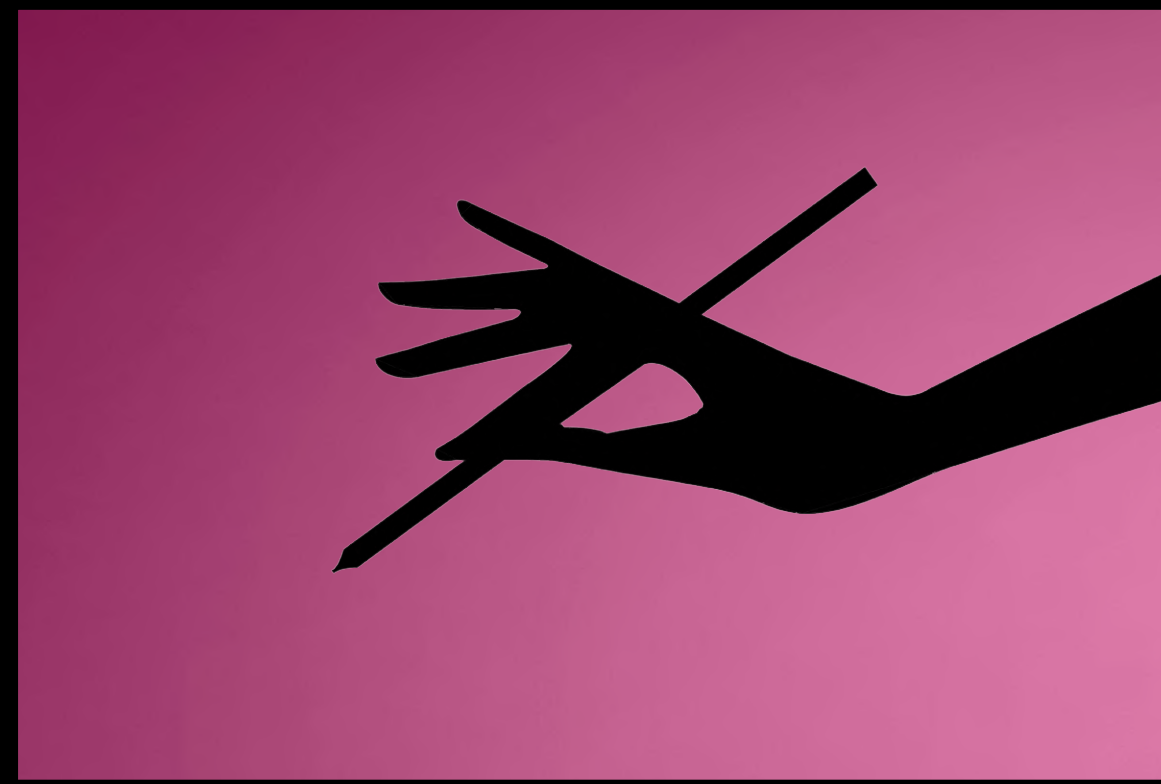
