Managing Our Mind To Manage Our Business

by Brent Brotine
photos by T. J. Hine

Mindfulness—the state of open awareness and attention to the moment—is a choice we can make to reduce stress, negativity and procrastination. That’s the message that over forty C3 members, guests and Columbia College students heard on April 25 from creative consultant and long-time photography rep Carolyn Potts. Carolyn’s presentation, Marketing and Mindfulness drew a large crowd that filled Columbia’s Hokin Hall and held everybody’s attention for a mind-blowing hour.

Carolyn began the presentation by having everybody notice their physical reactions to turning off their phones. She stressed how we are socially engineered to be addictive to our phones, and how our brains receive squirts of dopamine every time we’re “liked” or “followed.” Research shows that putting away our phones is one of the quickest ways to focus our attention.

Mindfulness techniques can be used to stay centered in the executive parts of our brains and avoid what Carolyn calls the “Rumination Railroad”—the woulda coulda shouldas that sap time and energy. Doing gratitude exercises can actually change our brains, helping us become more compassionate and less critical. Notably, gratitude releases dopamine just as social media activity is programmed to do.

Carolyn recommends meditation for its many benefits: focus, calmness, insight, higher work efficiency and stress relief. Other good ways to reduce our cortisol levels include diet, exercise, yoga, massage, humor and volunteering. There are also apps we can use to turn our phones into positive tools: one free app she likes is Insight Timer. She also advocates the Pomodoro Technique of time management: breaking work down into 25-minute intervals with short breaks.

A breathing exercise that Carolyn likes to do before stressful meetings or phone calls is called 4-7-8. You close one nostril and inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds—then switch nostrils. Doing this brings your nervous system back under your control.

Carolyn’s website offers a collection of helpful links and resources: visit cpotts.com or like her (squirt!) on Facebook at @CarolynPottsCreativeConsultant.
Mindful Collaboration and Opportunities for Growth

Our April program with Carolyn Potts, Creative Consultant, and Coach, was a collaborative partnership with APA Chicago and ASMP Chicago/Midwest. This event renewed relationships thanks to the efforts of Linda Levy who brought us together. With her encouragement, our organizations agreed to form a partnership to add value to the creative community through combined efforts to work together toward common purposes and achieve shared results.

Also, we agreed we can add depth and breadth to our community impact by working together. Establishing successful partnerships takes time. We hope our relationship with APA and ASMP can work toward strengthening organizations’ capacity for long-term cooperation and collaboration and our communities will reap the benefits of our partnership.

You may have noticed a common theme in our Business for Life programs—that success requires more than just a wish to do so. It requires our being willing to look at ourselves and how we show up. To be curious about ourselves and others, and to be uncomfortable.

It is said that discomfort is a catalyst for growth. It makes you yearn for more. It forces you to change, stretch, and adapt. Truth be told while attempting to write this letter, fear of being embarrassed, looking silly, being hurt, and facing rejection, or possible failure was spiraling in my head. After several visits to Facebook and my email, I laughed at the imagined threats and drama I created in my head, I was back on task. What turned me around? I thought about all the times I took risks and survived. I trusted that all would be well and didn’t get stuck on the what if’s.

I recalled the benefits of concentrating on the good, my dreams, visions, and goals. Seventeen years ago, putting my career and personal finances at stake, I took a risk and started my design business. For me, it was a very conscious choice to make a living doing something I am passionate about—my way. There have been challenges and fears that came with that decision, and there have been benefits too. I am always challenged to learn new skills. I’ve learned to ask for help and sought out mentors. I’ve honed my problem-solving skills and taken more initiative. And every day brings a new adventure. I would have missed out on all of this if I had chosen to focus on what might go wrong and stay with what was comfortable and safe.

All that said, to quote Steven Pressfield from his book The War of Art, “Fear doesn’t go away. The warrior and the artist live by the same code of necessity, which dictates that the battle must be fought anew every day.”

I am looking forward to our May program, Making Friends with Fear with Marta Johnson Lettowsky to learn more about myself and my relationship to fear. Define my fears, and learn to separate fact from fiction. And celebrate the silver lining and wisdom that comes from all of life’s experiences, especially the fearful ones, in particular, that teach great lessons.
Membership Has Its Benefits
by Michael Tanimura

Traditionally, membership has always been about benefits. Membership in C3 is no exception. Somewhere in this newsletter you will find a listing of our great member benefits. A few are so important they bear further discussion.

