

# connect

# ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022



# THE NEW APPROACH TO BUILDING COMMUNITY

# ACT LIKE A MEDIA COMPANY

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# THE WIDE VIEW

**B**usiness leaders everywhere are concerned about establishing the proper culture. The reality, however, is that too many organizations believe they can change culture from inside the organization when culture actually emanates from the client. Consider the idea that when we think only of ourselves and fulfilling our immediate needs, we betray ambition. When we hitch our wagon to something larger than ourselves, we start

to realize our true potential.

Culture begins and ends with the communities we serve. Putting service at the core of your company is not a new idea. What is new is our understanding of service versus traditional business models. Service means addressing the needs of our customers and when we do this well, everything else falls into place. The traditional approach to service—where we are trying hard to get what we want—creates disconnection. There is a clear giver and a clear receiver. One gets to feel good about giving something and the other is expected to feel grateful for this act of service.

A much wider view of service is emerging amidst new business practices. Great marketers are looking beyond their own internal needs and toward a deeper purpose of making a difference. Whatever you call this level of service, we believe it is the cornerstone to the kind of culture that is sustainable and enriching. In turn, it extends out into broader circles that include all those who come in contact with our products or services directly or indirectly.

We are committed to a culture of service that centers around those involved with marketing and want to get a better understanding of it. Diving into the intricacies of marketing and sharing stories that resonate with you will allow us to seek a better understanding of your needs overall.

We believe that great engagement comes from the creation of great content—the combination of connecting with leading experts in marketing and uncovering the stories that matter most to you. In this issue, we delve into a couple of the most pressing issues of the day. Our cover article, “Act Like a Media Company,” discusses the effects of the merging of publishing and marketing and what companies will need to do to succeed. Our second feature is a compilation of advice from marketing elites on how to manage brands in 2022.

All in all, we hope you continue to enjoy the content and are able to incorporate some of the ideas into your world.

Warmest regards,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



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**GREAT MARKETERS ARE LOOKING BEYOND THEIR OWN INTERNAL NEEDS AND TOWARD A DEEPER PURPOSE OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE.**

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## THE NEW APPROACH TO

# Building

## COMMUNITY

ACT LIKE  
A MEDIA  
COMPANY

B

ack in the early 2000s, Bart Van Olphen quit his job at Lucas Cartons' Michelin-star restaurant in Paris to pursue a new and more engaging passion. From his evenings walking the Au Pied de Couchon and grabbing dinner at the renowned Les Halles restaurant, he became enamored with how people loved to eat at their favorite seafood eateries. Slowly, his romance with the sea grew. Each morning, he would head down to the harbor as the local fishermen hauled in their scores. But as he spent more and more time in the small fishing communities, Van Olphen was shocked to learn how the fish were being treated. Essentially operating factories on the water, the fishery companies were not concerned with much more than tomorrow.

So Van Olphen decided to do something about it. Co-founding Fish Tales, a Netherlands-based company committed to sustainable fishing, he immersed himself in righting the wrongs in his new world. At the heart of his efforts was a blog, Fish

Tales, which covered everything and anything related to fish and the sea. Every Friday became "Fishy Friday," a content-driven initiative that hit a vein with those who shared his passion. The content not only inspired a series of bestselling books and cookbooks, but also helped build the Fish Tales community.

Andrew Davis believes there is much to learn from Van Olphen's story—one that he says probably does not get as much attention as it should for being the perfect blueprint for how content builds trust,

**"SINCE CONTENT  
IS THE SPOKEN  
LANGUAGE  
FOR BUILDING  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
MORE BRANDS  
SHOULD ACT  
LIKE MEDIA  
COMPANIES."**

**— DEBBIE QAQISH,**  
CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER,  
THE PEDOWTIZ GROUP



attracts followers and builds communities. “The commitment—not the campaign—is one of the key tenets of creating content,” says Davis, Co-founder of Monumental Shift, and a bestselling author and keynote speaker. “Committing yourself to making your audience’s life better on a regular basis means you are committing to the promise of delivering and sharing content that matters.”