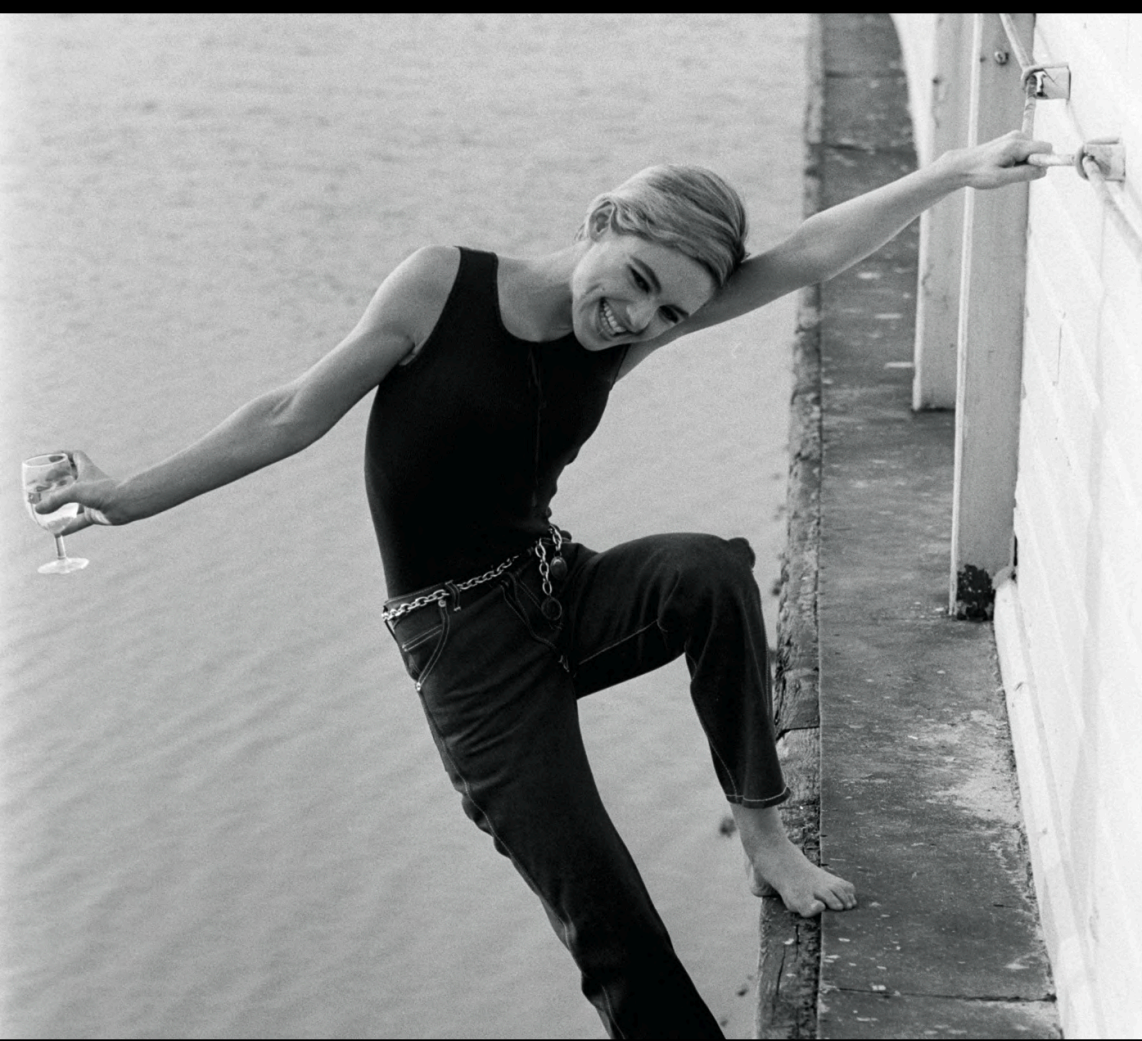


