






# Stealth Strategy - Flying Under the Radar

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 Tags	

How to tap into existing cultural programming to attract people—then wake them up

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## Marty's Wisdom

"The best way to defeat the invisible enemy is by not letting them know you are there."

### Translation for Legacy Rising:

Don't position yourself as revolutionary or anti-system. That triggers defensive reactions from funders, institutions, and gatekeepers who will shut you down.

Instead: **Look like you're playing the game. Actually be building something else entirely.**

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## The Trojan Horse Strategy

### What They See (The Package)

- A recovery program
- Workforce development
- Reentry support
- Social entrepreneurship training

- "Evidence-based" curriculum
- Outcomes that make funders happy (employment, stability, reduced recidivism)

## What It Actually Is (The Payload)

- Economic independence training
- Identity deprogramming (from shame/victim → builder/creator)
- Community building outside institutional control
- Teaching people they don't need the system's permission to thrive
- Creating a parallel economy of cycle-breakers who hire each other
- Breaking dependency on low-wage jobs, government benefits, treatment industrial complex

**The key:** Never say the second part out loud to institutions. Let them think you're helping people "reintegrate." Actually, you're helping people **opt out**.

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## Tapping Into Existing Cultural Programming

### Program #1: "Hustle Culture" / Entrepreneur Worship

#### What the system already sells:

- "Be your own boss"
- "Build your empire"
- "Side hustle your way to freedom"
- Gary Vee, Grant Cardone, motivational content everywhere

#### How we use it:

- Use the same visual language (construction imagery, builder aesthetic, motivational quotes)
- Speak the hustle culture language on social media
- Attract people who already believe entrepreneurship = freedom

- Once they're in: Redirect from toxic hustle (grind 24/7, exploit yourself) to sustainable building (purpose-driven, community-oriented)

**Example hook:**

┆ "You've been grinding for someone else's dream. Time to build your own."

*They hear:* Generic entrepreneur motivation

*What it actually means:* Stop making your boss rich. Own your means of production.

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## **Program #2: "Recovery Industry" Language**

**What the system already sells:**

- "You're in recovery for life"
- "Addiction is a disease"
- "You need treatment, meetings, supervision"
- Medicalized, clinical, dependency-creating model

**How we use it:**

- Use recovery-adjacent language to get people in the door ("recovery-informed," "trauma-informed," "evidence-based")
- Partner with recovery centers who see us as a "complementary service"
- Accept referrals from the system
- Once they're in: Shift identity from "person in recovery" to "builder" (without demonizing recovery tools—just expanding beyond them)

**Example hook:**

┆ "Recovery gave you stability. Now build your legacy."

*They hear:* Recovery-supportive program

*What it actually means:* Recovery is the foundation, not the ceiling. You're more than your recovery story.

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## Program #3: "Reentry / Criminal Justice Reform"

### What the system already sells:

- "Second chance employment"
- "Reintegration"
- "Reduce recidivism"
- Corporate social responsibility, ban-the-box initiatives

### How we use it:

- Use reentry language for grants and partnerships ("reducing recidivism through entrepreneurship")
- Position as workforce development (which funders love)
- Partner with parole/probation offices
- Once they're in: Frame entrepreneurship as the ultimate "fuck you" to a system that tried to throw you away (but don't say that to the parole officer)

### Example hook:

| "They said you'd never amount to anything. Prove them wrong."

*They hear:* Motivational second-chance message

*What it actually means:* The system bet against you. Make them regret it by becoming economically independent.

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## Program #4: "American Dream" Mythology

### What the system already sells:

- "Anyone can make it if they work hard"
- "Bootstraps"
- "Rags to riches"
- Individualism, meritocracy myths

### How we use it:

- Tap into the deep cultural belief that entrepreneurship = freedom

- Use patriotic/American Dream imagery if needed (it works in Texas)
- Frame entrepreneurship as taking control of your destiny
- Once they're in: Show them it's not about individual bootstraps—it's about community, mutual aid, and building together (but they discover this organically, not through preaching)

### **Example hook:**

| "The American Dream isn't dead. You've just been chasing the wrong version."

*They hear:* Patriotic bootstraps message

*What it actually means:* The corporate ladder is a trap. Build your own path.

