is worth millions.

Carefully observe the orthodoxies of a space. Then you can systematically bust as many as possible.
Winning brands exude magic. Uncover it. If it’s not there, create it. And if you find it too difficult to do either, punt.
The best innovation and creative leaders have more than a little bit of Joel Goodson in them.

Science and spirituality can not only coexist, they make great partners.

Sometimes it’s good to begin a journey without a specific destination in mind. You’ll know it when you get there, and it may be amazing.
Team collaboration is awesome, but sometimes you just have to pour a glass of whiskey, shut the door, and work out the darned thing yourself.

In any creative exercise, the little things can often have more impact than what you think are the big things.

What you feel is incredibly risky and even dangerous, in all likelihood, isn’t. Try it.
Unless it is specifically designed not to, fantastic creative should make you actually a little bit happier.

When reviewing creative ideas, the only two responses should be “Holy @*#&!” or a polite and respectful “No.”
The world of innovation is one of abundance, and we should all help each other.

The promised land is real. Let’s go.
No meaningful point of view can be created in a vacuum, and this is no exception. Many thanks to Craig Dubitsky, Leo Burnett, Maurice Saatchi, Alex Bogusky, Mick Jagger, Steffan Postaer, Rob Wolcott, John F. Kennedy, Craig Sampson, Steven Spielberg, Paul Brickman, Gordon Segal, Colin Powell, Paul Earle Sr., Tom Petty, Steve Lazarus, Bruce Springsteen, a second Bruce (Tim), all other Earle & Company contributors, and the goddess Fortuna.

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