



F2

FIREFLY MANIFESTO: REMIXED

Jonathan Fields

THE REMIX

On November 20, 2008, the original Fire Fly Manifesto was released to the world. My intention was to offer it as a catalyst to change the conversation from one of despair to one of hope. I was blown away by the worldwide reception to the ideas and challenges, and the conversations that unfolded from this simple document.

In the nine months since its release, though, both the economic climate and the mood throughout the world have changed in a fairly profound way. And, again, I felt the need to revise my manifesto to better address both the questions that have been asked of me and the challenges that lie ahead.

The result of this effort is **F2 | Firefly Manifesto: Remixed**.

My greatest hope is that you'll read it and share it with everyone you know as a source of conversation, growth, exploration and, again, a renewed sense of possibility.

With gratitude,
Jonathan

THE WAKE UP CALL.

Whether you flip burgers or swap derivatives, losing a job just plain sucks. I'm not here to tell you otherwise. Especially, when you were following the rules, did everything right, worked your ass off, sacrificed what you really wanted to do for years or decades on the promise of a better life... and still got sacked, or worse, watched your entire company go down in flames.

What's going on in the world and the economy right now is frightening. Nobody knows when the other shoe will drop, what it will look and feel like when it does, or if another shoe even exists. And, for many of the millions who've lost their jobs this year, the position you've lost simply doesn't exist anymore in any company. So, going back or making a lateral move isn't an option.

But, I've got news for you. What feels like the end of the world to you now may, in fact, be the window you've dreamed of for decades.

How many of you have spent months, or years, secretly praying to win the lottery so you could stop doing what you were doing and finally do what you loved? How many of you have felt locked into a tired, life-sucking career by a suffocating marriage of golden or lead handcuffs, fear that you'd be judged or ridiculed for changing paths and a life-stifling lack of belief in your ability to make a living doing what you love?

Thing is, if that's you, the economy has just served you up a big, fat opportunity.

In fact, you may never get an opening like this again. A chance to make a bold change, take a shot at doing what you love, and not be judged for trying. Not that it's impossible to change paths at anytime. I've done it many times. But, you've got a once-in-a-lifetime window here created by a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The meltdown has everyone re-examining how they earn a living and what they want out of their lives and careers.

Promises have been broken on a scale we've not seen since the Great Depression. Expectations have been destroyed. The old paradigm no longer exists. And, if you lulled yourself into believing that a honking pile of money or a seemingly Teflon job with a big, established company was your ticket to security, you're likely smack in the middle of a really rude awakening.

Everyone's worlds are being shaken, and in this shaking, sometimes violent thrashing, lies a massive opportunity—the chance to come alive.

We are now in the midst of a once in a generation window.

For those who've never explored a career with equal helpings of passion and prosperity out of a fear of being judged, unsupported or ridiculed, judgment has been suspended. For anyone who's decried the lack of time it would take to rebuild their livings around the life they want to live, time is your greatest asset. And, for anyone who's felt trapped by a long, emotional investment in a career you loathe, the slate's been wiped clean.

This crisis just served up public justification on a platter. It's given you a massive, defensible reason to explore a radically different approach to the way you earn your living. And, if you don't take it now, you may never have the will to do it again.

Simple truth—life is not all about sacrifice, suffering or giving up what matters most in the name of being a grown up.

Passion, purpose and fulfillment matter.

Even in this economy. Especially in this economy.

They make us come alive at work and at play. And, pursued the right way, they can be had along with a healthy serving of prosperity.

REDEFINING SUCCESS.

With the mass shift in mindset these days, a growing movement of people are learning to live with less. They're reshaping their lives around the concepts of simplicity, instead of excess. And, along the way, they're discovering something cognitive scientists and happiness researchers have known for decades. They're actually no less happy living a simplified existence. In fact, for many, they're happier.

Fact is, beyond earning enough to live comfortably in the world, more money, merchandise and power add little to how happy or satisfied we are. Nor do they make us feel a whole lot more secure. That's a fantasy. In fact, to the extent the pursuit of these things takes you away from other activities and people who truly do make you come alive, they may very well do the exact opposite.

So, if these things aren't success, what is?

I wonder what might happen if, instead of holding up money, merchandise and the illusion of security as the currency of success, you valued relationships, purpose and impact instead.

What might unfold if you identified what you loved to do first, then tapped the wealth of tools, strategies and technologies that have only come onto the scene in the last few years to build a substantial living around what makes your entire life smile?

What if, instead of scrambling to find another "J-O-B" that sends you spiraling back into years of sacrifice in the name of a life that, in the end, you've already discovered you didn't really want, you went about crafting your career from this point forward in a very different way?

Try this career choice standard on for size.

Will this choice allow me to:

- Spend the greatest amount of time
- Absorbed in activities and relationships that fill me up
- While surrounding myself with people I cannot get enough of, and
- Earning enough to live comfortably in the world?

It sounds so simple. This is the standard I've used to guide my own evolution from six-figure, beaten down mega-firm attorney to lifestyle entrepreneur, blogger, author, copywriter, marketer and, yes, even yoga teacher... oh, and still earn enough to live very comfortably in the world and support my family in New York.