In a world where engagement gets top billing in all marketing and branding discussions, Davis may be a bit of an outlier. Not a fan of the word engagement, Davis believes brands make real connections with their content and drive revenue. “Some people view engagement as clicks, likes or comments on social media. But that’s not true engagement. If you’re going to truly define engagement, content is what should drive revenue. For me, engagement is content that earns the trust and attention of your audience—something that inspires them to go on a journey, and prompts them to do or buy something they didn’t expect they would.”

At the end of the day, the goal of content is to build trust with a prospect or a potential audience, or an existing audience. The bottom line is that you want them to spend time and money with your brand. In taking a media company approach to your content initiative, you will be able to adopt the mindset needed for content creation, management and curation.

Over the past 18-plus months, as COVID changed the way brands everywhere communicated to their communities, content became the ideal vehicle to build an audience, deliver valuable insights, and create deep and meaningful relationships. Debbie Qaqish, DBA, says that in today’s digital world, content is the spoken language of building relationships.

“Today’s post-pandemic consumer wants a language that is authentic, personal and gives them something they can believe in or support,” says Qaqish, Partner and Chief Strategy Officer of The Pedowitz Group and author of “From Backroom to Boardroom: Earn Your Seat With Strategic Marketing Operations.” “If your message is filled with only your products and features, you won’t last long in this market.”

With content often one of the largest items on a marketing department’s budget

list, brands are taking a more concentrated focus on the media company approach. For example, some are employing editors-in-chief to establish and manage the type of discipline content creation requires. In companies that have this role, content is much more varied and on-target, resulting in a better connection with the customer.

“Since content is the spoken language for building relationships, more brands should act like media companies,” Qaqish says. “That means they obsess over knowing and connecting with their audience. That there is a huge variety of content—by media type (videos, white papers, etc.), channels (social, email, etc.)—all based on the persona/

personalization. Creativity is a key element in content to better make the customer connection.”

### **On your mark. Get set. Create.**

In today’s 24-hour news cycle, a brand’s agenda, depending on the market it plays in, is always changing. Some days, if the right PR moment hits, a brand may get that perfect lightbulb moment, resulting in concise, relative and reactive content. But more often than not, the need to deliver top-tier, clickable content is ever-present.

It is in these moments—and there are lots of them—that Rebecca Moss, Digital PR Director for JBH PR, says you must

“THE COMMITMENT—NOT THE CAMPAIGN—IS ONE OF THE KEY TENETS OF CREATING CONTENT.”

— ANDREW DAVIS, CO-FOUNDER, MONUMENTAL SHIFT





be prepared. While “Hubspot’s Annual State of Marketing Report” shows that 51% of companies find that updating and reinvigorating old content is important, Moss believes you must keep your eye on the content wheel. “Strategic planning, staying organized, and continuously reviewing what you offer is key. Creating new content should never fall to the wayside.”

The internet—and all its glory—brings something new and enterprising to tackle each day, which means it is imperative that brands can keep up. Whereas brands may have just focused content on new products or services, or touting their mission statements, the ever-changing content landscape has changed everything. With social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn serving as de facto content engines,

brands must make the investment in content marketing strategies.

“Generating new ideas with a fresh angle is perhaps one of the greatest challenges brands face, along with matching the speed of their competitors’ output,” Moss says. “The most successful content strategies are data-driven—with a constant focus on measurement and analytics. The best content marketers always have a plan, stay prepared and have a plan B. Consistency (act like you are a media company) is key to creating sustainable and manageable content.”

In a time when content truly is king, mastering the strategy is what will separate you from other brands that might not know what you know—that once you can get your audience hooked, they will be sure to follow. ■



## YOUR 5-STEP PLAN TO ACTING LIKE A MEDIA COMPANY

### » GET DISCIPLINED

You must make an appointment with your audience and consistently deliver on it. Set targets, goals and objectives for your content. Routinely measure your efforts.

### » GET FOCUSED

Make content the No. 1 priority on your 2022 to-do list, and beyond. Recent studies indicate an all-time high in the use of digital everything. With this in mind, making, keeping and growing digital connections will create competitive advantage for companies.

