

Insights from *The Accidental Creative* by Todd Henry

“Call yourself anything you want, but if you’re responsible for solving problems, developing strategies, or otherwise straining your brain for new ideas, I’m going to call you a creative — even if you ended up being one accidentally.” – Todd Henry



To create on-demand and experience sustained brilliance in our work, we need to fight off the 3 ‘Creative Assassins’ that naturally take over our lives:

Dissonance	Fear	Escalating Expectations
<p>Our compulsion to resolve tension and detect patterns can lead us astray when trying to do creative work.</p> <p>“We make things very complex in order to mask the reality that, deep down, we’re confused about our true objectives. Some of us (myself included) use unnecessary complexity as a mask for insecurity. (If we aren’t certain we can nail the project, we’ll at least confuse the heck out of them and show them how smart we are.) This is a waste of creative brainpower and does nothing to get us closer to our objectives.” – Todd Henry</p> <p>Spotting Dissonance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unnecessary levels of complexity (spending most of our time maintaining complicated systems) ➤ Unclear objectives (don’t know what winning looks like) ➤ Forgetting ‘why’ we are doing the work in the first place 	<p>Our intense fear of social exclusion kills our creativity.</p> <p>“We might fear losing our job, but more often we’re concerned about being perceived as inadequate or ineffective. We’re afraid that no one will want to work with us on future projects. We’re worried about our reputation.” – Todd Henry</p> <p>BUT...</p> <p>“The consequences of never taking creative risks will be significantly greater than some of our peers thinking we have poor taste. A lifetime of mediocrity is a high price to pay for safety.” – Todd Henry</p> <p>Noticing Fear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fear of deviating from the status quo and being kicked out of the group ➤ Fear of standing out and being judged by others ➤ Fear of not being able to sustain success and being mocked (making us wonder: What’s the point of trying?) 	<p>Creativity requires a gradual accumulation of ideas. It needs a series of poor ideas to be accepted before great ideas can be found. However...</p> <p>“We allow comparisons to affect our current creative engagement... we begin closing off potential executions and helpful thoughts because we deem them “not useful enough” in accomplishing our escalated expectations. Doing this too early in the creative process can seriously derail brilliant ideas and prevent them from ever seeing the light of day.” – Todd Henry</p> <p>Noticing escalating expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clinging to a previous success ➤ Giving ourselves impossible deadlines to impress management and peers ➤ Comparing ourselves to our heroes (the immensity of their work paralyzes us)

Re- F.R.E.S.H. each week to hold off the ‘Creative Assassins’

F

OCUS

Maintain your focus on the BIG 3: **“The Big 3 is best described as the three most important ‘open loops’ in my life and work. They are the three most important items that I’m still looking for critical insight on.”** – Todd Henry

R

elationships

Expand your creative thinking by meeting with experienced folks: **“When you approach your relationships with purpose, you will be able to draw on many lifetimes’ worth of experience for insight and inspiration.”** – Todd Henry

E

nergy

Creative thinking is energy intensive. Build daily rituals for sleep, exercise, and healthy eating to remain fully charged. **“To make the most of your day, you need to establish practices around energy management.”** – Todd Henry

S

timuli

Carefully choose what you read and watch in your off-time: **“If you want to regularly generate brilliant ideas, you must be purposeful about what you are putting into your head.”** – Todd Henry

H

ours

Your schedule is evidence of your priorities. **“You need to ensure that the practices that truly make you a more effective creator are making it onto your calendar.”** – Todd Henry