

An Audience Of One Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *An Audience Of One* is a practical and inspiring manual for beginner creators who want to live from their art, showing a simple, purpose-driven path to achieve that goal.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Want to launch a creative career online and start living off your art? There's nothing easier. All you need to do is define your audience, design a sales funnel, create an awesome product, learn about SEO and SEM, build social media following... Wait. Didn't I just say, "there's nothing easier?"

Srinivas Rao turns the whole idea of being a successful creative upside down. When everyone seems to be focusing on defining their niche and marketing personas, *An Audience Of One: Reclaiming Creativity for Its Own Sake* proposes a drastically different approach. In a nutshell, it is all about creating for yourself in the first place. Once you learn how to do that wholeheartedly and consistently, all the external success will follow.

An Audience Of One builds on a similar premise as the bestselling *Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. The idea is that you create your own meaning of life. That also means that you get to decide what the real purpose of your art is.

If you follow this goal long enough, there's no possible outcome other than success.

Here are 3 lessons I've learned about succeeding as a creative:

1. Create for an audience of one and stay assured that this will build you a wide audience over time.
2. To achieve artistic success, establish a strong relationship with yourself.
3. Don't fall for the myth of the "lone creator."

If you are serious about making your art a central part of your life and career, this book is the fast track to help you. Let's dive in!

Lesson 1: To build an audience, start by creating for yourself.

Many beginner creators get hung up on the idea of delivering specific products to precisely defined audiences. While this is not wrong, it rarely works at the beginning of your creative career.

When you are just starting with your craft, you are much better off focusing on creating for *an audience of one*-yourself. The reasons to do this are numerous, but let's look at the two big ones that Rao highlights.

First, creating for yourself helps you cultivate your internal motivation – rather than relying on the external accolades. This is essential if you are serious about pursuing a creative career in the long run. Because externally-driven factors, like the number of fans or financial rewards, are beyond your control, you can't rely on them as a means to sustain your creativity. Instead, you should focus on your inner drive and enjoying the process.

Another reason why you should create for yourself first is that developing a strong voice takes time. If you are not a good writer now, it doesn't mean that you can't get great with time and practice. But if you start publishing your work immediately, you may quickly become discouraged by critical opinions and drop the idea of writing altogether.

This is when the cliché motivational slogans are wise to follow. *Be your own biggest fan. Create the art that you would like to see yourself.* But most importantly: Know thyself.

Lesson 2: To be a successful creative, you have to be in touch with yourself.

The popular "no pain no gain" philosophy has spread widely in the internet productivity community and has also affected artists. While it is generally true that you need to work hard to succeed, that's not the whole story.

You also need *time away* from your craft so that you can build a relationship with yourself. **According to Srinivas Rao, there are three crucial elements to this: trusting yourself, being present, and spending time alone.**

Trusting yourself is a prerequisite to finding your unique voice. You need to become clear on your deepest values. You can't afford to be wishy-washy about them. Only stating boldly what you stand for will empower you to convey your message in a clear, original way.

The art of being present in the moment is challenging to anyone in the culture based on distractions like social media and advertising. But mindfulness is an important skill to master for a creative. By paying attention to what's happening in your mind and environment, you notice new ideas and sparks of inspiration flowing through your experience. Capturing them provides you with the raw material for your art, and also cultivates your sensitivity.

Lastly, to be a successful artist, you need to carve out alone time regularly. By detaching yourself from the rest of the world, you stop the constant stream of information from flooding your awareness. Temporary deprivation from external input is virtually the only way to connect with what *you* think and feel.

Lesson 3: Abandon the idea of being a “lone creator,” independent from everybody else.

As much as you are encouraged to create for *an audience of one*, it doesn't mean that your art starts and ends with you alone. No artist exists in a void. Like any person, you are prone to the influence of the people you spend time with and the content you consume.

So, make sure that you surround yourself with good company and inspirational material.

It may sound blunt, but most creators have people around them who don't serve their growth. **If you want to boost your output, associate yourself with those who have similar goals and aspirations to you.** It may come in the form of joining a mastermind group, book club, or starting your own creative cooperative.

The same goes for the content you consume; it inevitably influences you as a creator. For example, if you want to succeed as a movie maker, pay attention to what you watch. Is it mostly goofy YouTube cat videos, or something that can truly inspire and motivate you as an artist? Choose your content wisely, because everything you take in adds up to what you put out in the end.

An Audience Of One Review

An Audience Of One is a book for minimalists. For anyone who wants to build their life around creativity, but feels that they cannot wrap their heads around everything that they need to do. Instead of trying to do it all at once, Srinivas Rao encourages you to take a different approach, focused on internal motivation, incremental improvement, and creating your most authentic work. As a bonus, you get a lot of practical productivity tips.

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Who would I recommend the An Audience Of One summary to?

The 27-year-old freelance writer who wants to start living off their art instead of writing for others, the 44-year-old amateur painter who is wondering how to put her work in front of more eyes, and anyone looking to bring their creative projects to the next level.