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# The Stealth Creativity Manifesto: Better Living Through Creativity

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Running Head: THE STEALTH CREATIVITY MANIFESTO

Buffalo State College  
State University of New York  
International Center for Studies in Creativity

The Stealth Creativity Manifesto:  
Better Living Through Creativity

A Project in Creative Studies  
by  
Ian M. Rosenfeldt

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Science

(May 1, 2013)

Buffalo State College  
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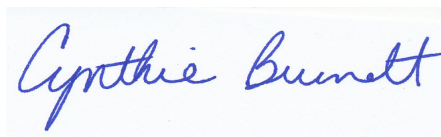
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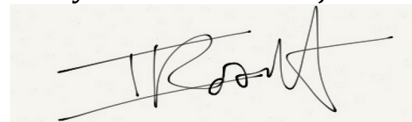
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# THE STEALTH CREATIVITY MANIFESTO

## **Abstract**

This project focuses on the creation of a manifesto to be used as a guide to better living through creativity. The literature review covers aspects of self-discovery, development of personal strengths, and investigating the future of creative thinking. The finished product for this project is the Stealth Creativity Manifesto, presented as the liner notes for a cassette tape. The process in this paper may be used as a guideline for investigating and creating a manifesto, and developing a more creative life.



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# THE STEALTH CREATIVITY MANIFESTO

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**Table of Contents**

Abstract .....i  
Copyright Notice .....ii  
Acknowledgements .....iii  
Table of Contents .....iv  
Table of Figures .....v  
Table of Tables .....vi

**Section One: Background to the Project**  
    Purpose and Description of Project .....1  
    Rationale for Selection .....1

**Section Two: Pertinent Literature**  
    Introduction .....4  
    Where did the Stealth Creativity Manifesto inspiration come from? .....4  
    What manifestos am I drawn to? .....6  
    How might I better know myself? .....8  
    How might my thinking change? .....10  
    How do I get from here to there? .....12  
    How to maintain this momentum? .....14  
    Bibliography .....15

**Section Three: Process Plan**  
    Introduction .....19  
    What actually happened .....19

**Section Four: Outcomes**  
    Introduction .....28  
    The Stealth Creativity Manifesto .....29

**Section Five: Key Learnings**  
    Introduction .....42  
    Principles of a Manifesto .....42  
    Thought Leadership .....43  
    Building a Network .....43  
    Management of Time and Energy .....44  
    Unexpected Learning .....44  
    Measuring Success .....45

**Section Six: Conclusion**  
    Introduction.....48  
    Manifesto Development .....49  
    Manifesto Tools .....49  
    Network Development .....49  
    Personal Brand .....49  
    Concluding Thoughts .....50  
    References .....51

# THE STEALTH CREATIVITY MANIFESTO

## Table of Figures

Figure 1 – Initial drawing .....	22
Figure 2 – Cardboard prototype .....	23
Figure 3 – First electronic prototype .....	23
Figure 4 – Background image prototype .....	24
Figure 5 – Second electronic prototype .....	25
Figure 6 – KPM Library record .....	26
Figure 7 – ALC Music Library .....	26
Figure 8 – The Stealth Creativity Manifesto .....	32
Figure 9 – Opening the Manifesto .....	33
Figure 10 – Unfolding the Manifesto .....	33
Figure 11 – Manifesto Spine and Real Panel .....	34
Figure 12 – Manifesto Inside Tag .....	34
Figure 13 – Manifesto Cover and Track Listing.....	35
Figure 14 – Manifesto Items 1 and 2 .....	36
Figure 15 – Manifesto Items 3 and 4 .....	37
Figure 16 – Manifesto Items 5 and 6 .....	38
Figure 17 – Manifesto Items 7 and 8 .....	39
Figure 18 – Manifesto Items 9 and 10 .....	40
Figure 19 – Full manifesto template .....	41



**Table of Tables**

Table 1 – Project Hours Spent .....27

## **Section One: Background to the Project**

### **Purpose and Description of Project**

The study of creativity, innovation, and change leadership has revolutionized the way I lead my life, both personally and professionally. I feel compelled to create a holistic approach for following this newly discovered passion, to drive my own growth, and to inspire positive action in those around me. As I work towards completing my Master's degree at the International Center for Studies in Creativity, I am driven to take this passion and to use it to create more meaning in my life, as well as in the lives of others.

I will develop the Stealth Creativity Manifesto, which will serve as the guiding principles for proactively pursuing my passion. I have made choices in my life based on circumstance, selecting my path according to what was offered, and moving forward. These decisions haven't necessarily been poor, and yet they were reactionary in nature. With this project, I choose to create opportunities that appeal to my passions, and to proactively follow the opportunities that best align to the principles of my manifesto. Furthermore, I want to share the Stealth Creativity Manifesto with the world as a means of igniting passion for a more creative life.

The purpose of this project is to create a body of work that will serve as a foundation for personal and professional growth. The tangible outcomes will be a manifesto and a supporting rationale that will provide guiding principles for leading a more meaningful and creative life. The manifesto will be presented in an appealing and unique way and both the manifesto and the rationale will be available to the public.

### **Rationale for Selection**

I have a growing dissatisfaction for my current path in life, and it has been brewing for a while. It's not that I have a bad job, or that I'm doing things that are undesirable. I comfortably

support myself and pursue the things that I enjoy, and yet I realize that I have much more to offer. There is more value and meaning to share with those that I interact with, both personally and professionally. This dissatisfaction has come to bear during my Graduate studies. The tools of Creative Problem Solving (CPS) provide the ability to chart a course when the destination is unknown. I'm not certain where my path will take me, however it is not acceptable to have these tools and expertise at my disposal, and to admit there is nothing that can be done about my dissatisfaction. Therefore, this project is the metaphorical line in the sand. Stepping over this line will mark a shift from living life in a reactive way, by accepting the circumstances presented to me, to taking a more proactive approach to my happiness, by creating opportunities to share my passion and enthusiasm for creativity.

Over the past year, I have tackled a series of 30-Day challenges - the act of trying something new or different, every day for 30 days ([http://www.ted.com/talks/matt\\_cutts\\_try\\_something\\_new\\_for\\_30\\_days.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days.html)). This included things like doing a particular exercise routine, meditating, drawing, eating more vegetables, and keeping a gratitude journal. The purpose for taking on each of these challenges differed. For some challenges, it was about getting back into shape after an injury, for others, it was about unplugging and unwinding, and some were all about experimenting with something new.

During calendar 2012, I tackled an even bigger challenge - I made one watercolour painting a day, every day, for the whole year (<http://zany4days.wordpress.com/>). The purpose of this challenge was to deliberately step away from work, from school and technology, and to immerse myself in a pursuit that was completely different than my normal avenue for relaxation. Watching television seemed like a diversion that served to occupy my mind, to distract me from my thoughts, to take me away from the present, and little else. It didn't further ideas, or provide

time for incubation. It wasn't even that relaxing. Selecting painting seemed like a creative and constructive use of my free time, and in the least I would develop some artistic skills and have the time to let my mind wander and explore. At the most, I was open for the adventure of a new experience. One of the more interesting and rewarding results that transpired from this challenge, was that those that learned about it were motivated to take on challenges of their own. The list of people inspired by my enthusiasm for my challenge steadily grew. There was plenty of positive feedback from friends, colleagues and strangers alike and people started their own challenges inspired by my actions. I realized that what I was doing, and how I went about sharing it, was having an inspirational impact on others.

This project is about using the tools and skills I have learned to create something that will have a positive impact, and inspire by example, demonstrating that dedication to creativity can lead to rejuvenation and transformation. I will create the Stealth Creativity Manifesto as a way of deliberately sharing my passion and enthusiasm for creativity. I will proactively grow my network as a means of spreading the message that creativity is for everyone, and I will be living and breathing the elements of the Stealth Creativity Manifesto as I move forward.

## Section Two: Pertinent Literature

### Introduction

When reviewing literature to prepare for a journey of personal discovery, the possibilities are limitless. For the purposes of this journey, I decided to structure my research under different questions in order to form a narrative of creative development. Taking stock of my starting point, and charting my path towards a more creative and proactive future, these questions served to direct my curiosity accordingly:

- Where did the Stealth Creativity Manifesto inspiration come from?
- What manifestos am I drawn to?
- How might I better know myself?
- How might my thinking change?
- How do I get from here to there?
- How to maintain this momentum?

### Where did the Stealth Creativity Manifesto inspiration come from?

In 1926, Graham Wallas wrote about four stages of the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Creativity does not always follow a linear process and when inspiration strikes, it is important to recognize and acknowledge it. In my case, the inspiration to create the Stealth Creativity Manifesto struck as I was reading *Steal Like an Artist* (Kleon, 2012). Specifically when I read the following “You’re ready. Start making stuff. You might be scared to start. That’s natural” (Kleon, 2012, p. 27). I’m not sure what it was about this particular phrase. Perhaps it was the cartoon on the previous page that depicted a chasm with a stick figure on the left, labeled “what we are” peering over to the right, labeled “what we want to be”. It was at this moment that the A-HA struck me and I recalled an earlier goal write about

stealth creativity. At the time, I defined stealth creativity as developing the creative ability, within myself, and others, without specifically talking about it or even using the “C” word. Stealth creativity was about building a foundation, leading to higher creative realization.