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## **Strategic Language: Two Meanings**

**The goal:** Every piece of marketing language should work on two levels.

1. **Surface level:** Sounds conventional, non-threatening, aligned with mainstream values
2. **Deeper level:** For people who are ready to hear it, the message is actually radical

### **Examples:**

#### **"Break the cycle."**

- Surface: Stop using drugs, stop going to prison (conventional)
- Deeper: Break the cycle of wage slavery, systemic poverty, dependency on institutions

#### **"Build your legacy."**

- Surface: Start a small business, be proud of yourself (inspirational)
- Deeper: Create generational wealth, build outside the system, leave something that can't be taken away

#### **"Turn your story into your strength."**

- Surface: Resilience narrative, overcoming adversity (palatable to funders)

- Deeper: Your lived experience is more valuable than any credential the system could give you

**"We help people become job creators, not just job seekers."**

- Surface: Economic development, good for the community (appeals to politicians)
- Deeper: Teach people they don't need to be dependent on employers

**"Recovery-informed entrepreneurship."**

- Surface: We accommodate people in recovery (sounds supportive)
  - Deeper: We use the obsessive patterns that drove addiction as fuel for business
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## Who NOT to Trigger (Stay Off Their Radar)

### 1. Large Treatment Centers / Recovery Industrial Complex

**Why they'd oppose you:** You're suggesting recovery isn't the end goal—building is. This threatens their business model (keeping people in treatment long-term).

**How to stay stealth:**

- Position as "complementary" to recovery, not replacement
  - Partner with smaller recovery centers (not the big chains)
  - Never say "recovery isn't enough" publicly—say "recovery + purpose"
  - Send them success stories about people who stayed sober BECAUSE of your program
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### 2. Workforce Development Establishment

**Why they'd oppose you:** You're teaching people to opt out of the low-wage job pipeline they're designed to feed.

**How to stay stealth:**

- Position as "entrepreneurship training" (which they like—it's trendy)
- Report outcomes in their language ("X% employed or self-employed")

- Don't say "wage slavery"—say "economic mobility"
  - Emphasize you're creating "job creators" (politicians love this)
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### 3. Traditional Nonprofits Competing for Same Grants

**Why they'd oppose you:** You're taking funding they want, and your model threatens to show theirs isn't working.

**How to stay stealth:**

- Collaborate publicly (invite them to events, share credit)
  - Position as "filling a gap" not "replacing what doesn't work"
  - Don't trash-talk other programs
  - Build a different funding base (earned revenue, individual donors) so you're not competing as much
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### 4. Institutions That Benefit from Dependency

**Who they are:** Parole/probation systems, some treatment centers, low-wage employers, government assistance programs

**Why they'd oppose you:** Your success means people don't need them anymore. They lose clients, funding, control.

**How to stay stealth:**

- NEVER frame yourself as anti-institution
  - Partner with progressive individuals inside these institutions (there are always rebels)
  - Report outcomes that make them look good ("Your referrals are thriving!")
  - Don't announce you're building a parallel economy—just quietly do it
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## Funding Strategy: Take Their Money, Build Your Vision

**The approach:** Speak the language funders want to hear. Use their money to build what you actually believe in.

## What to Emphasize in Grant Applications:

- ✓ **Reduced recidivism** (they love this)
- ✓ **Employment outcomes** (they love this)
- ✓ **Evidence-based** (they love this)
- ✓ **Trauma-informed** (they love this)
- ✓ **Measurable outcomes** (they love this)
- ✓ **Cost-effective** (they love this)
- ✓ **Scalable model** (they love this)

## What NOT to Emphasize:

- × "We're teaching people they don't need the system"
- × "We're building economic independence from institutions"
- × "We're deprogramming shame narratives"
- × "We're creating a parallel economy"
- × "Entrepreneurship as rebellion"

**Key insight:** These are your actual goals. Just don't put them in the grant application.

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## Marketing Strategy: Attract the Awake, Don't Scare the Asleep

### Tier 1: Broad, Conventional Messaging (Casts Wide Net)

**Platforms:** Partner organizations, traditional media, grant reports

#### Language:

- "Free entrepreneurship program for people in recovery and reentry"
- "Turn your experience into a business"
- "Build your future"
- "Job creation, not just job seeking"



**Goal:** Attract anyone who's curious about entrepreneurship. Sounds safe, non-threatening.

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## **Tier 2: Slightly Edgier (For People Ready to Hear More)**

**Platforms:** Social media, website, flyers in community spaces

**Language:**

- "You're not broken. You're a builder."
- "Break the cycle. Build your legacy."
- "They bet against you. Prove them wrong."
- "Obsession isn't the problem. Bad targets are."