Currently under-utilized, but a raison d’être of this organization, is our private e-list, accessed by emailing c3list@chicagocreative.org (if you are a member), which connects you with all our other members. This was one of the first things we established when C3 came about in 1999, as it was an answer to a real dilemma at the time: how a specialist in one arcana of communication arts could know something from another specialty, as we were being asked by clients all too frequently (“It’s all on the computer, right?”). Information, clients, resources, vendors and opinions are all shared freely and collegially on our e-list, and it should remain an invaluable tool. As opposed to just referencing info from the internet, you can get it from trusted sources (your fellow C3 members), who share a commitment to professionalism and provide the value of experience-based information.

Another member benefit that I think is undervalued is noted in the list as social events and outings that strengthen Chicago’s creative community. By producing programs and special events, and taking part and supporting Chicago-wide arts happenings, C3 is able to fulfill its core mission to enrich, educate and inspire creative lives. By participating in a C3 activity, you not only reap the benefits of interacting with other Chicago creatives, you also do your part in promoting the belief that creativity has a vital place in everyone’s life.

These two benefits are at the core of why there is a C3: to support your creative life, and represent the value of your creative endeavors in the greater Chicagoland arena. In this way, C3 feeds the soul—of our members, our event participants, and the city at large.

Like what you see?

Ink Printed digitally on Xerox 700.

Paper This newsletter is printed on Classic Crest 70# text.

Process The digital press uses waste-free toner and no fuser oil. The process is 100% chemical free—printed courtesy of Consolidated Printing.
The Business Of Life #2: Making Money

by Cindy McEwen and Kathleen Kearns
photos by T. J. Hine, Cindy McEwen

The second program in our Business of Life series focused on the tangibles of succeeding in our creative businesses—the tools we can use to make money. On March 22, nearly two dozen C3ers gathered at Victor Powell Photography where we heard from an all-star panel of five successful entrepreneurs: Eric Masi of digital marketing firm Torque; Roger Brown of educational media producer Trillium; Irv Michaels, CPA of Michaels Consulting; Marci Rolnik Walker, Legal Director of Lawyers for the Creative Arts; and our host Victor Powell.

The panel all emphasized the importance of having a team of support people you can call on to assist with things outside your expertise—marketing needs, legal matters, tax issues, etc. This becomes your own Board of Directors you can delegate tasks to give you more time to create.

For hiring contractors, the panel stressed you need to find those who meet the same quality level you have, and to be smart about liability, non-compete and confidentiality agreements. The definition of who is an employee and who is a contractor differs between various regulatory agencies, and IL.gov was mentioned as a good information source.

Everyone recommended using contracts to control issues with clients—and having them notarized is not an arcane practice but a sound one. You can and should push back on contract negotiation, which shows you are experienced. And you have the same right to vet clients just as they vet you.

Irv recommends paying attention to your gut; if it doesn’t feel right it probably isn’t. Eric practices open book management: letting employees help make decisions to run the company. Marci believes you should build karma; put it out there and it comes back to you. Roger emphasized you should never give away your value: your time, your knowledge. And Victor advised younger people to take FLO (For Love Only) jobs which don’t pay but provide experience you don’t have.

You can connect with our panelists through their websites: powellphotography.com, torque.digital, trillfilm.com, michaelsconsultingltd.com and law-arts.org/staff.

C3 Newsletter Advertising Opportunities

The C3 newsletter is published quarterly from September to July and reaches a wide range of communication arts professionals. B&W ads are accepted in hi-res press-ready pdf format. Contact Cindy McEwen at macindy@mac.com for more information.

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C3 MEMBERS RATES: Free for the first 30 words, 10¢ each additional word.

NON-MEMBERS RATES: $25 for the first 30 words, 25¢ each additional word.

Victor Rolls Out The Welcome Mat

by Brent Brotine,
photos by Victor Powell

While C3 was pleased to hold our Business of Life program in Victor Powell’s studio space, we were even more delighted to hear that Victor is looking to help other Chicago area NFP organizations in need of space for creative projects. Powell Photography’s downtown Chicago studio at 531 S. Plymouth Ct. has a dedicated workshop area that’s opening its doors at no cost to clubs, religious groups, charities, volunteer causes and other worthy endeavors—just right for anything from a meeting to shooting a YouTube video that deserves better than some member’s basement. Interested organizations can contact Victor directly at vpowell@powellphotography.com.
The Importance of Business Plans for Artists to Thrive
by Irv Michaels

Creative businesses start with a passion, which sometimes leads to a product or service that fills a market demand. However, to be sustainable, the transition from informal startup to viable business necessitates the establishment of structures, accountability, and realistic risk assessment.