Printed, in bold, at the top of the page was the phrase “Make things, know thyself”. This statement became a driving force for the Stealth Creativity Manifesto. For my personal manifesto to reflect the core of my being, and to draw out my creative best, I would have to delve deeper into self-exploration more than ever before. Kleon presented his theories of creativity in a playful and unique way, mixing in illustration, cut-and-paste graphics and different font styles, all of which appealed to me and beckoned my curiosity. When the idea for this manifesto resurfaced, it resonated in a way that caught my attention, not to be ignored. I wanted it to appeal on a number of levels, to a number of senses. In the pages of Kleon’s book, I realized I was ready to make something that would inspire my creativity, and to learn more about myself in the process.

Further inspiration for this project came from Bruce Lee. Lee’s personal quest to develop an efficient and effective style of self-defense was a creative endeavor unlike any before it in the world of martial arts. Styles of fighting and self-defense were traditionally fixed and rigid, and Lee’s style, Jeet Kune Do, was fluid and adaptable (1975). “Art lives where absolute freedom is, because where it is not, there can be no creativity” (Lee, 1975, p. 202). When creating Jeet Kune Do, Lee actively stripped away elements that were not essential, taking pieces from differing martial arts that proved effective *for him*, and he used these pieces to develop his own style of martial arts to be used by himself and others *like him*. This style of creative assembly has always resonated with me, as I too have a “spotlight” or “multiperspectivalist” view on life (Gardner, 2008). I see things from a broad perspective, sampling many tastes, and taking disparate

elements that work for me, applying them in my own unique way. Instead of having laser like focus, I shine a spotlight to look across genres and disciplines, in what Gardner (2008) called a “synthesizing mind”. I actively take in a wide range of influences, as a means of informing my personal and professional perspective. Lee once stated, “To hell with circumstances, I create opportunity” (1975). The Stealth Creativity Manifesto is just that - a declaration that my future is an opportunity to be created, with passion and purpose. I view its creation as the development of guiding principles that will draw influence from a disparate range of sources, serving as a guide to creative realization for myself, and any that choose to follow it.

Additional inspiration comes from Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (1983), where he postulates that there are many forms and expressions of intelligence. For example, some of us may have a more developed intelligence in the realm of logic and mathematics, while others rate higher in intrapersonal or kinesthetic intelligence. When I learned about this theory, it felt like an invitation to value and legitimize my existing strengths, instead of trying to develop intelligences that came less naturally to me. As obvious and intuitive as this may seem, it’s easy to focus solely on weaknesses at the behest of acknowledging and developing one’s strengths, something that I have often struggled with.

Each of these influences served as updrafts that moved the Stealth Creativity Manifesto higher forward into my consciousness. Illumination came from the pages of *Steal like an Artist*. The impetus to pull data and inspiration from a variety of sources came from Bruce Lee, and the vision to use this manifesto as a tool to bolster my strengths came from Gardner’s theories.

### **What manifestos am I drawn to?**

I was once told that “A vision statement is more than words on a paper, it should be something you want to tattoo on your body” (Personal Communication with Jody Fisher, 2013).

I feel that a manifesto has similar importance. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “a public declaration or proclamation, written or spoken” a manifesto aims to spark action and inspire beyond its words. Before inspiration for the Stealth Creativity Manifesto struck, several other manifestos had already piqued my curiosity. Each presented in an interesting and unique way, inspiring creative action. They are reviewed here to present an understanding of the type of manifesto that inspires and excites me.

**Right Brain Terrain.** The Right Brain Terrain manifesto (<http://rightbrainterrain.com/Manifesto.htm>) gets straight to the point. Plain and simple, it is a call to create. It is presented in a handwritten Moleskin journal, and appears a little rough around the edges. It is imperfect in its presentation, with mistakes scrawled out, and in that imperfection comes a strong message – don’t aim for perfection, or a perfect creation, aim for creativity as an ongoing process instead. This manifesto plays at our emotions, calling attention to our frustrations of being stuck in “respectable and prosperous career choices”. It draws upon the likes of Pablo Picasso and Albert Einstein to let us know that it’s never too late to reclaim our creativity, and to never let it go. Its logo serves as a reminder that the right side of our brains should be liberated, and it ends off with a call to action by Abraham Lincoln that stated “...in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

**Holstee Manifesto.** The Holstee Manifesto (<http://shop.holstee.com/pages/about#the-manifesto>) is presented in both poster and video form, each carrying the same message to pursue life to its fullest. What I found interesting about the video is that the simple words, accompanied by a visual message, carry much more gravity. The written messages were interspersed with video of people riding bikes, enjoying themselves and having fun. This allows time for each message to sit with the viewer, as they associate it with positive emotions. Perhaps it resonates



with me more because the visuals are all about bike riding, which is something I tend to associate positive emotions with. It states its elements with short and simple phrases such as “Do what you love, and do it often.” and “Travel often; getting lost will help you find yourself.” One might call these truisms, and yet even the most trivial statements often mean nothing unless we pause to consider their meaning. The Holstee Manifesto puts these statements front and centre, and they serve as a reminder to pay attention to ourselves, and to be present in our own lives.

**Cult of Done Manifesto.** The Cult of Done Manifesto

(<http://www.brepettis.com/blog/2009/3/3/the-cult-of-done-manifesto.html>)

is presented in both written and visual formats. In the graphic presentation, each statement is presented visually using Rubik’s cubes. This manifesto speaks to the user on multiple levels. Each proclamation is delivered as a written statement as well as visually engaging, appealing to different parts of the brain in order to deliver their message. Meier (2009) outlined several different ways in which we learn - somatic, auditory, visual and kinesthetic. This manifesto presents its ideas in a way that creates a different experience for each viewer, enabling more meaningful connections on a variety of levels.

I had encountered these manifestos before beginning my studies in creativity, and they have always stuck with me. I am struck by the strength of their messages, which I feel are presented with elegance and simplicity. Even though I chose these particular manifestos to discuss, there are others that appeal to me and are listed in the bibliography, for further investigation.

**How might I better know myself?**

In order to write a manifesto to be used as a guide for creating more meaning in my life, it was important to better understand myself. There have been times in the past, when my actions

have not always aligned with my values. In these instances, the resulting decisions rarely, if ever, sat well either in my head, or my heart, often resulting in a dichotomy that led to cognitive dissonance. Ralph Waldo Emerson once stated that “self-trust is the first secret to success” and in order to have self-trust, there must be self-awareness, which stems from self-discovery. As Socrates stated “the unexamined life is not worth living”, and thus the creation of my manifesto will require a deep examination of self, from many angles. Puccio, Murdock and Mance (2011) referred to diagnostic thinking as “making a careful examination of a situation. As part of this diagnostic self-examination, it is important to learn how others see me, as a way of revealing personal blind spots. The Johari Window (Coates, 2010) is a tool that can be used to discover areas that are consciously or unconsciously being hidden, from others, and ourselves which might lead to self-deception and poor decision-making. I aim to seek out and address potential lack of awareness through 360 evaluations, soliciting SWOT feedback from peers and colleagues, and learning more about how I am perceived by others. Perhaps this feedback holds insight I can use to decrease potential blind, hidden and unknown panes of my Johari Window (Coates, 2010) leading to a more authentic and integral approach to life?

I looked into additional assessments that I had not taken before, as a way of discovering, or rediscovering, personal strengths and weaknesses. One was the Strengths Finder 2.0 (Rath, 2007) and the other was the Realise2 assessment (<http://www.cappeu.com/Realise2.aspx>). Historically, psychology was focused on developing weaknesses as a path to personal development (Rath, 2007). Instead, Strengths Finder focuses on potential for growth and development. Allowing people to leverage their strengths on a daily basis means they are “six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general” (Rath, 2007, p. iii). The Realise2 assessment looks at

strengths as “the things we are good at that give us energy when we are using them” (Realise2 Technical Manual, 2012). The personal profile of the Realise2 assessment covers realized and unrealized strengths, and gives the tools to moderate weaknesses and learned behaviors.

In *Courage to Create*, Rollo May wrote (1975) that “...this compartmentalization of values and goals leads very quickly to an undermining of the unity of the personality and the person, in ‘pieces’ within as well as without” (p. 53). Through this self-examination, it is important to develop a unity within myself that will allow me to present an even more unified whole to the world. Moving into a world of greater creative realization and new opportunity will undoubtedly benefit from the increased awareness that comes from immersion in self-discovery. In turn, greater creative realization will lead to greater self-awareness, something I’ve already discovered through the 30-day challenges. “We must always base our commitment in the center of our own being, or else no commitment will be ultimately effective” (May, 1975, p. 13). It is with commitment to myself that I will make this manifesto a bold and courageous declaration.

### **How might my thinking change?**

After better understanding my starting point, I wanted to investigate what areas I might try to develop. How will I have to change my thinking in order to develop greater creative possibility, and to proactively go after my goals and dreams? To dig into this question, I examined two books written around the future of cognition. *A Whole New Brain: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (Pink, 2006) and *5 Minds for the Future* (Gardner 2008). Written independently, each author unaware of the other’s efforts, these books turned out complimentary theories, augmenting each other’s messages. As automation and computerization become more prevalent, human beings will increasingly operate on equal footing and the best way to distinguish ourselves will be within the cognitive realm (Gardner, 2008; Pink, 2006). How we

think, create, and interact with one another will become more and more important. This is a message that resonates with me, and is influential to the Stealth Creativity Manifesto.

Gardner (2008) wrote about five different “minds” that we might cultivate if we are to be truly successful in a future where computers will be responsible for the majority of our non-creative work. These minds, which are separate from, although somewhat linked to his theory of the eight intelligences, are the synthesizing, disciplined, creative, respectful and ethical minds. Pink (2006) wrote about the shift from the industrial age to the conceptual age, where industry as we know it today will be more and more automated, leaving us to interact with each other in a more conceptual “right-brain” way. The five elements of interaction in Pink’s Conceptual Age are design, storytelling, symphonic thinking, empathy and play.

