

Block-Buster

Info and Inspiration for Creatives: February 2019



FEATURE

Return on Creative Investment

How were your sales last year? If they were disappointing, did you have moments where you were ready to chuck it all as just too hard? This creative life isn't easy sometimes. So if it's not the money, what will keep you going?

What's the real Return on Creative Investment (ROCI)?

If you can figure this out, you'll develop a bedrock of resolve to sustain you in dark times. Here's my suggested ROCI list:

- the joy of losing yourself in the work
- relationships with souls who share your passion
- the challenge of closing the gap between vision and execution
- love of your materials, your process, your tools and work environment
- refuge from the cruel world
- knowing your work brings wonder, joy, hope or enlightenment to others

Giving back

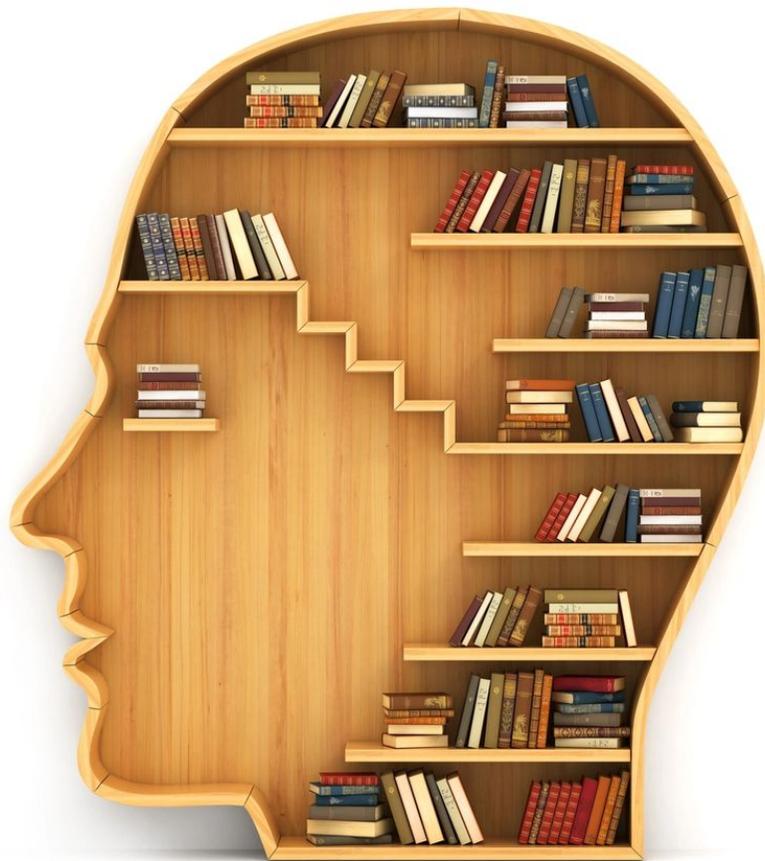
Finally, our art can give us a platform that lifts others up and extends the reach of our creativity.

Sarah McLachlan's School of Music (<https://www.sarahschoolofmusic.com/>) is just one example of how artists can provide opportunities to those who would otherwise be unable to explore their talents.

The givers' philanthropy not only benefits the recipients of their largesse; it also brings new people and experiences into their own lives, enriching all involved.

If all these benefits steadily and increasingly outweigh the costs, that's a healthy return on your creative investment.

So next December or January, when you're totting up the revenue and expenses from your creative business, have your own ROCI list handy. It will remind you that profit is only one of the payoffs of a life in the arts.



BOOKSHELF

My Life

Isadora Duncan

Liveright Publishing, New York, NY: 2013

Bold as brass, given to declamatory discourse, and profoundly committed to her creative mission, Isadora Duncan was a singular figure. Though often dismissed, even posthumously, as flaky and unable to distinguish fact from fantasy, creatives will find in her a kindred spirit.

Some of her pronouncements in particular will resonate. Duncan declared that the Puritan ethos of early American settlers compelled them to try to tame themselves as well as their wild new country, but "had disastrous results artistically".

Duncan escaped the fate of her aunt, an apparently gifted singer whose parents associated public performance with Devil's work. In contrast, Duncan's mother and siblings never questioned the rightness of Duncan's zealous pursuit of dance on her

own terms, even if it frequently cost them a full belly and a roof over their heads.

Duncan's home was filled with music and the children were left to follow their own inclinations. This was an enviable proving ground for Duncan's creativity, and at least partly the genesis of her free-spirited development of dance as she lived and breathed it.

Qualities we can admire in Duncan include her conviction that children's originality is not to be stifled by the education system, the family, or any other authority. She was a self-educated reader, delving into the classics and popular fiction with equal ardour.

A bright, audacious individual, Duncan is likeable even in her most impractical or self-defeating moments and in her grand pronouncements, because she is utterly recognizable to fellow creatives. Her fearless advocacy for her art is an inspiration.



BRIGHT IDEAS

Clutter management can remove a lot of frustration from your creative life and give you more time and energy for doing the work you love.

The next time you go looking for that song idea, background article or art tool, time how long it takes you to dig through those disorganized piles, whether

virtual or tangible.

If that sparks the desire to change the situation, give yourself two to three weeks to slowly set up a system for easy retrieval. Then test your system. Look for that item again and see how long it now takes you to find it.

Convinced? This idea is from Dorothy Lehmkuhl and Dolores Cotter Lamping, C.S.W., authors of *Organizing for the Creative Person*.

Here's another tip: Make all your organizational and storage systems playful, colourful and quirky. Working with your natural style will take the sting out of what otherwise feels like left-brain drudgery.



COACHING NEWS

I have spaces available for in-person coaching in the Ottawa area, or by phone. Please contact me at clare.thorbes@gmail.com to arrange your free first consultation.



WISE WORDS

“Painting is the best way I've found to get along with myself.”

— *Robert Rauschenberg*

Clare Thorbes

Clare Thorbes is a creativity coach and a visual artist specializing in portraiture. She helps writers, artists and performers overcome creative blocks and build a fulfilling life in the arts.

[About Clare](#)



Learn more about Creativity Coaching

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