One of my favorite quotes for creatives who want to make their living from their art is: “We must exchange this idea of a Starving Artist with a new term: Thriving Artist” (Jeff Goins, *Real Artists Don’t Starve*).

Sometimes we hear about the successful musician/actor/artist who made large sums of money, but because of bad judgement—whether financial, management, or otherwise—finds themselves going through a bankruptcy. With little interest or experience in business or finance, the creative focuses on their creation. To ultimately succeed, he or she has to either learn the ins and outs of business, or reach out for assistance from someone trustworthy with the necessary knowledge and skills.

It is important is to have a business plan that sets out a business’s objectives and strategies for achieving them. The successful business plan has the following elements:

- Align goals with company’s core business objectives and values
- Define organization’s SWOT
- Develop strategies
- Set goals
- Create Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measurement

The phases of a business plan include:

- **Kickoff**—interviews to discover problems and challenges worth solving
- **Planning**—gathering general business and financial information
- **Modeling**—analyzing the financial and market information to create goals
- **Building**—create the business plan

Too frequently, when a plan is completed, these plans are filed away and disregarded until the next business planning cycle. The business plan provides the structure for establishing an organization’s goals.

For a business plan to succeed, a fifth phase, Post Plan, with scheduled reviews, measures the following:

- Financial reports including a Scorecard with KPIs
- Business development and marketing
- Human resources
- Other specifics tailored to the company

An important aspect of any organization, whether supporting artistic work, providing professional services, manufacturing, etc., is for it to be accountable for its goals while having the ability to adjust to unexpected situations as they inevitably occur. Execution of a business plan is crucial for the achievement of the goals and success.

The objective for the creative is to become a thriving artist.

Irv Michaels is the principal of Michaels Consulting, Ltd. and a new C3 member.

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Art Revitalizes Downtown Waukegan
by Claudia Hine, photos by Jan Johnson, Cindy McEwen, Warren Perlstein

On April 21, eight talented C3 artists participated in ArtWauk (pronounced art walk), a monthly event in downtown Waukegan’s arts and entertainment district. The show was at Dandelion Gallery, a non-profit artist co-op, the exhibit ran until May 11.

Artists included Carolyn Aronson (jewelry and stone figurines), Cindy McEwen (handmade glass jewelry and paintings), T. J. Hine (reclaimed wood framed mirrors), Nate Marks (paintings), Warren Perlstein (photography), Laura Marie Sanchez (mosaics), Robert Tolchin (photography), and Mary Wagner (drawings).

ArtWauk was developed by a team of local artists to improve vacant properties and revitalize Waukegan’s main street. Today, the event spans more than six blocks as 40-plus galleries, shops, bars, restaurants, and other venues offer full access to ArtWauk attendees. ArtWauk happens the 3rd Saturday of every month.
Robert Irving Potter III
REP3, Potter School of Photography
312.226.2060
potter@rep3.com

My mission is to enrich lives through the arts.

The business has two divisions, REP3.com (photographic image creation and manipulation) and P-SOP.com the Potter School of Photography.

In image creation, I am most fond of my days shooting actors at The Second City. That venue introduced me to so many talented artists and I captured their personalities on film. Bonnie Hunt once told me my shot of her was the last she ever needed and my shot of Chris Farley landed on the desk of Lorne Michaels at SNL. Chris and I became great friends before he left for New York and I miss him to this day.

My mission with the Potter School of Photography is to create a safe place where creativity, understanding, and the adventure of life collide into the courageous expression of self through visual imagery. Teaching how the tools of technology can empower the person behind the camera thus leading to a lifetime of insight, awareness and self-discovery.

1. **Jack and the Goose**
   What: Job for Piccolo Theatre
   Why: Press Photo Jack and the Wild Goose Chase or Harlequin Hatched
   Where: Back Stage at Piccolo Theatre, Evanston IL

2. **The Road to Tellico.**
   What: Image made while leading a photo safari for P-SOP.com.
   Why: Lesson use of motion in still images.
   Where: Appalachian Mountains, Monroe County, TN

3. **Road to Real de Catorce**
   What: Image made while leading a photo safari for P-SOP.com.
   Why: Lesson, Look Behind YOU!
   Where: Sierra de Catorce Mountains, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

4. **Celebrating the end of summer with family.**
   What: Personal project.
   Why: Every year I photograph my family jumping into the lake.
   Where: Honey Lake, Biltmore Country Club, North Barrington, IL