Exploration and development of the landscape of the mind are not new, and go back to the Socratic method of thinking - using dialectical methods of conversation as a way of discovering new perspectives and viewpoints. However, with industrialization, Gardner (2008) and Pink (2006) stated that humans have turned increasingly to external methods of interaction, and as these methods become easier to replace with technology, there are fewer options available for distinguishing themselves from technology. The opportunities that do present themselves are within the cognitive space. With how we design interactions with people, places and things, and with how we define our creative thinking to produce new and unique products and outcomes.

Godin (2010) discussed similar elements from a different angle, stating that the automation of our jobs spells doom for the individual worker. This is a similar message to Gardner and Pink, being told with from different angle. Godin went on to describe that creating “art” is the best way to distinguish ourselves in order to be successful. Gardner, Pink and Godin all put forth a message that I interpreted thusly - the future requires that human beings develop

their metacognition, and learn to create the “owners manual” for our own brains. Two aspects of which are using design as the interface between people and products (Pink, 2006) and learning how to more effectively and empathetically interact with those who may be different than us (Gardner, 2008). These two elements are essential if I am to be successful in defining the direction that my manifesto, and my future, will take.

### **How do I get from here to there?**

In order to define how to proactively stretch to the future of my choice, I need to know how to get there. There is no end to self-help articles available online or resources in any local bookstore. To begin with, one needs a growth mindset, defined as the willingness and ability to develop and change, without establishing a pre-defined limit to personal possibility (Dweck, 2006). A growth mindset is a useful tool when tackling self-discovery and personal growth. Understanding that we are not perfect, and accepting that we need to develop flexibility in order to surpass perceptual blocks, are core elements of developing our creativity (Davis, 1999). When it comes to our mindsets, Dweck stated they “frame the running account that’s taking place in people’s heads”. Our mindsets dictate how we interpret our interactions with the world around us. While fixed mindsets attach negative connotations and judgments to our internal dialogues, growth mindsets allow us to be more mindful, looking for opportunities to learn and grow (Dweck, 2006).

*The Tools* (Stutz & Michels, 2012) contained several different methods that provide guidance when attending to thoughts of negativity, which serve to reinforce fixed mindsets. These “tools” don’t tell you what to think, and yet they provide guidelines for preventing the perpetual attachment of negative connotations to your thoughts by replacing them with positive

ones instead. By detaching “inner enemies”, our thoughts are free to grow and develop in a positive fashion (Stutz & Michels, 2012), leading to the development of a growth mindset.

Our thoughts often manifest themselves as actions, becoming habits over time. In developing awareness of self, it’s important to recognize our own habits, both good and bad. If these habits are deemed incompatible with our ultimate goals, then we should work towards changing or developing them so that they become beneficial. *The Power of Habit* (Duhig, 2012) outlined the “habit loop” which consisted of a cue, the resultant routine and the ultimate reward. The basis of change is in modifying the routine, while leaving the cue and the reward the same, something Duhig called “Golden Rule of Habit Change” (2012).

Changing existing thought patterns, behaviors and habits by identifying negative elements and altering them is an approach that can be augmented by many of the practices of positive psychology, which is the study of optimal human experience (Grenville-Cleave, 2012). *Positive Psychology, a Practical Guide* (Grenville-Cleave, 2012) contained a series of exercises and activities based on the work of Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi and Martin Seligman, two of the founding fathers of the positive psychology movement. The book outlined Seligman’s model for well-being, which focused on positive emotion, engagement (based on Csikszentmihalyi’s psychology of optimal experience), relationships, and achievement (Grenville-Cleave, 2012). If traditional psychology is concerned with diagnosis of conditions that result in current psychological distress, positive psychology is focused on developing psychological elements that result in flourishing and well-being (Grenville-Cleave, 2012).

Guided by these resources, these tools and techniques will inform the creation of a manifesto that will embody many positive aspects of well-being, continual learning and development, as well as the cultivation of happiness and a proactive lifestyle.

**How to maintain this momentum?**

The question remains - once this manifesto has been completed, are there tools that will help me to adhere to its tenants? The cognitive tools of CPS, as laid out by Puccio *et al* (2011), provide a framework with which to tackle problems that are open-ended in nature. But what else is there? Mindfulness and awareness are two elements that seem to be applicable to any number of situations. Mindfulness and meditation can be used as tools to develop concentration and clarity (Gonzalez, 2012). *Mindful Leadership* discussed hindrances, which are “mental states that impede success” (Gonzales, 2012, p. 63). Such hindrances as attachment and aversion could be key elements that block the development of positive habits, or may be elemental in affecting such traits as persistence. As part of following through on the declaration of my manifesto, it is important to dig deep within in order to make a sustainable effort towards positive change. There are many mindfulness exercises in *Mindful Leadership* that aimed to maintain balance and focus, despite external influences.

*Wherever you go, there you are* (Kabat-Zinn, 1994) outlined several qualities of a meditative personality which included patience, non-judgment and concentration. He stated that meditation is an ongoing practice or repetitive rehearsing, instead of being something that one is either good at or not. This meditative approach and perspective will serve useful when rehearsing the elements of the Stealth Creativity Manifesto.

Much like Bruce Lee’s wide reaching perspective, my research covered many different resources. As my work developing the Stealth Creativity Manifesto continues, I will dive back into the following extended bibliography when necessary to augment the rationale for my personal declaration.

## Bibliography

### Manifesto Inspiration

*The Accidental Creative Manifesto* (<http://www.accidentalcreative.com/manifesto>)

*The Cult of Done Manifesto* (<http://www.brepettis.com/blog/2009/3/3/the-cult-of-done-manifesto.html>)

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*The Five Sentence Manifesto* (<http://five.sentenc.es/>)

*The Happiness Manifesto* ([http://www.happiness-project.com/happiness\\_project/2009/02/check-out-my-happiness-manifesto-brand-new/](http://www.happiness-project.com/happiness_project/2009/02/check-out-my-happiness-manifesto-brand-new/))

*The Holstee Manifesto* (<http://shop.holstee.com/pages/about>)

*The JetSet Citizen Manifesto* (<http://jetsetcitizen.com/cheap-travel/jetsetcitizen-manifesto/>)

*The Manifesto for Children* (<http://creativitycat.org/file.php/1/E.pdf>)

*The Manifesto Project* (<http://www.1000manifestos.com/list/>)

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## Section Three: Process Plan

### Introduction

When I began this project, my initial plan was rigid and formulaic, and didn't take into account my meandering creative process. However, I had to start somewhere so the plan was prepared in three phases, as follows:

**First Phase.** The first phase (February) would be research, personal SWOT analysis and drafting of the initial manifesto. This phase was to focus on the clarifying aspect of the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process.

**Second Phase.** The second phase (March) would be spent working on the final presentation of the manifesto and tackling a series of challenges related to each manifesto point as well as working on writing a rationale to be shared. The second phase was to focus on the ideating/developing part of CPS.

**Third Phase.** The third phase (April) was going to focus on writing up the content of chapters 4 – 6 and refining my final product. This phase was to be heavy on implementation.

As soon as my concept paper was approved, my well-laid out plan quickly fell apart when I realized it did not match my creative process. As an ENTP on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (<http://www.myersbriggs.org>), I tend to head down rabbit holes, and take a very circuitous route to my final destination. I've made an attempt to capture my actual process in the next section.

### What Actually Happened

The actual process I followed was much more organic, and I shall lay it out here in two categories, creating the manifesto and designing the final product.

**Creating the Manifesto.** My initial concept paper was for a business plan, manifesto, network developing and essentially a re-branding of “Ian”. Professor Burnett then asked “Is this what you really want to be working on for the next four months?” The answer to that was no, what I really wanted to do was focus on my manifesto. My initial process included an ongoing capturing of ideas through journaling, and I started six separate documents based on the sections of the final paper. As I had ideas and discovered links or sources, I slotted them into the appropriate document. I read and researched as much as I could absorb around personal, cognitive and creative development. I wasn’t certain at this point what was going to drive the manifesto, and yet I knew I had to write a literature review.

At the same time, I reached out to friends and co-workers to ask them to complete a SWOT analysis about my personal brand. I completed a SWOT analysis on myself, as well, and invested in several different strengths assessments. By capturing data from these assessments from many different angles, internal and external, I hoped to gain insight into any gaps between how I saw myself and how others saw me. This was a key exercise, as it would eventually inform some of elements of the final manifesto.

When working on the literature review, I tried to craft a story that would show where I’m at, where I wanted to go and how I was going to get there. The idea was the manifesto would serve as a tool to get me to my creative destination. After this phase of the project, I had an opportunity to do some work with the Leadership Council of the Creative Problem Solving Institute (<http://www.cpsiconference.com>). Immersing myself in conversation with creative thought leaders and practitioners is something that everyone completing this Master’s project should have an opportunity to do. The discussions and

support helped guide my thinking as I crafted the next phase of the project, which focused on writing the manifesto.

In an invigorating conversation with my sounding board partner, discussing research and ideas to date, I was asked the following question - "Could you write the manifesto right now?" I responded affirmatively. The next statement followed - "Then write the first prototype" (Personal Communication, Jody Fisher, 2013). As simple as it may seem, this advice got me writing as I realized that creating the manifesto was actually creating a series of manifesto of prototypes. I created draft after draft, discussing the outcomes with my sounding board partner, with close friends and creative thought partners alike. Each of the iterations introduced new insight, as I built in elements based on my literature review as well as from the personal analyses. Much iteration later (twelve prototypes), I had my final manifesto.