# BE YOUR OWN MUSE



6

POWERFUL THINGS TO KNOW AND DO TO FEARLESSLY BUILD YOUR DREAMS



by  
LAUREN  
DICKINSON CLARKE  
LONDON



**A** tribute to the tryers, the believers and daring dream weavers.  
Made for the fearless, free spirits and those who reject the status quo.  
For she who dares to inspire change and who seeks to create waves.  
Here's to her, here's to dreams & heres to you.



Dear fearsome fellow Misfit,

If you are reading this, the odds are that you've either started or are thinking of starting a creative endeavour (Huzza!)

Every muse & trailblazer started their journey with a few tentative steps. To help you on your path to realising your dreams, I share some tools that have helped me leap from scatty creative to designer and brand builder. I'm most definitely still a work in progress, but these methods have helped in abundance.

On the following pages, you will find :

- **Passion tracker.** To keep that fire in your loins.
- **"So crazy it just might work" challenge.** And why you should never play it safe
- **Harnessing your creative weapons.** Why your varied (or lack of) experience will be your greatest asset.
- **Brain dump method.** (The only planner I have been able to stick to as a designer.
- **Celebrating failure & rebuking haters.** Why failure doesn't take you further away from your dreams, but instead, closer to them.
- **The secret sauce.** This one is *key*.

Let's get into the thick of it...

# PASSION TRACKER | SOMETHING TO DO

When you start a new pursuit, especially a pursuit of passion, it can be difficult to imagine what the end destination looks like, which can feel daunting. The trick here is to focus on what you do best and start mastering your craft in the most authentic way possible... with practice.

Fill out the passion tracker and name the one thing you want to master. It can be anything from singing to painting, writing, cooking, rolling around in custard creams, or pole dancing. Whatever you *love* and would love to be known for, that's *your thing* to perfect. Don't be afraid to get weird. Embrace your inner misfit.

Next, decide on the amount of time you want to devote to your craft and mark the days you practiced. Print as many copies as you need to as time goes by. The tracker will also be handy for your new creative weapons, which we will discuss later.

Don't worry about the end result; for now, embrace the process of doing the thing that brings you joy. As your mind is freed to enjoy the task at hand, you will find that other ideas come to you and get clarity about where you are going.

**Remember, it always starts and ends with the craft.**

P.S. The following pages are intentionally void of colour, so you can easily print and avoid a pesky low ink situation.

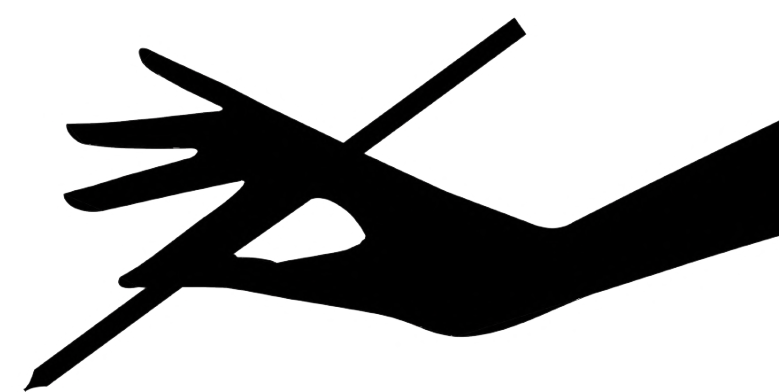
## YOUR CHALLENGE

PASSION: *Drawing chimps wearing hats*

NUMBER OF DAYS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRACTISE / WORK ON YOUR PASSION: *21*

WHICH DAYS THIS MONTH DID YOU WORK ON YOUR PASSION?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



MARK OFF THE NUMBER OF DAYS YOU WORKED ON YOUR CRAFT.

REMEMBER TO BE HONEST. THAT WAY YOU CAN TRACK YOUR PROGRESS



PASSION:

NUMBER OF DAYS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRACTISE / WORK ON YOUR PASSION:

WHICH DAYS THIS MONTH DID YOU WORK ON YOUR PASSION?



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31				

PASSION:

NUMBER OF DAYS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRACTISE / WORK ON YOUR PASSION:

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29	30	31				



As we start to put our feet forward toward building our dreams, we head into the unknown, so we often look to logic to give us confidence. In my case, I am often faced with "what does the data say? What are the spreadsheets telling us? What difference will that activity make to our sales?" This is particularly the case when I have to convince others to get on board with my off-the-wall ideas. But the problem with too much logic is that it removes the magic. Some of the greatest successes are born from nonsense ideas. These are often ideas that make people say, "That's ridiculous. It will never work!"