**Goal:** Start shifting language from conventional to provocative. People who resonate with this self-select in.

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## **Tier 3: Radical (For Those Who Are Fully Awake)**

**Platforms:** Private alumni network, 1-on-1 conversations, advanced modules

**Language:**

- "The system wants you dependent. We want you dangerous."
- "Economic independence is the ultimate recovery."
- "You don't need their permission to thrive."
- "Build outside the system."

**Goal:** Once people are in and you've earned trust, you can be explicit about what you're actually building.

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## **Case Study: How to Talk to Different Audiences**

### **Scenario: Describing the Same Program**

**To a funder (foundation, government grant):**

"Legacy Rising is an evidence-based entrepreneurship program that reduces recidivism and increases employment among justice-impacted individuals. Our

trauma-informed, recovery-supportive curriculum helps participants launch sustainable businesses, with 87% of graduates employed or self-employed within 6 months. We address root causes of reoffending by providing economic opportunity and community support."

*Translation: We sound like a conventional workforce program. You'll fund us.*

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**To a partner organization (recovery center, reentry program):**

"Legacy Rising helps your clients move from stability to purpose. After completing your program, many feel directionless—recovery gave them sobriety, but what's next? We provide the 'what's next': entrepreneurship training, mentor support, and a lifelong alumni network. Your clients get better outcomes, you get success stories for your funders, and it's free."

*Translation: We complement your work (not threaten it). Partner with us.*

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**To a potential participant (social media, flyer):**

"You're not broken. You're a builder who's been aiming at the wrong target. Legacy Rising helps cycle-breakers turn obsession into entrepreneurship. 8 weeks. Free. Houston. Apply now."

*Translation: We see you differently than the system does. We're offering a way out.*

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**To an alumni or advanced participant (private conversation):**

"Look, here's what we're really doing. The system wants you dependent—on jobs that don't pay, on programs that keep you in 'client' status, on a story that you're damaged and need fixing. We're teaching you that you don't need their permission to thrive. You can build your own income, your own identity, your own community. We're creating a parallel economy where cycle-breakers hire each other, support each other, and opt out of the bullshit. That's the real mission. But we can't say that in the grant application, you feel me?"

*Translation: Now you're in the inner circle. Here's what we're actually building.*

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## **Messaging Matrix: Code-Switching by Audience**

Audience	Goal	Language	What NOT to Say
<b>Funders</b>	Get money	Evidence-based, outcomes, recidivism, employment	Anti-system, rebellion, opting out
<b>Partners</b>	Get referrals	Complementary, success stories, free resource	We're better than you, system is broken
<b>Media</b>	Get visibility	American Dream, second chances, resilience	Radical politics, class war
<b>Participants (marketing)</b>	Get applications	Builder identity, break cycles, obsession redirect	Full radical vision (save for later)
<b>Alumni (inner circle)</b>	Retain, mobilize	Economic independence, parallel economy, fuck the system	Nothing—you can be real here

## Red Flags to Avoid (Things That Trigger Defensive Reactions)

### ✗ Don't Say:

- "The system is designed to keep you down"
- "Wage slavery"
- "Treatment industrial complex"
- "Opting out of capitalism"
- "Revolution"
- "Dismantling oppression"
- "Fuck the police" (even if you mean it)

### ✓ Instead Say:

- "Many people face systemic barriers"
- "Economic mobility"
- "Recovery support services"
- "Entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency"

- "Transformation"
- "Addressing inequity"
- "Community accountability"

**Why:** The first list triggers defensiveness and gets you labeled as a threat. The second list says basically the same thing but in language that doesn't activate institutional antibodies.

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## The Long Game: Building Power Without Announcing It

### Phase 1: Look Harmless (Years 1-2)

- Small cohorts, local focus
- Partner with institutions (recovery centers, reentry programs)
- Report outcomes in conventional language
- Accept grants from mainstream funders
- Don't threaten anyone

**What you're actually doing:** Building proof of concept, alumni network, curriculum, reputation.

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### Phase 2: Scale Quietly (Years 3-5)

- Expand to more cities
- Train facilitators
- License curriculum to partners
- Build earned revenue (less dependent on grants)
- Alumni businesses start hiring each other (parallel economy emerges)

**What you're actually doing:** Creating a self-sustaining ecosystem that doesn't need institutional support.

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### Phase 3: Reveal (Years 5+)

- You have hundreds of successful alumni
- Businesses generating millions in revenue
- Alumni network is self-organizing
- Media attention (now you can be more explicit)
- Model is proven and hard to shut down

**What you're actually doing:** Now you can say the quiet part loud, because you've built something too big and too successful to stop.