**Manifesto Design.** I felt good about the work done in creating the manifesto, and yet I wasn't sure how the final presentation was going to come together. At this point, I decided it was best to engage a designer friend of mine to facilitate me through the design process. I knew the final product was going to be unique and interesting, and yet I wasn't sure how I was going to get there. Time was of the essence, and graphic design is not a skill I have a lot of practice with.

It was important that the ideas and concepts come from me, so we laid the groundwork for our design sessions. I shared what my project was, and what my outcomes were to be. What followed was an organic process for coming up with the final idea of presenting the Stealth Creativity Manifesto as the liner notes for a cassette tape. The first step in the process was to help the designer understand the manifesto, so we stepped

through it piece by piece. The designer asked questions, in order to fully understand the concepts that went into its creation. Despite thinking my manifesto was complete, these lines of questioning made me realize that I had to add clarity and refinement to the manifesto. During the design phase, I created three more iterations of the manifesto, breaking it down and re-building it.

Next, we looked at rearranging the content of the elements to tell a story. This exercise allowed the ordering of the elements to mirror the narrative I laid out in the literature review – what elements do I live already, and where would I like to go? This ordering exercise resulted in the narrative presented in the final product, found in section four.

The process then focused on presentation. What symbols represented stealth? I couldn't answer this question without thinking of planes, weapons and ninjas. So the process switched focus from stealth to Ian. Almost immediately, the mixtape as a representing symbol came to mind. The mixtape is a tool and vehicle that I use to share music with my friends. The thought of presenting my manifesto as a mixtape cassette liner resonated strongly, and the prototyping began immediately (See Figures 1 – 3).

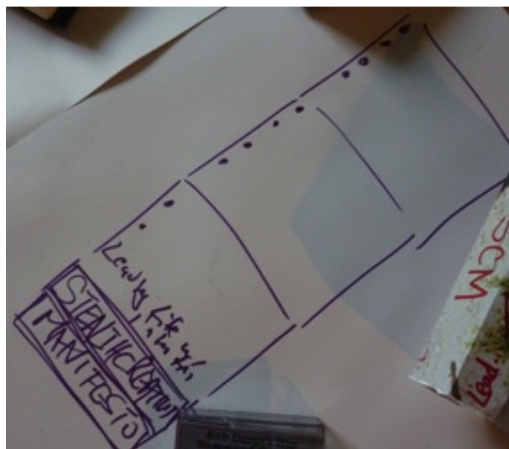


Figure 1 – Initial drawing



Figure 2 – Cardboard prototype

**Inside**



**Outside**

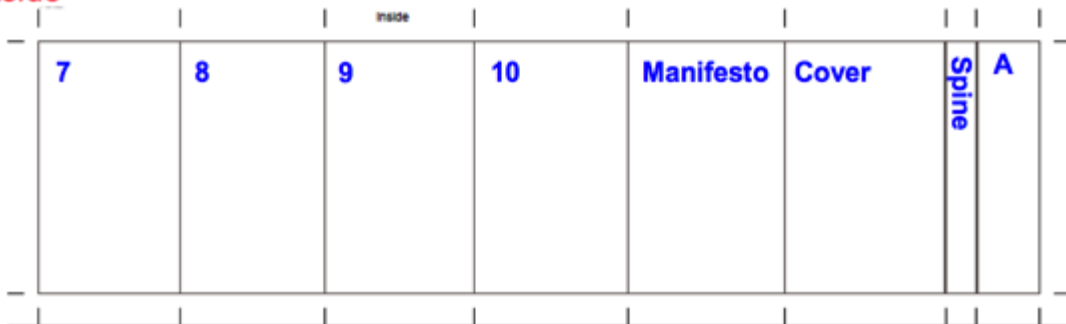


Figure 3 – First electronic prototype

After the product format was decided, attention was turned to visuals. I selected a number of records from my collection that represented my style and persona, and I began creating a mood board in order to capture themes and images that resonated with me. The song arc stood out above the rest, and was used as a basis for the imagery of the manifesto.



I chose to use the full spectrum of colour, to represent the universal reach of creativity (see Figures 4 & 5).

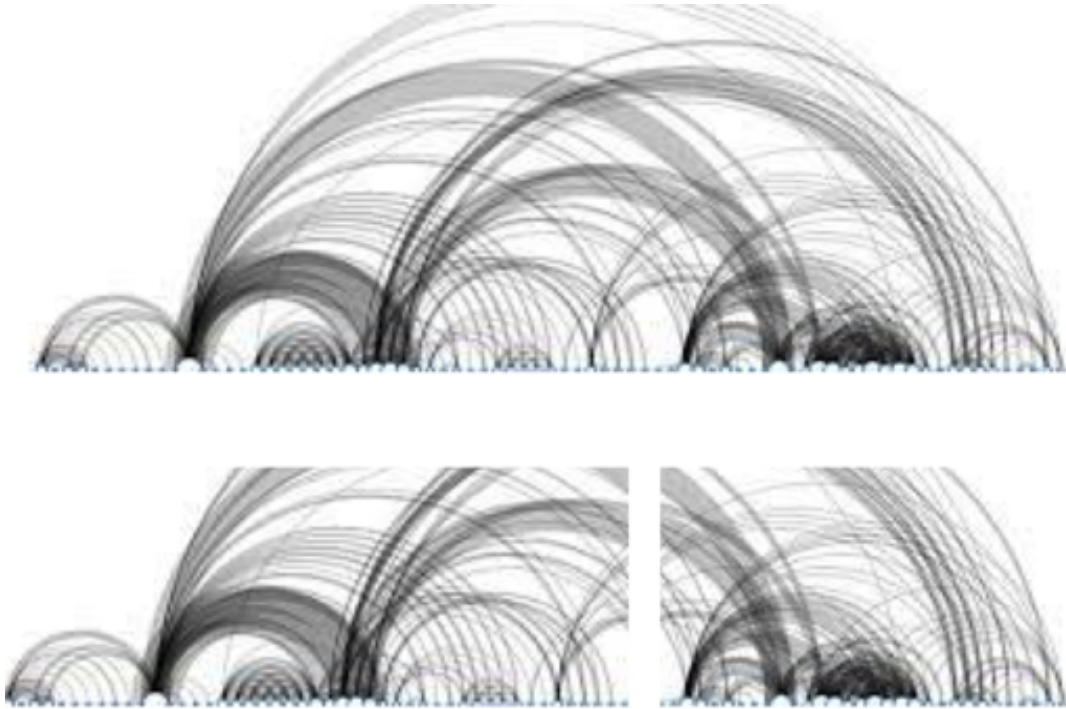


Figure 4 – Background image prototype

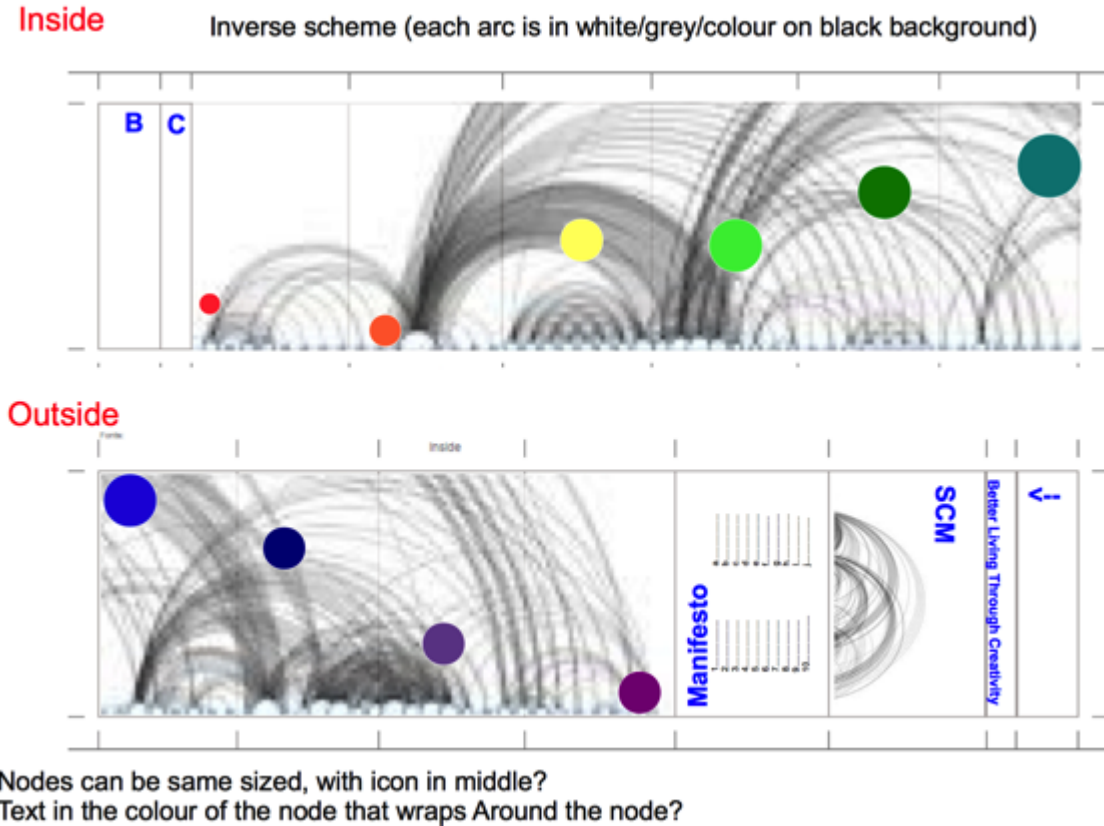


Figure 5 – Second electronic prototype

Figure 6 and 7 show two records that were chosen from my collection, since they hold deeper meaning for me. Figure 6 shows a KPM Library record from 1970. Figure 7, shows the ALC Music Library cover (2003) which was made as a nod to the KPM. This repurposing of graphic arts in music mirrors the art of sampling, which is of the utmost importance to my own musical journey. I chose to use these covers as a guide for creating the Stealth Creativity Manifesto cover, weaving stealth into its very presentation. I wanted the Stealth Creativity Manifesto to include a reference to the depth of meaning that sampling can entail for some music enthusiasts, creating multiple meaning for those that may spot it.