Let me give an example; the brand Red Bull initially had "failure" written all over it. The taste tests came back with less than promising results. Tasters hated it, yes, *hated* it. They, in fact, deemed it "undrinkable." So how is it possible that Red Bull became one of the most popular drinks of today *and* costs twice as much as a can of Coca-Cola? The answer largely lies in the messaging. It wasn't sold under the guise of a refreshing, tasty beverage but instead for its medicinal qualities; it gives you energy, *it gives you wings*. This meant that customers forgave the slightly acidic taste. After all, medicine is often not so tasty.

This wickedly clever approach allowed Red Bull to sell their drinks for a higher price and back daring stunts such as the stratosphere jump & world record Motorcycle jump. See how both of these stunts align with the notion of having wings? The earlier taste tests should have been Red Bulls' death knell. Instead, they laid the foundations for a global, adrenaline-junkie-led brand.

**Remove the reason, reframe the logic, then brilliant, bold & magical things can happen.**

### YOUR CHALLENGE

1

On the following page, list anything you believe could be holding you back. Then, next to each point, write ways that this could become a positive. You could be so busy trying to fit a certain mould that you perceive your greatest strength as a weakness. Spend time on this, tear up the rule book and think outside the box. When everyone else *Zigs*, you must *Zag*. In other words, whatever everyone else is doing, do the opposite.

2

To take it one step further, on page 7, brainstorm as many mad ideas as possible. Ideas that revolve around telling the story of these positives in an unexpected way. (Consider Red Bulls' stratosphere jump here). Think of utterly mad schemes or stunts you would love to do, and don't worry about how you will bring them to life. This activity is about removing reason and reframing logic so you can zag.

3

Once you have completed your brilliant, nonsensical brainstorm, pick out the most exciting of your mad ideas. Choose just one or two that spring out at you. Now, I want you to promise to do them within a specific timeframe. Print them out and stick them where you can see them every day (on a mirror is a good choice), and every time you see them, you will be reminded to bring your big idea to life. These are the things that give us joy, not because they make sense but because there's more to us than logic, and you deserve to be excited about something that keeps your spark alive. And who knows, maybe something brilliant will happen as a result...

PERCEIVED WEAKNESS

HOW THIS CAN BECOME  
A POSITIVE

*My drink tastes like  
medicine*

*If the drink improves energy  
then this won't matter and  
I have a unique approach*



MAD, CRAZY, THEY WILL  
NEVER (OR WILL THEY)  
WORK IDEAS

It's one thing to create products and sell them, but it's another to create something people *love, take it,* and build it into a brand that grows. This stands whether you want to become a recognised signer, dancer or anything else in the arts field. If you're creative, and your craft lies at the heart of your business (first of all, hit me up, and we can be friends), then the chances are that you may not have the business tools needed to lay the foundations for your brand to grow.

If this is you, don't panic! The good news is that as a creative, you are probably already a dab hand at creative thinking, which lies at the heart of problem-solving.

The trick here is to stay open to new experiences and activities. There has long been a fascination with highly creative people and their correlating personality traits. One key trait is the notion of 'openness' and the willingness to embrace the new. Past and present, some of the most successful innovators have been identified as *polymaths*, meaning "having learned much." These clever folk brilliantly excelled in more than one area:

- **Marie Curie** - The only person to win the Noble Prize in both physics & chemistry
- **Leonardo Da Vinci** - art, astronomy, invention, engineering & anatomy
- **Aristotle** - politics, biology, metaphysics, logic, poetry
- **Nikola Tesla** - invention, electrical and mechanical engineering, physics
- **Elon Musk** - programming, physics, engineering, business, manufacturing

Unless you have a partner to handle the business *stuff*, you will likely be wearing many, many hats. Embracing the new and channeling your inner polymath will open you to new problem-solving methods. Creative innovation is often the blending of two unrelated concepts or skills. Becoming more polymath allows you to live this by definition and equips you with a greater creative palette to draw from.

Remember the saying, "Jack of all trades is a master of none"? The entire phrase is, "Jack of all trades is a master of none, but oftentimes better than a master of one." It completely flips it on its head, doesn't it?