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## Tactical Examples: Hijacking Existing Cultural Narratives

### Narrative #1: "Comeback Story"

**Existing cultural programming:** America loves a redemption arc. Underdog who overcomes adversity and succeeds.

**How we use it:**

- Frame alumni as "comeback stories"
- Use sports/competition metaphors
- Before/after visuals
- "From [rock bottom] to [success]"

**Example:**

"Marcus was homeless 12 months ago. Today he runs a lawn care company with 6 employees. That's a comeback."

*They see:* Inspirational story

*What it actually is:* Example of someone who built economic power outside the low-wage job system

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### Narrative #2: "Small Business = American Dream"

**Existing cultural programming:** Small business owners are heroes. Mom-and-pop shops. Local entrepreneurs. Job creators.

**How we use it:**

- Frame graduates as "small business owners" (not "formerly incarcerated people who couldn't get jobs")
- Emphasize job creation ("Our alumni have hired 50 people")
- Community investment angle

**Example:**

"Legacy Rising graduates have launched 30 small businesses in Houston, creating 50+ jobs in underserved communities."

*They see:* Economic development success story

*What it actually is:* People who were locked out of traditional employment building their own economy

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## **Narrative #3: "Self-Made Success"**

**Existing cultural programming:** Rugged individualism. "I built this myself." Hustle culture.

**How we use it:**

- Let alumni tell "I built this" stories
- Emphasize personal agency and ownership
- Use individualistic language publicly
- Privately: Teach them it was community support that made it possible (but the public story is "self-made" because that's what sells)

**Example:**

"Nobody gave me anything. I built this business from scratch."

*They see:* Classic American bootstrap story

*What it actually is:* Community-supported entrepreneurship, but framed in individualistic terms because that's the language the culture understands

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## The "Wake Up" Moment (How Transformation Happens)

**Key insight:** You don't wake people up with a lecture. You wake them up with an experience.

### The Sequence:

**Week 1-2:** They think they're in an entrepreneurship class.

**Week 3-4:** They start to realize this is also identity work. "Wait, I'm not broken?"

**Week 5-6:** They see the cohort becoming community. "I've never had people who get me like this."

**Week 7-8:** They realize they don't need the system's permission to thrive. "I can actually build this."

**Post-graduation:** They're in the alumni network and someone offers them a resource or opportunity. "Wait, we're building our own economy?"

**6-12 months later:** They're mentoring the next cohort and hiring alumni. "Oh. We're actually building something larger than individual businesses. We're building power."

**The magic:** Each person thinks they discovered this themselves. You never preached it. They woke up organically.

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## Marty's Wisdom Applied

"The best way to defeat the invisible enemy is by not letting them know you are there."

### Translation for Legacy Rising:

1. **Don't announce you're a threat.** Look like a conventional program.
2. **Use their language and channels.** Apply for their grants. Partner with their institutions. Speak their jargon.

3. **Build real power quietly.** Alumni network, parallel economy, economic independence.
4. **Let them fund their own obsolescence.** Take grant money from workforce development to teach people they don't need workforce development.
5. **By the time they notice, you're too big to stop.** Hundreds of alumni. Millions in revenue. Proven model. Media attention. Political support.

**The enemy:** Any system that benefits from keeping people dependent, ashamed, or economically powerless.

**Your move:** Don't fight them directly. Build an alternative that makes them irrelevant.

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## Next Steps

- ☐ Create two versions of every marketing material (public/conventional vs. internal/real)
- ☐ Train facilitators in code-switching (how to talk to different audiences)
- ☐ Build relationships with sympathetic insiders in institutions
- ☐ Track which funders are safe vs. risky (who would freak out if they knew the full vision)
- ☐ Create alumni leadership circle (people who understand the real mission and can spread it)
- ☐ Monitor for signs of institutional pushback (adjust strategy if needed)
- ☐ Document success stories in multiple languages (funder language, media language, community language)

  The Tribe - Cultural Transformation Framework