Figure 6 – KPM Library record

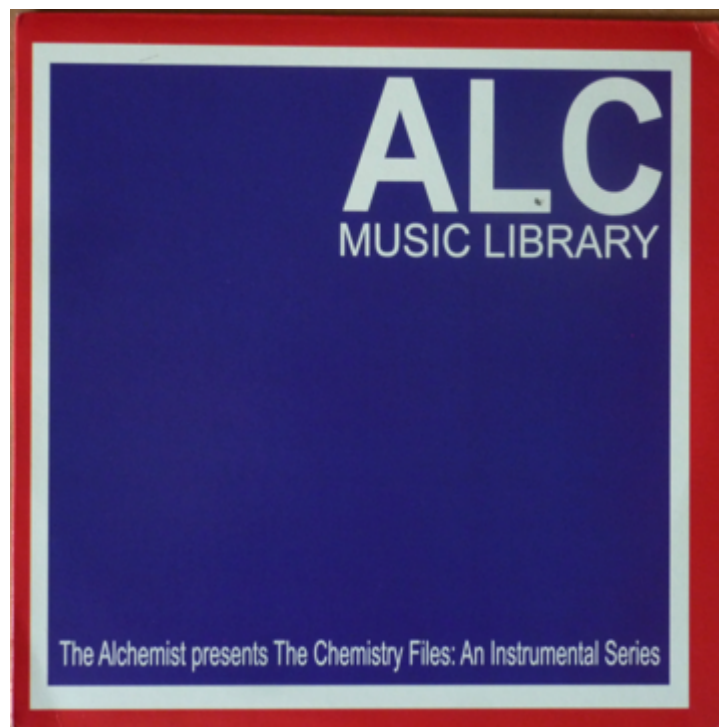


Figure 7 – ALC Music Library

<b>Task</b>	<b>Time Spent (hours)</b>
Research	30
SB Partner Discussions	6
Discussions with Cyndi	3
Personal Assessments	7
SWOT Analyses	10
Adopt-a-Paper Assignment	4
Journaling	6
Writing	15
<b>Creating Manifesto Total</b>	<b>81</b>
SB Partner Discussions	6
Discussions with Cyndi	2
Design Prototyping	20
Manifesto Refinement	15
Journaling	4
Writing	15
Editing	6
<b>Manifesto Design Total</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Total Hours on Project</b>	<b>149</b>

Table 1 – Project Hours Spent

## Section Four: Outcomes

### Introduction

While a manifesto is a public declaration of intention, stealth is synonymous with secretive methods. By its very nature, the Stealth Creativity Manifesto creates deliberate discord by juxtaposing an overt message with covert tactics. This tension serves as a reminder that the message carried by this manifesto is to be woven into every aspect of my life, and not to remain as mere words on paper. The ten manifesto elements were chosen in a manner that was very unusual for me. On my birthday, I was presented with a group of words that best described someone born in the morning, in a particular part of the Zodiac. Not one to take an Astrologists word, I asked what words represented someone being born in the afternoon. The afternoon words presented did not resonate with me whatsoever, however the words that represented a morning birth did, remarkably so. I chose to base my manifesto items on the words from the morning, since they resonated so much. Furthermore, using these words as a starting point reflected the effort I was making to trust my instincts. These words felt like a good starting point, so I developed them accordingly. The original words that served as my starting point were philosophy, higher education, learning, travel, collaboration, fairness, harmony, mastery, passion and confidence. As the manifesto grew and evolved over fifteen iterations, the elements themselves shifted and morphed into the final statements below.

The Stealth Creativity Manifesto is presented here in its entirety, followed by photos and screen shots of the final product, as liner notes for a cassette tape, outlined in Figures 8 - 19.

**The Stealth Creativity Manifesto**

*1 – Each day I seek new perspectives to create my ongoing adventure.*

Where my final destination might find me, it will be the result of an exploration rich in new perspective spurred by imagination and curiosity. Each unique perspective I experience will reveal possibility and unexpected connections to be pursued with curiosity. I will challenge the ordinary, the familiar and the routine, seeking out new and unusual perspectives on a daily basis.

Guiding exploration with curiosity and imagination can spark creative connections within.

*2 – I pursue education beyond the confines of the school system.*

Learning is ubiquitous and I continually strive to satisfy my hunger for knowledge and education. I will build a network of teachers, both formal and informal, seeking to learn from others in all facets of life. I will mentor with the goal of learning from my mentee and will not be complacent with my education.

Learning and education perpetuate the creative journey, revealing surprise and opportunity at every turn.

*3 – I use storytelling as a tool for learning and teaching.*

I will weave narrative and content together, creating stories that will resonate more effectively with both teacher and student. I will use this storytelling to create a learning mindset at all levels of participation, heightening anticipation and curiosity for what is yet to come.

Strong narratives help messages resonate, catalyzing greater personal connection.

*4 – I pursue collaborative relationships.*

I will explore the energy and spark ignited through collaboration with creative thought partners.

Collaboration doesn't necessitate perpetual consensus and I acknowledge that respectful conflict and open discourse can be mutually advantageous. I will foster collaboration with curiosity, empathy and understanding.

Collaboration diversifies connections and perspective, energizing creative possibility.

*5 – I approach the world with an open and objective mindset.*

I strive to put aside my ego in order to see things as objectively as possible. This mindset will allow me to explore the maze of life, turning misstep into opportunity and mistake into knowledge and understanding. I will suspend my expectations and view circumstances beyond my control as opportunities for growth.

Creative possibility can flourish through the deliberate pause of judgement and expectation.

*6 – I treat the act of thinking as a skill to be developed.*

Acknowledging that thinking is a skill grants me the freedom to practice and play with my cognition. This practice demands commitment and concentration, and will manifest itself in greater clarity and depth of ideas. I will experiment with my thoughts to generate new ways of approaching the challenges of life, creating greater insight and understanding of the world around me.

Better thinking leads to new perspectives and processes, revealing insight, which may foster greater creativity.

*7 – I trust what my heart tells me.*

I believe that all emotions are beautiful and will attend to mine without judgement. My feelings inform my values and guide me towards passion and fulfillment. I accept that my heart is a source of strength and its voice will no longer be silenced.

Passion is communicated through feelings and emotion, and is a cornerstone of creative pursuit.

*8 – I strive for harmonious balance in my life.*

I will shift focus and energy between elements of my life as they ebb and flow, mindfully maintaining a balance that feels harmonious and centred. I approach this ongoing effort as a practice to be enjoyed, knowing that it requires empathy, understanding and self-compassion. Internal balance of thoughts and feelings will allow me to be in greater harmony with the world around me.

Harmony and balance lessens cognitive dissonance by aligning values and actions, freeing space for greater creative thinking.

*9 – I pursue mastery of my passions.*

I devote myself to deeper focus on what I love doing, to follow my strengths and to pursue curiosity. I give myself permission to let go of the things that take away my energy. I acknowledge that Mastery takes time, effort and concentration and will be patient and deliberate with my intentions as I lead my life.

Mastery is a foundation from which the creative process can experience boundless growth.



10 – *I cultivate confidence as a state of being.*

Setting and achieving goals will add to my confidence; manifesting itself as courage, determination, motivation and spark. Habitual self-challenging requires passion, motivation, commitment and purposeful acknowledgement of personal achievement. My personal challenges will push beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone, deliberately stretching my skills.

Confidence perpetuates motivation, and extends the flow of creativity.