I have had an eclectic career path, and it didn't dawn on me how handy this would be until 2 years into building my brand. Intending to take on the family dentistry business one day, I studied science and psychology at college. It became clear that this wasn't the route for me when I realised I spent more time doodling than crunching formulas. I left to pursue womenswear design (much to my mother's dismay) which led to roles in fashion design and production. I found fashion production to be slightly tedious. It involved quality control, logistics, and a lot of warehouses. On the face of it, my path was wonky at best. But looking back now, all of that varied experience was priceless, and I almost certainly wouldn't have my business without it. My science education helped me understand candle formulas. In contrast, my experience in fashion design meant that I could conjure up our candle hats due to an understanding of fabrics and trimmings. My time in production became invaluable as a large part of any product-based business revolves around logistics and warehouses.

In summary, embrace the wonky and the new. Don't consider hobbies a distraction from your path but instead an asset. If you have had a varied career experience like mine, embrace it and use it to your advantage. Take your learning and development seriously. Think of your experiences and skills as weapons to draw when cooking up your schemes and problem-solving. The Passion tracker on page 3 may be helpful here too.

As Benjamin Franklin said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

















If there was only one piece of advice I could pass on from my time as a creator so far, it would be to ignore the haters and nay-sayers. This can be harder than it sounds because they are often the people closest to you or the ones you want to impress the most. **But you must not let anyone deter you from building your dream. No Sir and no way.**

To make my case, here are some stories about trailblazing women who stuck it to the man and proved them all wrong:

- **Lucille Ball** was rejected from countless movie roles. She had, in fact, given up on TV altogether and turned her hand to radio when she was approached for the lead role of the infamous 'I Love Lucy' show. Lucille went on to win almost every entertainment award and was the first woman to own and run a production company,
- **Anna Wintour** was a junior editor at Harpers Bazaar for 9 months before being fired by Tony Mazella, who claimed that her photoshoots were "too edgy."
- **Marilyn Monroe's** contract with Columbia Pictures expired before she had acted in a single movie. She persevered and met her agent Johnny Hyde who helped land her roles in "All About Eve" and "The Asphalt Jungle." The rest is Hollywood history.
- **J.K Rowling** was fired from her job at Amnesty International because she was so distracted by writing. She wrote Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone while being a single mother on benefits before being rejected by 12 publishers. Eventually, Rowling sold the book for the equivalent of £4,000. Needless to say, her book became legendary, and she's now worth over £1 billion.
- **Joan Jet**, the infamous rocker, was told by her music teacher that she had no talent and would never succeed. Her first band was subjected to violence and sexism by audiences that wouldn't accept women as Rock stars. The first solo album she released was rejected by 23 record labels. Despite all this hardship, Joan became the first known female Rock star and one of the most famous women of her time.
- **Vera Wang** didn't dream of becoming a designer when she was young. Instead, she yearned to be a professional figure skater, but she was rejected by the U.S Olympics team in 1986. It was only then that she landed her first job in fashion at a YSL boutique in New York before going on to work at Vogue two years later.
- **Lady Gaga** was with her first label, Island Def Jam Records, for only 3 months before being dropped in 2006. After hearing the news, Gaga went to her Grandmothers' house in tears. Her Grandmother told her, "I'm going to let you cry on this sofa all day. But tomorrow, you've gotta go and kick some ass!"

So if I can urge you to do one thing, it's to never take failure to heart. Every loss takes you one step closer to your goal. Ignore the nay-sayers and those who don't recognise you yet. One of my favourite department stores to sell our candles turned me down for years (yes, years) before they gave me a shot. Now they can't seem to keep us on the shelves long enough. Just keep striving to be brilliant, and the rest will fall into place.

And if you need a comeback for those pesky nay-sayers, this quote from Eric Thomas might come in handy...