Fact is, this definition of success keeps me honest.

And, with good reason. It's evolved out of thousands of hours of testing and exploring a broad spectrum of career paths and entrepreneurial ventures, interviews with a wide cross-section of successful career renegades—from maverick CEOs to internet-earning soccer moms—and extensive research into the field of applied positive-psychology.

It integrates concepts like famed cognitive scientist Mihaly Csíkszentmihályi's seminal work on cultivating "flow" states and Gallup researcher Tom Rath's eye-opening studies on the critical impact of friendships in the workplace.

Apply it, test it, kick its wheels & see what unfolds.

RECESSION PROOF JOBS, SANTA CLAUS AND THE EASTER BUNNY.

Which one of these things is not like the other?

It's a trick question... they're all the same. They make for great TV specials, but they seem eternally elusive in real life—especially that first one. Because, as long as you're working for someone else, you'll never have the control you want.

Does that mean everyone should run out and become entrepreneurs?

Probably not. Control comes with responsibility and, depending how you bring your idea to life, varying amounts of risk.

But, here's the thing. I've been asked a bunch of times how smart it is to walk away from the "safe option" of working for someone else to start your own business, or even begin to build some kind of independent career and leveragable reputation on the side in this economy.

Safe...SAFE? I want to scream, "Are you out of your mind?!"

Since when is the safe option handing over the keys to your career to someone else and hoping that, in challenging times, they'll make the tough decisions in your best interest, rather than in their best interest?

Safety, in this context, is largely an outgrowth of control.

In times of relative prosperity, most people don't care so much about control. Because, as long as there's enough to go around, the people who you surrender the fate of your career to don't have to decide between them and you—or the company and you. There's enough to go around for everyone.

But, in tough financial times, like right now...

Those same people DO have make tough choices. And, there's a pretty good chance that what's best for you is the not their driving motivation.

When the going gets tough...

- I want to be the one who determines what I do or don't do, whether I have a job or not and what my relative value is.
- I want to be the one to monitor the world, analyze my options and take action to respond or adapt the direction of my career, my company and my future.
- I want to be the one who chooses who I surround myself with, why, in what context and when, and...
- I want to be the one to balance short-term risk with long-term vision and opportunity.

I want to be in control, even in this economy... ESPECIALLY in this economy.

And, somehow, the world perceives that as the "riskier" path?

Yes, things are challenging. And, I understand there is always risk in building your own path, starting your own biz in any economy. But, you know what, we'll all get through it. Things will get better.

In fact, in a recent Microsoft/Elance survey, nearly 90% of small business owners said they'd still rather work for themselves, and 60% said they expect 2009 to be as good as, if not better than, 2008. Like Seth Godin notes, "It makes it so much easier to win when so many other people are dropping out."

Plus, it's no secret that, without fail, those who are willing to find opportunities, invest and take chances in challenging markets are very often those who end up on top when we emerge from the carnage. Right now...

- You can acquire massive amounts of knowledge in the blink of an eye.
- You can test and research ideas online for free or very little money.
- You can establish yourself as the go-to person in your area of passion and begin to build a following—a community.
- You can build a business plan based on the proven demand of your community, rather than best-guess assumptions, and then...
- Give people what they want, when they want it, in the way they want it, at a price they can afford.

This is the new entrepreneurship—post downfall reinvention, start-up style. Fast, low risk, low capital, amassing knowledge, growing conversations and turning those conversations into passion-driven solutions you already know people are hungry for.

Ask these two critical questions that will likely determine what your livelihood and life look like once this period is behind us:

1. Who do you trust to create your career, income and future?
2. Beyond a paycheck, what do you really want from the way you earn your living?

When it comes to deciding what I should or shouldn't be working on for the rest of my life, how secure I want to feel and what I'm worth on any given day...

I trust me!

I want the control, the freedom and the opportunity to do what I love, make a great living and change peoples' lives.

So, I'm going to take the *safe* option... and keep signing my own paychecks.

GOING RENEGADE IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS.

“Yes,” comes the reply, “But, what if I’m laid off? What if I’m bleeding cash? What if I need to make money NOW? Can I still go renegade?”

If you’re in the midst of crisis and your immediate need is to put food on the table and pay your rent or mortgage, that will pretty much always take priority over any other pursuit—passion included. It’s straight out of Maszlow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

It’s difficult to focus on passion when you’re worried about losing your home.

And that may mean turning your immediate energies to finding a band-aid job, the sole purpose of which is to stop the bleeding. I’d never judge anyone for shelving the pursuit of a passionate living during a time of extreme economic stress that threatens their basic need to survive.

What feels like the end of the world to you now may, in fact, be the window you’ve dreamed of for decades.

But, here’s something else to ponder as you go looking for that band-aid job.

In most cases, if you’ve been laid off, the one thing you’ve got on your hands is time. People say that, when you’re unemployed, your fulltime job is finding another job. But, we all know that’s rarely a true representation of how most people spend the 8-12 hours you used to spend working. How you spend your crisis time is critical.

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