### » GET HUMAN

Attach a person to your content. Send an email newsletter every week to help build relationships and humanize your brand. By being more than just a logo and/or name, your audience will know there are people behind the promise you want them to trust.

### » CREATE A HOOK

This is a simple twist on a familiar theme designed to connect your content with your audience. Make your content unique and ownable, i.e., there should be no question that it is from you.

### » FAIL TO PREPARE; PREPARE TO FAIL

It is critical to learn and grow from your failures. The best part about content is that you can continue to deliver it. Figure out what works, what doesn't, what's next and why.







# WINDS OF CHANGE

**C**hange is in the air, and marketing leaders have something to say about it. We gathered advice from five marketing elites about 2022, trends and what organizations require to manage their brands going forward. Our panel includes Bo Bothe, President & CEO at BrandExtract and Co-founder at ESG Reporting Partners; Jay Bower, President & CEO at Crossbow Group; AmyK Hutchens, Founder at AmyK International; Mark Montini, CMO at Premium Service Brands; and Mark Friedman, VP of Marketing at Fujifilm.

## MARKETING LEADERS TALK WHAT'S COMING IN 2022

### How have brands become too antiseptic?

**Bo Bothe:** I believe that the proliferation of information and the access to it has shone a light on how similar companies are across the globe. Thus, everything has been seen. That said, a good brand that finds its voice and is true about the customer it's looking for or the problem it solves always stands above the crowd. Brands need to truly understand what makes them unique to their customers and then focus on that operationally and externally.

**Jay Bower:** Some have, and some decidedly have not, become antiseptic. But the power of "brand" has waned in recent years for sure. Context has become much more important.

**AmyK Hutchens:** Brands have a difficult decision of whether they use their voice to have a point of view and whether they worry about if that point of view aligns with the customers' or not.

**Mark Montini:** In periods of extreme divisiveness like we are living in today, it's much easier for brands to simply embrace cultural trends in pursuit of short-term objectives rather than to stand boldly for the things that make the brand truly special and position it for long-term success. The result is that brands begin to focus on winning the "story of the day" instead of writing the "story of the brand."

**“**IN PERIODS OF EXTREME DIVISIVENESS LIKE WE ARE LIVING IN TODAY, IT'S MUCH EASIER FOR BRANDS TO SIMPLY EMBRACE CULTURAL TRENDS IN PURSUIT OF SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES RATHER THAN TO STAND BOLDLY FOR THE THINGS THAT MAKE THE BRAND TRULY SPECIAL AND POSITION IT FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS.”

— MARK MONTINI, CMO, PREMIUM SERVICE BRANDS

**Mark Friedman:** Brands are in a very difficult position today. It is easier for smaller companies and brands to decide to stand for something, and in doing so, create a genuine connection with customers. But smaller brands can do this because they have a smaller and generally more homogenous customer set. And the genuine connection they make is often because of their standing for something, not the other way around. Bigger companies and brands must decide if they can compete in this space, and it is not easy to decide or execute. I think in the quest to connect with customers and cut through the noise of today's world, some brands have tried to deviate from their product-focused approach and their comfort zone and chosen to enter this space. Will customers accept the change? Is it genuine? Is standing up for what is right ever wrong?

### What role does marketing play in creating intimacy?

**Bothe:** Man, this is a good question. I don't know if marketing really plays a role in intimacy unless you're talking about authenticity. If the marketing is honest and the right customer collides with the brand due to it—and the brand executes and provides the experience promised—then marketing has a hand in intimacy. That intimacy leads to brand loyalty, but the only role marketing has in it is to be true and to help find the right customer you want to be intimate with.

**Bower:** If by "intimacy" you mean a personal relationship with a brand, storytelling and marketing technology—

both the province of marketing—play a critical role in building and maintaining customer intimacy.

**Hutchens:** Ultimately, intimacy is about connection. Brené Brown defines connection "as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued." I would add that people also feel truly connected when they feel understood, when they have a non-judgmental witness, and when, through giving and receiving, they are strengthened by the exchange. When marketing authentically says, "we understand you," there is a strong connection between brand and consumer.