**"I do not take constructive criticism from people who have never constructed anything."**



# SILENCE THE SISSY | THE SECRET SAUCE

We all have that inner sissy, the one that says, "I'm just going to hit snooze on my alarm, I deserve a lie in," or "I'm too old/young/not talented enough to make this a reality." Please listen when I say you are not too old, young, or anything else to be able to bring your dreams to life. And wait a moment before you blame your lack of tools or resources. A number of my fellow brand founders still shoot all of their product photography on their phones because they couldn't afford a camera when they started, myself included. And I am pretty sure Shakespeare didn't write *Romeo & Juliet* on a Mac Book Pro.

When we start a new endeavour, we often create obstacles for ourselves because it prevents us from facing the pain of potential failure. But the only thing more dangerous than taking the wrong action is inaction. Screwing something up along the course of your journey is inevitable, but it will always, *always* beat not starting at all.

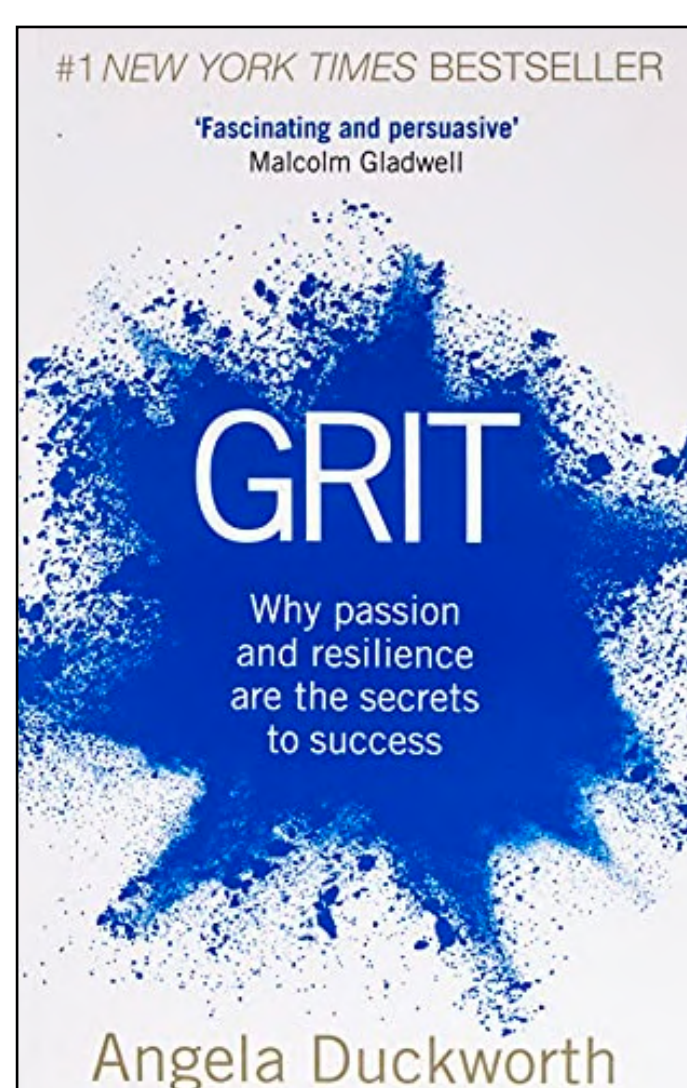
Put. In. The. Work. Every. Damn. Day. This is the only secret sauce. Do something every morning which pushes you out of your comfort zone and challenges you. Forge your work ethic and exercise it like a muscle. Be utterly relentless in your approach.

You must go after it daily as if your life depends on it. Fall in love with the work itself, not just the outcomes. Learn to enjoy the excruciating pain of making mistakes and failing. Because, as we've covered, every failure takes you closer to the desired result.