5. **Worship transcends time and place.**
   What: Personal project.
   Why: Because I have to make images of the world as I see it.
   Where: CTA Red Line Southbound from Howard, Chicago, IL
As part of the International Society of Glass Beadmakers Gathering Conference in Las Vegas, Cindy McEwen enjoyed an evening excursion to The Neon Museum™ and its Neon Boneyard. The Boneyard houses over 200 historic signs from Las Vegas hotels, casinos and businesses including the Stardust, Horseshoe, Caesar’s Palace, Aladdin, Golden Nugget, Sahara and more. While many of the signs are in need of tens of thousands of dollars in restoration, the park is lit throughout with colored lighting to enhance the look of the signs and your experience. And our 4th generation Las Vegas tour guide knew an impressive amount of Las Vegas history which made it even more enjoyable. One of Cindy’s favorite signs was from the Yucca Motel where the flower of the yucca looks like a giant bead!

New Members

Robert Potter
REP3
potter@rep3
Photographer

Irv Michaels
Michaels Consulting Ltd.
irv@michaelsconsultingltd.com
CPA

Paul Minnihan
Minnihan Painting
paulminnihan@gmail.com
Painting, fine finishes, murals

Stephen B. Starr
Design, Inc. launched a website in March, agbecker.us. A.G. Becker & Co., Inc. was the largest investment banking firm in the country in their peak years. Former President and CEO, Paul R. Judy hired Stephen to create a website that chronicles the history and the demise of the firm that was founded in Chicago in 1893. Mr. Judy collaborated with the Newberry Library to compile the company archives into a cohesive narrative that is now an online book that reads with all the drama of an historical novel set in the world of high finance. It is a story of the triumph of business acumen, a history of Chicago as a major player in the world of finance and a cautionary tale about too big to fail.

Claudia Hine, and her YTC Media business partners sold their Paper, Film & Foil Converter B2B website property. After a transition period, she is looking forward to retirement and puttering in her garden.

T. J. Hine showed his photographs, framed with repurposed wood (many accented with art glass or stone inlay by mosaic artist Laura Marie Sanchez at Swell Gallery in West Dundee as part of its Return of Spring exhibition.

Helping creative businesses thrive.

Michaels Consulting Ltd.

Irv Michaels, CPA
Creative Business Advisor
C3 Talks with Kaitlyn Keely

Company: Keely Creative
Occupation: Sales associate with Vera Bradley
Favorite Color: Green
Dream Car: convertible Volkswagen beetle in green
Family/Kids/Pets/siblings: I have a half-sister, she is 8 years old and her name is Emeraon
Favorite Subject In School: Art
Hobbies/Interests: painting, photography, going out to the movies, spending the entire day at the Art Institute of Chicago, spending time with friends and family
Three Words that Best Describe Me: strong, determined and creative
Favorite Movies: Harry Potter
Favorite CDs/Recording Artists: Demi Lovato
My Fantasy Is: traveling and living somewhere warm—like California

I’d Give Anything to Meet: Emma Watson or Demi Lovato
My Inspiration Comes From: I get inspiration in a variety of different places, it all depends on what sparks the mood of creativity
Favorite Food: mashed potatoes
Favorite Restaurants: La Villa and Manee Thai
Favorite TV Show: Modern Family and The Middle

I believe: in the supernatural
I love: Sock Monkey
Places I’ve Traveled: London, Ireland, New York, Florida, California, New Mexico, Kansas, Michigan, Indian, Wisconsin, Iowa, New Orleans
Favorite Places to visit/want to go back: London and Ireland, when I was 10 years old
The One Thing Nobody Knows About Me: I liked chemistry class in high school, even though I’m terrible with math
Favorite Way to Chill Out: watching movies or TV on the couch
If I Won the Lottery, I’d: take my mom back to Ireland, buy a new camera and computer
Last Movie I saw: A Wrinkle In Time
Favorite Snack Food: popcorn
Favorite Dessert: ice cream and chocolate brownies

C3 Membership Benefits

Programs and seminars for personal and professional development
For-members-only workshops that spark new ideas and promote networking
Member exhibitions that generate awareness, commissions and sales
C3 website showcase that has search engine preference and directs traffic to your own site
Social events and outings that strengthen Chicago’s creative community
Publicity opportunities through the newsletter, website and e-list

Committee and Board appointments that build leadership skills
Free member classifieds plus discounts on newsletter display ads
Quarterly newsletter featuring member success stories and event recaps
Mentoring opportunities such as internships and special events
Private e-list where members exchange ideas and provide assistance

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