**Montini:** The primary job of marketing is to tell a brand's story in ways that are meaningful to all stakeholders, but primarily consumers. Intimacy is the result of meaningful interactions and experiences, so you can certainly make the case that marketing's role is creating intimacy.

**Friedman:** We all know that digital engagement is no match for human interaction. And while we don't really want businesses to track our social behavior, web searches or purchase history, we do appreciate a well-timed notification of a sale or an item we were looking for coming back in stock. So what is marketing to do? The key to successful digital engagement is being genuine, honest and respectful. Don't abuse automation. Don't abuse the data you collect. Respect a customer's ability and desire to make decisions and determine their own fate.

### What are the biggest challenges for marketers in creating empathy for the customer?

**Bothe:** Empathy is tricky because you have to have context. If a brand (and its expression/marketing) is authentic and true, then empathy can be created. I guess I'm empathetic in a way for some of the brands I interact with (Southwest, Apple, etc.) whereas I'm willing to give them a break when they screw up because they do have an impact in my life. I feel they get me and I get them. Thus, we have a solid and almost symbiotic relationship.

**Bower:** The pandemic forcing people inward and away from other people has impacted marketers' ability to empathize and "create" empathy. Building persona-driven narratives that fuel storytelling and using martech to personalize and customize can help marketers address the challenge.

**Hutchens:** Connection at its core is about empathy. You actively listen to seek understanding. You actively share to be understood. A brand wants to be accepted, respected and/or loved. The consumer wants to be accepted, respected and/or loved. When marketers miss or dismiss the consumer's desire to be accepted and respected first, they create greater disconnect.

**Montini:** Losing sight of the fact that connecting with customers and not creating campaigns is the real job of marketing. It may sound overly simplistic, but it can be difficult to keep a "customer-first" mindset in the midst of day-to-day projects and pressures of short-term results.



**Bo Bothe**  
President & CEO,  
BrandExtract  
Co-founder, ESG  
Reporting Partners



**Jay Bower**  
President & CEO,  
Crossbow Group



**AmyK Hutchens**  
Founder, AmyK  
International



**Mark Montini**  
CMO, Premium  
Service Brands



**Mark Friedman**  
VP of Marketing,  
Fujifilm





**Friedman:** In order to create empathy you have to allow yourself to be vulnerable. This is an uncomfortable place for many businesses and brands, but is where many consumers want to see the brands they choose to support.

### What is your hope for the role of marketing in 2022?

**Bothe:** That it's true, good and it stops dividing us up. I'm speaking more of political marketing but I think marketing has gone too far in the area of targeting and people live more and more in echo chambers because marketing feeds them what they always want. That's great but it really does start to limit our ability to see and do new things or experience new products, which divides us.

**Bower:** Marketing can and should help bring people together and make them feel better about themselves and their fellow humans.

**Hutchens:** Authenticity is still an untapped frontier. Marketing honestly and vulnerably is what creates the highest levels of connection. Hoping that marketing returns to the experiences that connect us all.

**Montini:** My hope is that organizational leaders will begin to recognize the value created from a strong, bold brand story and empower marketers to courageously go out and tell that story regardless of which way the short-term cultural winds are blowing. Consumers respect brands that are passionately authentic, even if they don't necessarily agree with what that authenticity represents.

**Friedman:** Marketing needs to put the customer at the center of everything. We are trying to walk in their shoes and put forward platforms and content that addresses their questions and concerns, gives them access to information when they want it and how they want it, and allows them to be in the drivers' seat. By flipping the engagement we are confident

that we will create a meaningful and respectful solution to the noise and chaos of today's buyer's journey.

### What is your best advice for brands in this day and age?

**Bothe:** Know yourself and what you believe makes you different, be authentic and communicate in ways that align with your brand promise, and make sure you deliver the product and EXPERIENCE you're promising. People choose you because you somehow make their life better or easier, people stick with you because they believe that more and more over time, and people can't live without you as your brand becomes a part of their daily lives. Apple did that with the iPhone, Southwest has done that with business travel, and Stitch Fix is doing that with my wardrobe.