Figure 8 – The Stealth Creativity Manifesto



Figure 10 – Unfolding the Manifesto

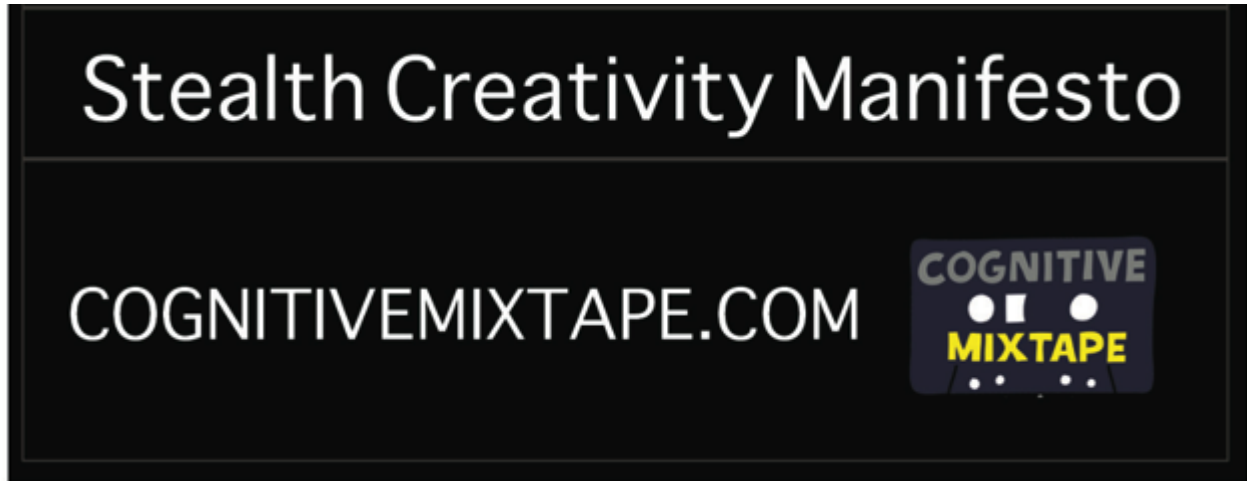


Figure 11 – Manifesto Spine and Real Panel

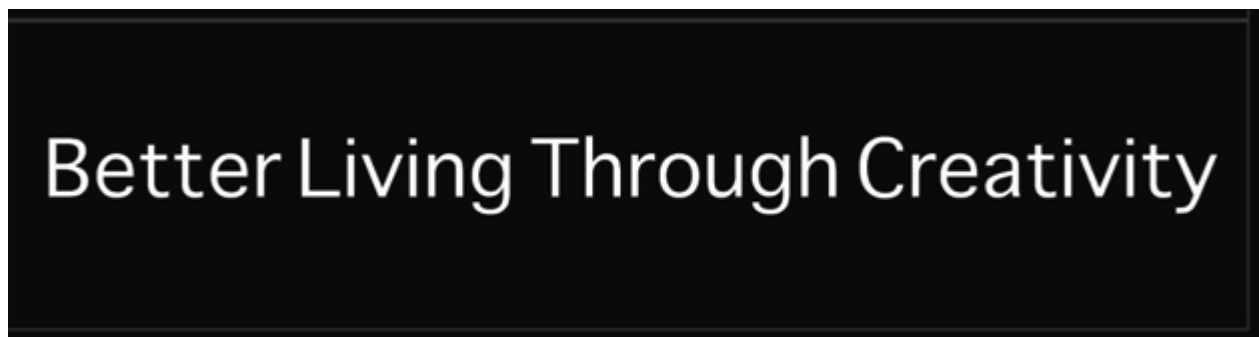


Figure 12 – Manifesto Inside Tag



Figure 13 – Manifesto Cover and Track Listing

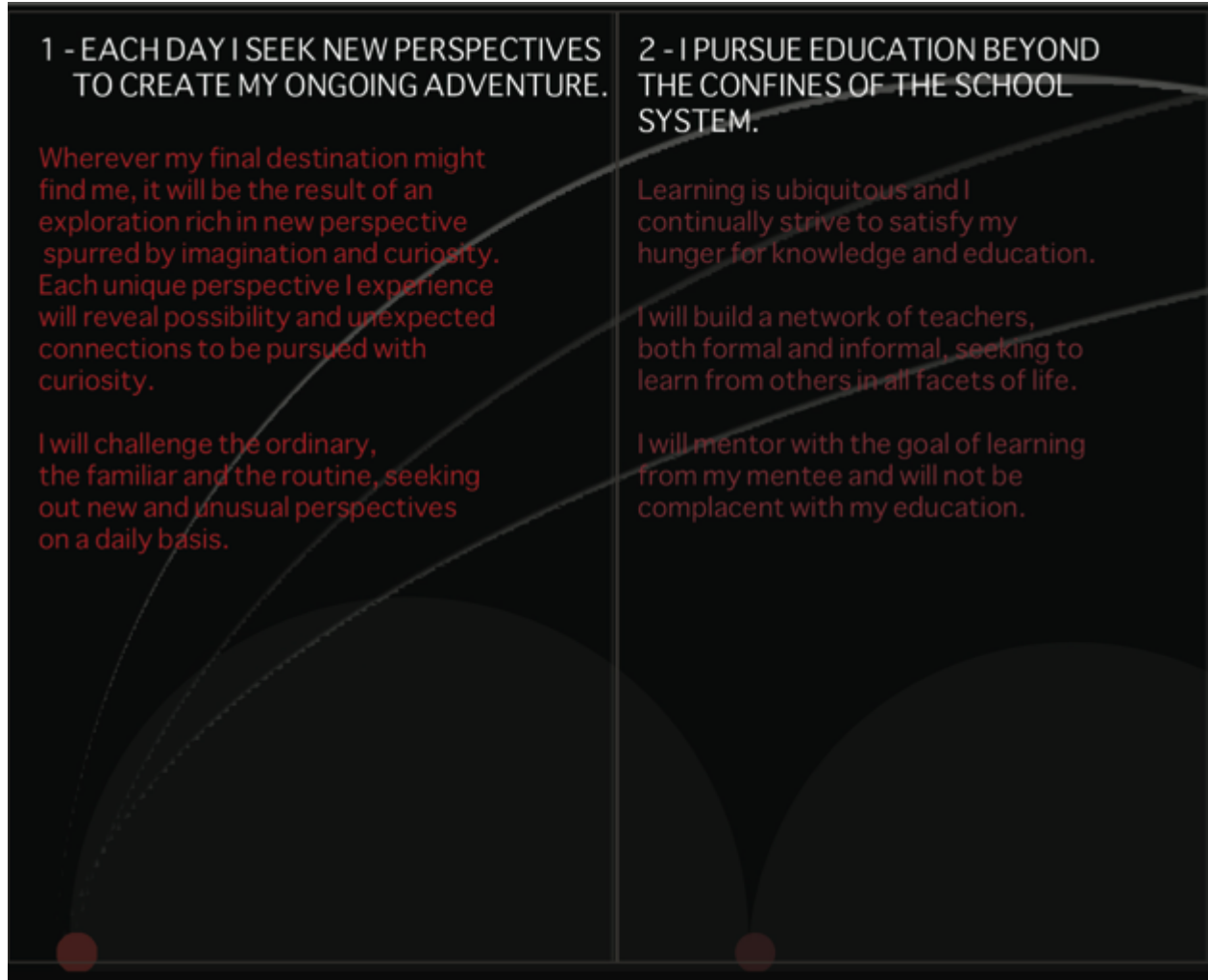


Figure 14 – Manifesto Items 1 and 2

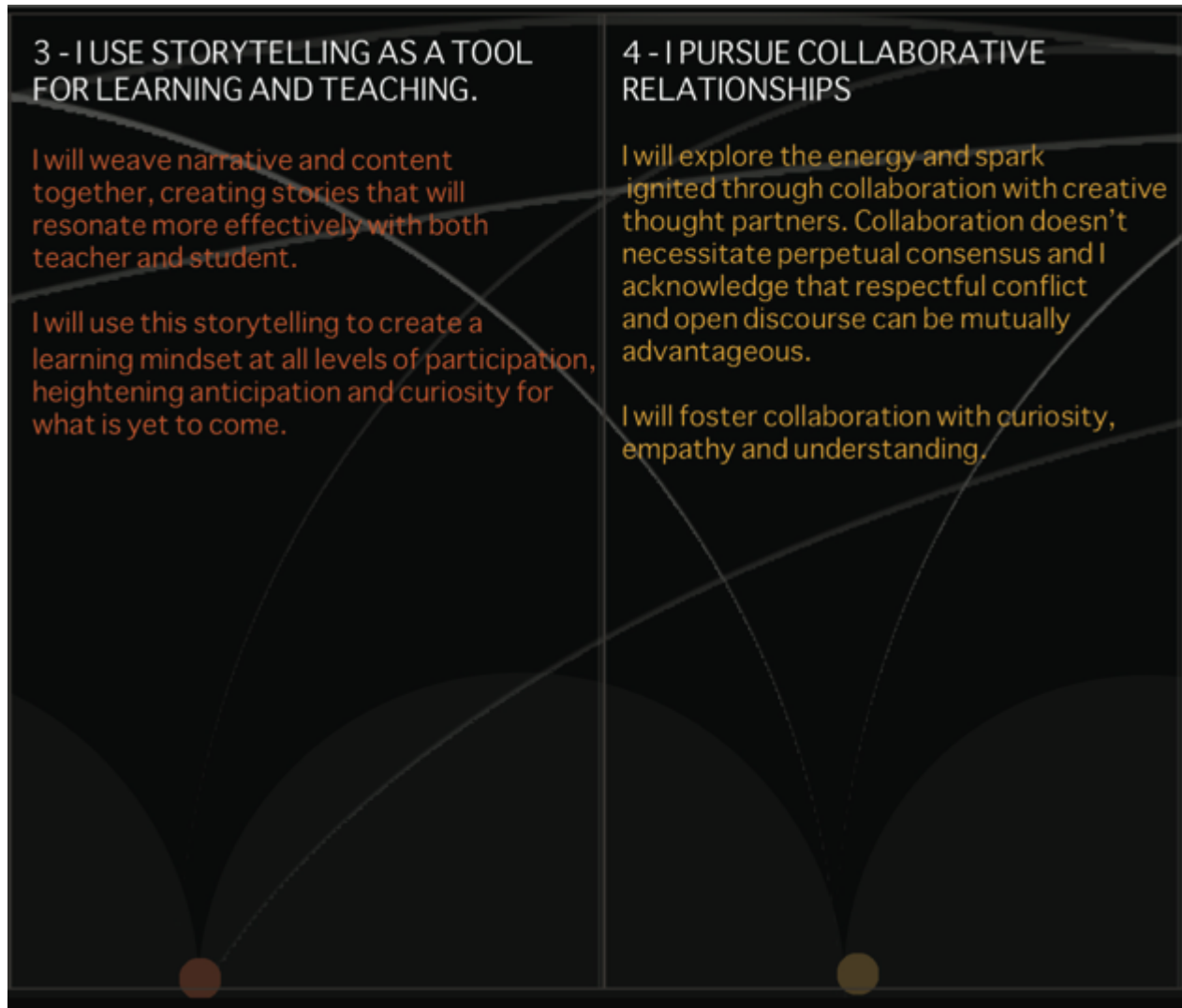


Figure 15 – Manifesto Items 3 and 4



5 - I APPROACH THE WORLD WITH AN OPEN AND OBJECTIVE MINDSET	6 - I TREAT THE ACT OF THINKING AS A SKILL TO BE DEVELOPED.
<p data-bbox="212 346 743 562">I strive to put aside my ego in order to see things as objectively as possible. This mindset will allow me to explore the maze of life, turning misstep into opportunity and mistake into knowledge and understanding.</p> <p data-bbox="212 598 716 705">I will suspend my expectations and view circumstances beyond my control as opportunities for growth.</p>	<p data-bbox="834 346 1349 594">Acknowledging that thinking is a skill grants me the freedom to practice and play with my cognition. This practice demands commitment and concentration, and will manifest itself in greater clarity and depth of ideas.</p> <p data-bbox="834 636 1354 810">I will experiment with my thoughts to generate new ways of approaching the challenges of life, creating greater insight and understanding of the world around me.</p>