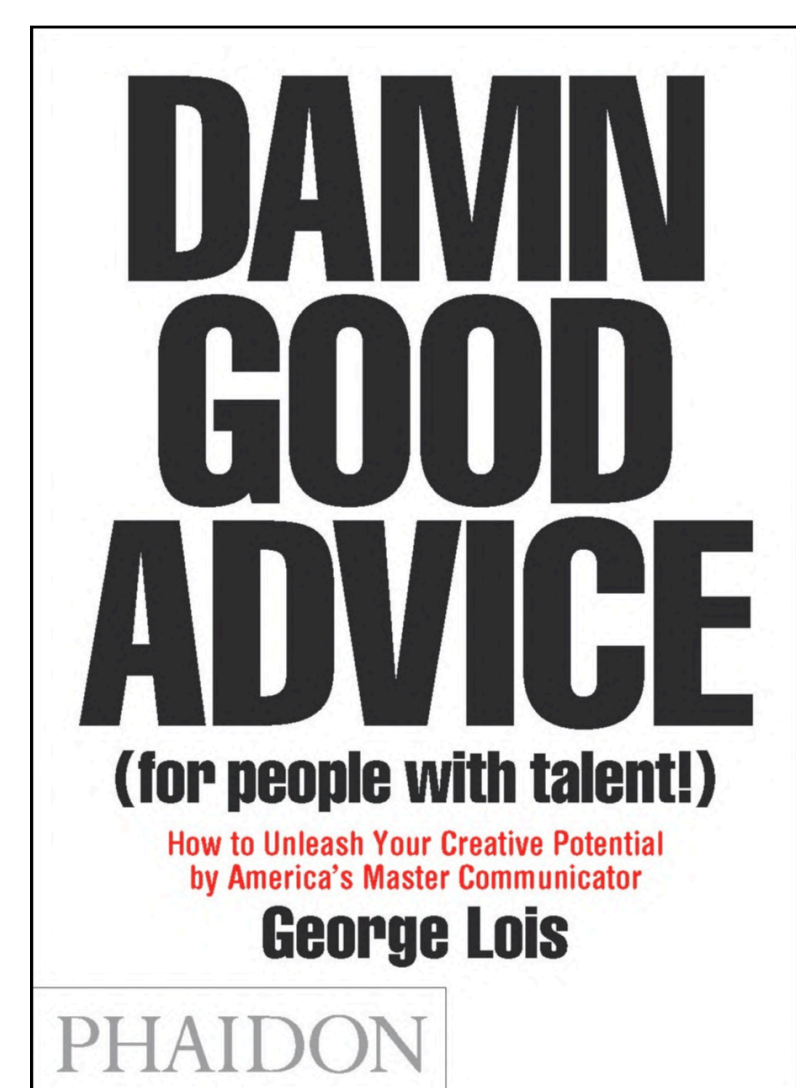
Despite what Instagram may tell you, there is no quick fix or loophole. Getting up after every knock and trying over & over again is the only sure way to achieve your dreams.

There is a fantastic book named *Grit* by Angela Duckworth, who explains this far more eloquently than I ever could. In this book, she weighs up the attributes of successful people to determine which one contributes most to their success. You guessed it; Grit wins every single time. It trumps both talent and IQ. There may always be people more intelligent or talented than you. It doesn't matter because embracing a non-sissy mindset means they can't possibly outwork you; and ultimately, this will be the decider.

You've got this. I know you do. Take reading this as a sign that it's time to go after it, hell for leather, and let absolutely nothing stand in your way. Please tell me how this goes for you. I am rooting for you and would love to know how you get on.



My recommended reads for anyone who want's more help silencing their sissy.





I hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it for you.

I cannot wait to see what you build & create!

Please let me know at [mymuse@laurendickinsonclarke.com](mailto:mymuse@laurendickinsonclarke.com)

I am always here if you need a sounding board along the way or just someone to shout out your wins (and failures) too.

Have at it. Ignite your fire and go for it like your life depends on it!

**And remember, let nothing & nobody stand in your way.**

Stay Creative, Yours

*Lauren x*

P.S. If you want to know more about us and my scented celebration of muses, misfits and rebels, you can check us out at

[laurendickinsonclarke.com](http://laurendickinsonclarke.com)