**Bower:** Make sure you define and clearly articulate your brand's "why." Concisely and compellingly tell prospects and customers why you do what you do, why it matters to them and why it matters to the world.

**Hutchens:** Let go of status and embrace service. Market to an individual's most powerful potential. How does your product help them better serve themselves and others? Make the consumer, not your product, the hero of the story.

**Montini:** Take the time to evaluate (or re-evaluate) your brand's DNA. Talk to the founders, most tenured team members, and earliest customers to find out what it is or was that made your brand special. Then, commit to being authentic to that DNA in everything you do.

**Friedman:** Be honest. Be respectful. Listen to what's important to your customers. Meet your customers on their terms, on their preferred platforms, ready to service what they need to make good decisions and feel good about doing business with you. Remember they have choices. ■

**“MEET YOUR CUSTOMERS ON THEIR TERMS, ON THEIR PREFERRED PLATFORMS, READY TO SERVICE WHAT THEY NEED TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.”**

— MARK FRIEDMAN, VP OF MARKETING, FUJIFILM

# TACTICS

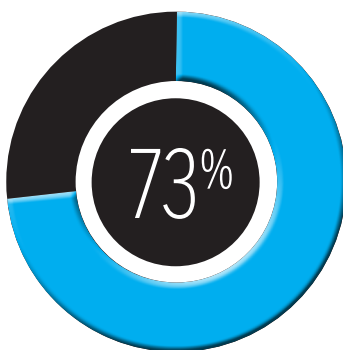


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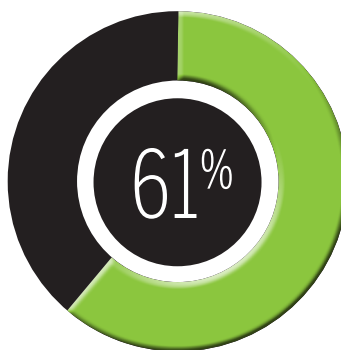
### TOP CHALLENGES FACING CREATIVE TEAMS

Creative teams can take a bow. In the “2021 Creative Management Report,” 93% of respondents said that creative content is important to the success of their organization’s key objectives. The report, published by inMotionNow and InSource for the fourth year, combines survey results from

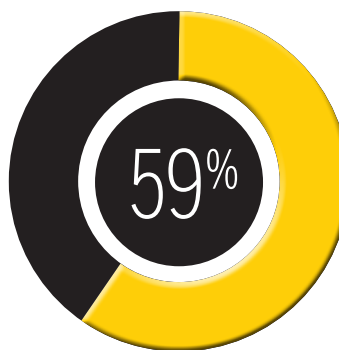
over 400 marketing and creative professionals with insights and best practices from industry leaders. Businesses are increasingly recognizing that creative content sets them apart, yet fewer resources and higher demands have put creatives through a tailspin. See what challenges creatives are facing:



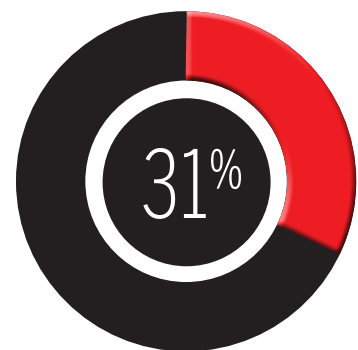
The speed at which they are expected to work



Too few resources to accomplish the work



High demand for more creative content



Reductions in resources





## THE YOUNG AND THE PRINTLESS

### DIRECT MAIL REMAINS POPULAR WITH YOUNGER CONSUMERS

The results are in—print is back in style. Keypoint Intelligence's most recent "Annual State of Marketing Communications" survey found that nearly a quarter of consumers under 35 believe that providers who sent

printed marketing pieces were more serious about winning and keeping their business, compared to under 14% of those aged 35+. Check out the different generations' attitudes towards direct mail:

#### AGES 18-34



- **54%** Most of the direct mail I receive is relevant to me
- **50%** I look at most of the direct mail pieces I receive
- **51%** I spend much more time reviewing direct mail that is personalized/relevant than generic mail

#### AGES 35-54

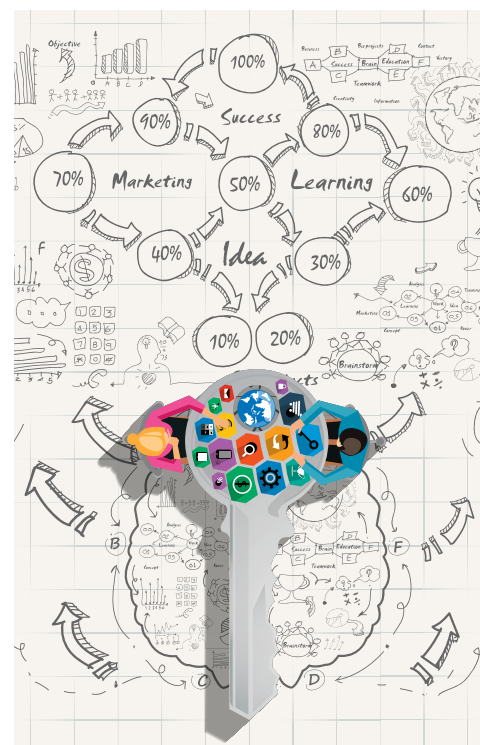


- **36%** Most of the direct mail I receive is relevant to me
- **57%** I look at most of the direct mail pieces I receive
- **51%** I spend much more time reviewing direct mail that is personalized/relevant than generic mail

#### AGES 55+



- **21%** Most of the direct mail I receive is relevant to me
- **62%** I look at most of the direct mail pieces I receive
- **56%** I spend much more time reviewing direct mail that is personalized/relevant than generic mail



**“FOR MY TEAM, IT’S ALL ABOUT EFFICIENCY AND PUTTING A PREMIUM ON THE CREATIVE TEAM’S TIME. I WANT ALL OUR CREATIVE RESOURCES FOCUSED ON HIGH-VALUE WORK.”**

— **JIM NICHOLAS**, SENIOR CREATIVE,  
FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY

# QA

## **As a leadership coach, what do you see as the challenges of our time?**

**Harrison:** I think one of the big challenges is learning how to change more deeply. To solve some of the wicked problems of our time, we need to dismantle old systems and the mindsets that support them and discover new ways of putting our world back together. That requires a lot of letting go, and a big bold leap of courage into the unknown.

The leadership challenge that goes with that is learning how to radically reorient. So, we shift how we see the world, rather than focus on surface level change within old ways of thinking.

A close second would be learning how to embrace difference. To see different viewpoints as the start of a creative and generative process, rather than something innately threatening. So, we become a lot more comfortable with open, exploratory conversations, where we don't know the answers and aren't trying to convince others of our point of view. Leaders have an important role to play in creating environments where those kinds of conversations can happen, safely.

## **What kind of re-orienting do you see happening?**

**Harrison:** In the leaders I coach, it's often about detaching from an Achievement orientation and finding an orientation that's more about Contribution or Purpose.

So many of us are driven by a need to achieve, thinking the next thing is going to make us feel good about

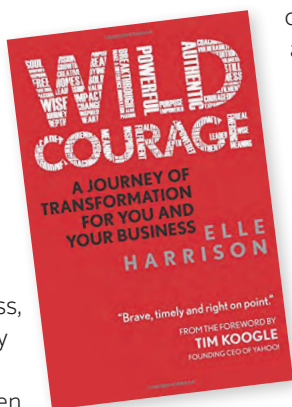
## **FOUNDER, WILD COURAGE ELLE HARRISON**

LEADERSHIP COACH SHARES THOUGHTS  
ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

**A**s the author of "Wild Courage: A Journey of Transformation for You & Your Business," founder of Wild Courage and Certified Executive Coach, Elle Harrison is focused on coaching leaders to master their inner game, maximize their impact, and navigate change with confidence and calm.