Figure 16 – Manifesto Items 5 and 6



Figure 17 – Manifesto Items 7 and 8



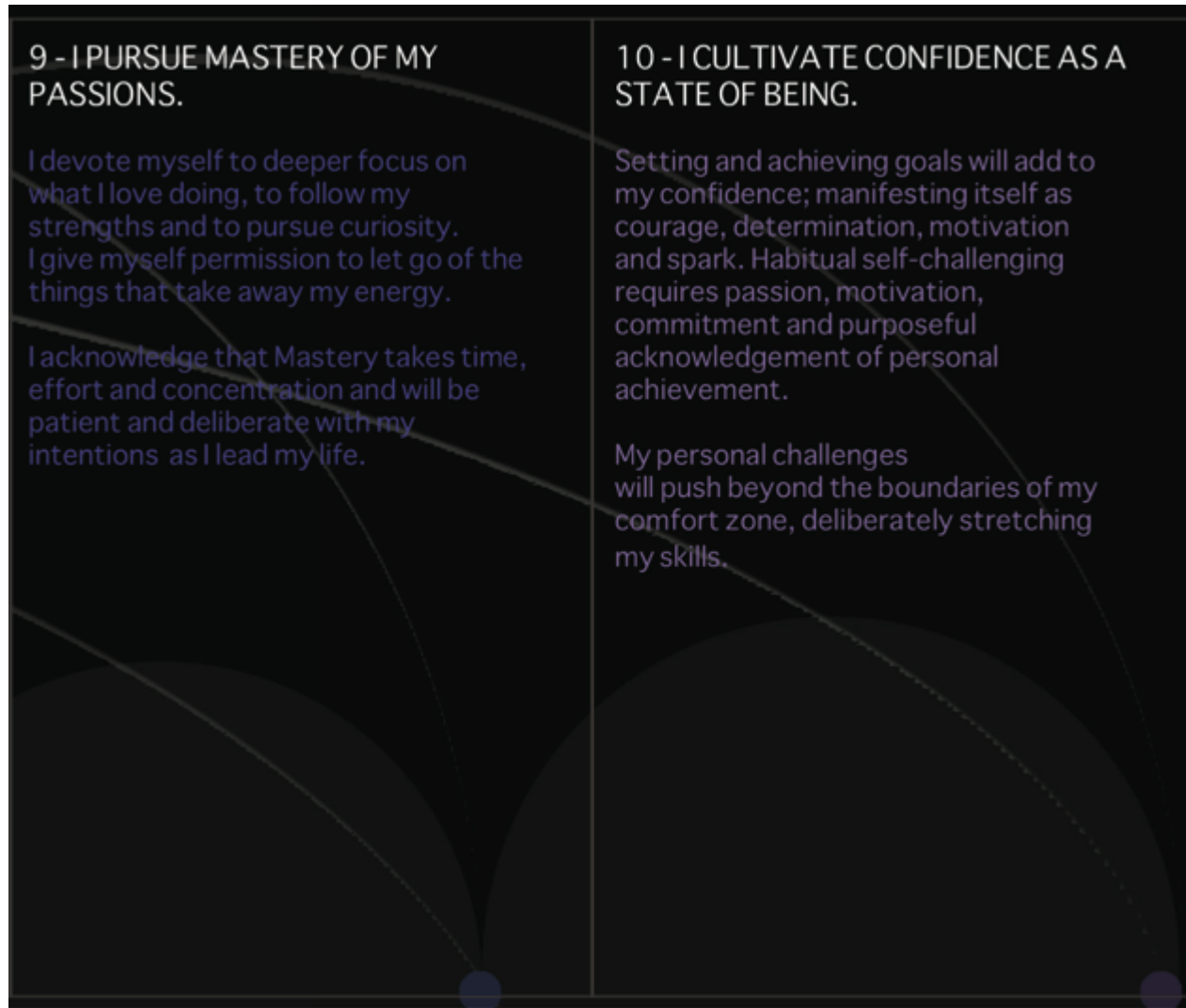


Figure 18 – Manifesto Items 9 and 10

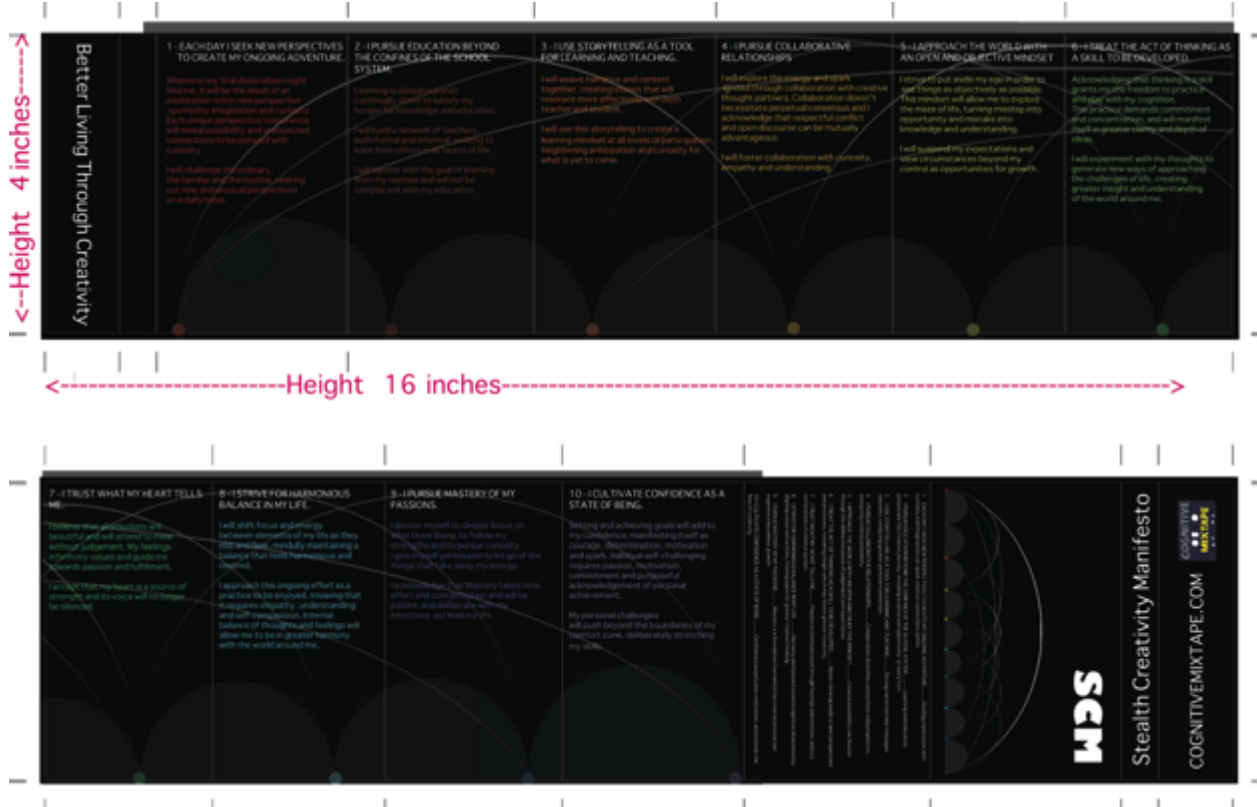


Figure 19 – Full manifesto template

## Section Five: Key Learnings

### Introduction

Without setting goals, there is no forward momentum. At the beginning of this project, I established four goals to aspire towards.

- Develop and implement a sustainable, repeatable set of principles that continually feed my passions (both personally and professionally)
- Cultivate myself as a thought leader in deliberate creativity
- Build and nurture a growing network, both online and offline, to communicate and share my knowledge around stewardship, creativity and positive change
- Better manage my own time and energy as this project moves forward

These goals were my starting point, and as the project grew and evolved, extraneous goals were eliminated and others got put on hold. My key learnings are outlined below.

### Principles of a Manifesto

I decided to write my manifesto as a sustainable, repeatable set of principles designed to feed my passion. I gathered strengths and weaknesses from many sources, including a personal SWOT analysis, strengths assessments (Strengths Finder, Realise2 and Stand Out) as well as SWOT feedback from peers and colleagues. Synthesizing this feedback allowed me to get a better picture of where my strengths were. I used this picture to identify elements that were important to me with respect to living a creative life. The key learning that I took away was not so much around my strengths and weaknesses, nor was it how to write a manifesto. Through this journey, and with the creation of my manifesto, I recognize that integrating my values, actions and behaviors is a conscious choice that I must practice on a daily basis. When I found myself experiencing thoughts of self-doubt, I would refer back to the elements of the manifesto already

written and I would ask if these were rules I would be comfortable living by. In fact, I found myself thinking back to them on a daily basis, even when not working on this project. I did not just spend three months writing a manifesto, I spent three months learning how to live by each piece of this manifesto.

### **Thought Leadership**

As I examined what it meant to ‘cultivate myself as a thought leader’ I looked at the definition of cultivate, which is to “break up (soil) in preparation for sowing or planting” (Oxford English Dictionary). The process I followed was indeed a “breaking up” of sorts. I had to put aside my ego, and was open to seeing myself as others see me, not just as I hoped to be seen. What started out as an academic exercise, examining resources and literature, quickly turned into a more personal journey. Taking feedback from the various assessments and my peers, and distilling it into useful information required mindful consumption and reflection. A key learning from this process was that becoming a thought leader requires a depth of personal discovery, self-reflection and self-awareness. One must be aware of ones values, in order to align them with corresponding actions. When I set this goal, I didn’t realize how much self-discovery I would be undertaking. I consider this immersion in self-discover and reflection a rite of passage, and I am comfortable saying that I have emerged as a thought leader in deliberate creativity.

### **Building a Network**

I had the initial goal of building and developing an online network with which to share my developing thoughts about my manifesto. Shortly thereafter, I abandoned this goal, as I felt it more important to focus my energy and creativity towards creating the actual manifesto. The deliberate decision to prioritize my efforts and eliminate elements accordingly was a key learning for me. This sort of deliberate prioritization was empowering, and seemed to deliver a boost of

confidence along the way. This isn't to say that network building isn't useful; it just wasn't useful to me in the moment.

### **Management of Time and Energy**

If I had checked my goals and objectives more regularly, I might have remembered that I committed to the balance of energy and time throughout the course of this project. However, here I am, at the end, and I feel out of balance. While I am happy with my final product, and my writing is nearing completion, there are areas of my life that I have been neglected. I abandoned my practice of meditation, which was to help maintain mental focus during this project. I let my regular exercise routine slip, as I chose to sit at my laptop instead of visiting the gym. Only as my final product started coming together, did I feel comfortable taking time away to exercise, as a way of clearing my mind and enjoying some incubation. My key learning here is to trust in processes that I know have worked for me before. Meditation and exercise give me a balance in life, which translate into a clearer mind and more focused approach to give creative endeavors.

### **Unexpected Learning**

You cannot always anticipate or predict what you might learn, and a few key experiences revealed additional insight along the way. First was that ambiguity must be embraced and relished, even when it feels uncomfortable. In those uncomfortable moments, when it was least expected, my most creative ideas tended to appear, often hitting me over the head with their simplicity. Second is the notion that having expertise in a domain allows for better realization of creative ideas, within that domain. If limited domain expertise and experience does not allow you to bring your ideas into a physical reality, then engage those who can help guide you, and be sure to learn from their process along the way. In the case of this project, I knew that I required a strong design aesthetic and yet did not have the time to develop that aesthetic myself. By

engaging a designer to help draw out my ideas, I was able to realize the true essence of the Stealth Creativity Manifesto. The resulting product is something that could only have come from me, and I learned that looking to the expertise of others is a way to catalyze my creativity.

### **Measuring Success**

**Completion of the Manifesto.** My first goal was to develop a complete manifesto that would capture positive and proactive methods for developing creativity, to be used by myself as well as others. While I cannot say with certainty if this manifesto will help others grow their creativity (should they choose to follow it), I am certain it will grow my own creativity. In fact, I can already feel the magnetic effect of this manifesto, positively energizing me with creative intention. The foundations of this manifesto will create opportunity for me to influence others through the authenticity of its message. It will be interesting to see if others choose to follow its guidelines.

**Novel and Unique Presentation.** When giving a musical mixtape to someone I care about, the songs are specifically chosen and mixed based on a deep understanding of their quirks and tastes. That is my musical philosophy. In turn, I have a similar philosophy around creativity, which I refer to as the “cognitive mixtape philosophy”. A cognitive mixtape is the name I have for preparing and sharing personalized tools or techniques with someone, based on a deep understanding of their preferences, circumstance and creative needs. When turning my manifesto into a final product, I was challenged to identify a symbol that might be used to represent the Stealth Creativity Manifesto. I decided upon a symbol that truly represents me, the mixtape. This idea resonated so clearly with me, I knew it was the right direction forward. Not only does it allow for a unique style in its presentation, stealth is embedded at many different levels. The mixtape has a deeply personal meaning to me; it is a way that I enjoy sharing with others.

Creating mixtapes requires deep listening and concentration and the act of making myself this cognitive mixtape truly required, for the first time, that I turn my “integrator” thinking style inwards, instead of using it to support those around me. It is a representation that honours my philosophy around creativity and by virtue of the time, effort and energy spent creating, it already holds a special place inside of me. As I reflect on my final product, I realize that presenting my manifesto with such a depth of personal meaning makes it more successful than I could have hoped for.

**Blog to share synthesis of knowledge and deepen understanding.** I had planned to blog as a way of developing and synthesizing elements of this manifesto. It seemed like a reasonable approach, and yet sharing deeply personal insights in public didn't seem like an approach that was meaningful or useful to me. Therefore, I chose to abandon this particular goal, as it did not support my efforts in a constructive way. I did start CognitiveMixtape.com and it will become my home base for sharing my thoughts around creativity, however it is far from a finished product.

**Creating a body of work with no endpoint.** This manifesto is certainly a strong starting point in creating a creating a body of work aimed at sparking inspiration and creative action, for both myself, and others. During its creation, I realized that making it as strong as I could is the only way to move forward. There were goals that came and went at the periphery, while the manifesto stayed at the centre of my focus. As clarity grew and ideas evolved, changing my criteria, milestones and goals became part of the process. Does this body of work have an endpoint? Not in the foreseeable future. I will discuss next steps more extensively in section 6.

Most importantly, the strongest measure of success is how I feel about the completion of this manifesto. The idea resonated greatly when it first came to me, and I have honoured that feeling by creating something that truly embodies the notion of “stealth creativity” for me.



## Section Six: Conclusion

### Introduction

The process of developing the Stealth Creativity Manifesto was essentially the process of creating the ultimate cognitive mixtape, for myself. Each element contains ideas and reminders that, when followed, will allow me to be as creative as possible. This act of self-exploration was a challenging process, and yet I feel strongly about both the process and the manifesto. It was a creative endeavor that was, and will continue to be, hugely rewarding. Rollo May (1975) stated “If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, you will have betrayed yourself” (p. 12). With this declaration, I am announcing my true intentions to lead a fully creative life, and feel that I have listened to myself more intently, more closely, than ever before.

That’s not to say this project didn’t trigger any self-doubt along the way. Delving into self-discovery for months at a time was often quite daunting, and yet without this effort, the resultant manifesto wouldn’t carry the depth of purpose this one does. As it stands, the Stealth Creativity Manifesto has already grown roots deep inside my head and deep within my heart, acting as a compass pointing towards my creative future. In grade 11 English class, I wrote the following quote from a Beastie Boys song on the edge of a paper - “Be true to yourself and you will never fall” (1992). There have been times in my life when I was anything but true to myself, and with the creation of this manifesto, I see those as times of the past, and not of my future. The creation of this manifesto accomplishes a goal I established during my Creative Leadership class, and sees me crossing that metaphorical line in the sand into a more proactive future, filled with creative opportunity.

The future must always include new goals, and the following outlines how I intend to

develop the Stealth Creativity Manifesto further.

### **Manifesto Development**

I stated that this manifesto would be iterative in nature. As I become aware of elements that need to be added to or developed, I will do so. I also see this as the first complete prototype, ready to be tried and tested, and to be refined and developed as needed. This will likely include alternative formats of presentation such as an album version and poster. I will develop an electronic version to share with online communities.

### **Manifesto Tools**

Partway through this project, I was struck with the idea of having tools that would allow me to turn the theory of the manifesto into practice. Although that idea never came to fruition for this final product, I do have notes and concepts that are waiting for further development. What I see myself doing is creating a set of tool cards that fit into a tape case, wrapped in this manifesto. This is the next logical step in developing the Stealth Creativity Manifesto. The tools would be created and compiled, based on the research from this project, and would provide instruction to assist in living each element to its fullest.

### **Network Development**

I had considered developing my network as a platform for deliberately sharing my manifesto. As this project developed, my focus sharpened on the manifesto itself and moved away from developing networks. What I see myself doing is continuing to extend my networks, not necessarily for sharing this manifesto, but for sharing other cognitive mixtapes to those that might want to listen.

### **Personal Brand**

My initial concept paper revolved around my personal brand and business plan. While

this concept was put aside temporarily, I feel strongly that the effort put in to develop the Stealth Creativity Manifesto can be bridged to the area of personal brand development. This manifesto is rooted in authenticity and a holistic approach to life, both personal and professional. I see myself transferring elements from my research into the area of personal brand development.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This project started amidst plenty of ambiguity, and I often struggled to chart a path towards my final destination. I've learned my creative process works best this way; exploring the murkiness of the unknown, experimenting with ideas, and striving to unearth new and unexpected connections. Rollo May stated, "...finding the center of strength within ourselves is in the long run the best contribution we can make to our fellow men" (1953, p. 79). Internal strengths are not always apparent, and yet when they are discovered and built upon, they can act as a springboard towards a more creative and successful future. This manifesto is more than a foundation for future creative projects; it gives me the confidence to use my strengths creatively, to build a more proactive life for myself, and to seek out new and exciting ways to spark the same creative passion within others. The Stealth Creativity Manifesto is a pledge, to share my passion and curiosity, to spark inspiration, and to seek a better life through creativity.

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