Her clients are CEOs, Founders, strategists, and those setting the direction of their team or organization. Most are involved in transformation—soulful, creative change that reimagines something genuinely new, whole and sustainable.

She believes that solving the wicked problems of our time demands wise leaders. And those leaders need coaches who listen, challenge, reflect and go deep with them. That's a role she loves to play.



ourselves. But we often abandon ourselves and our deeper needs on this path. We achieve results by being who we feel we "should" be, rather than by drawing on our unique gifts. Which means so many of our gifts are left untapped. That's a great loss, for both that individual and society.

It's not to say achieving isn't a satisfying phenomenon. But only being oriented to achievement can get in the way of a deeper kind of fulfillment and creativity.

## **The book has stood the test of time. Why not write another?**

**Harrison:** I do hope to write another book, but the small matter of raising two small children has delayed the timeline!

I do agree, though, that the core principles of "Wild Courage" are as relevant today as when I wrote it back in 2010. I think they're also becoming more mainstream. When I wrote "Wild Courage," stillness was a very strange idea to business, but now mindfulness

in the workplace is common practice! Similarly, Brené Brown's 2010 TED talk brought vulnerability into the spotlight. Leaving a corporate career to become freelance or an entrepreneur has also become a well-trodden path. I remember leaving the corporate world because I couldn't see how I could have a lifestyle where I would be able to be present with kids and have a rich and meaningful career. In the post-COVID Great Resignation, more and more people are making that same move.

I think we are starting to see that many of our human systems are broken. That the change we need is systemic and transformative, not just a little tweak. Whether we are discussing sustainability, climate, healthcare or even education, it feels like there's more readiness to see that something substantial needs to change.

## **If you were to add another chapter to "Wild Courage," what would it be?**

**Harrison:** "Belonging." And by that, I mean "belonging" behind the level of identity.

So many of the challenges of society come from a tendency to anchor



belonging at the level of tribe: a sports team, or political party, a nation, or the company you work for. That's fine, it can be a positive experience. But it becomes problematic when this tribal belonging creates a sense of "other." When we start to polarize and judge and feel separate from people who aren't part of our gang, who don't see the world the same way.

I believe that we are all connected and inter-dependent. We all belong to the world, always and already. We are all part of the same whole of this amazing system that is life, that is intelligent beyond any human intelligence. It's got this ability to self-correct and to grow and change. If we remember that we belong to this bigger system, then we become so much more resilient than any tribe, gang, or club could ever make us.

I notice, over and over when people find this deeper sense of belonging, they relax. They stop trying to prove themselves, from a sense of lack or fear or inadequacy. And they start to contribute to life from a place of connection and belonging. From a place of "I am..." before any identities kick in.

Grounded in this deeper kind of belonging, we naturally listen more openly to people who see things differently. And we build a world that is so much happier and more creative.

***Do you feel hopeful about the future of work, and the future of our planet?***

**Harrison:** I'm always an optimist because I believe the system of life, itself, is intelligent. It's always orienting towards wholeness. Our body will rebalance itself; our psyche will rebalance itself. So, if society is overvaluing one aspect, the parts that are undervalued are full of potency and ready to be tapped. And people sense that, and slowly put offers around the untapped aspects of life. And because they're needed, they grow. Maybe slowly, maybe over generations, sure.



**“ WE ARE ALL PART OF THE SAME WHOLE OF THIS AMAZING SYSTEM THAT IS LIFE, THAT IS INTELLIGENT BEYOND ANY HUMAN INTELLIGENCE. IT'S GOT THIS ABILITY TO SELF-CORRECT AND TO GROW AND CHANGE.”**

**— ELLE HARRISON,** FOUNDER, WILD COURAGE

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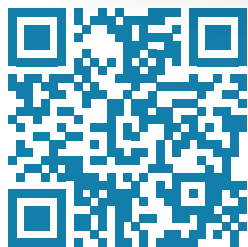
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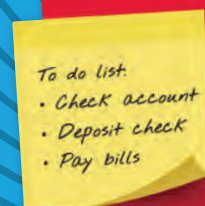
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