



Buz drumming up a new life

Transitioning into Gratitude (My Life 2.0)

By Addison “Buz” Olian

(Editor’s Note: Buz Olian, 59, recently closed his advertising and marketing agency of 30 years. In this article, he examines his life and looks ahead to the future.)

**So here I am on the other side.
I might look back and think
where did the time go?
I could also look forward and
wonder where will I go now?**

I must try to do neither for I have learned that being in the moment is where I need to be and so I take a deep breath, inhale our clean Northern California air and try to get centered.

Okay, this sounds a little woo-woo metaphysical and is probably something I would have laughed at when I was 30. But I’m about to

head into my 60’s and I’m deep into introspective perspective. I understand that my Zen approach towards transitioning from being defined by “what I do” was never really who I was.

I am not an adman. I am not TV commercials, color magazine ads or big budget ad campaigns created to sell stuff. Nor am I the enlightened, self-aware person I am seeking to become. I’m in transition.

The rewiring of me is in progress. Call it: *My Life 2.0*.

My advertising agency career of about 40 years brought me success and so it was a good ride while it lasted. Let’s just say I paid my dues and went the distance and have a storage facility filled with

dozens of creative awards inscribed “good job.” The best part of my career was the people who had the amazing talent to make something great happen often from nothing more than a client’s whim.

We indeed worked hard to not just persuade, but to entertain, enlighten, amuse and inform (sometimes) intelligently. I feel proud of the firm’s contributions which helped many companies become viable brands and gave scores of people their livelihoods.

Now, I’m reinventing myself. I prefer to call it rewiring, not retiring (a clever phrase I borrowed from a wise client). What I learned is that it is meaningful to do this rewiring, if you first clear out the clutter. Think of it as Roto-Rooter-ing all that stuff stuck inside your head where the useless crap is trapped so new wisdom will have space and clarity in which to reside. So, that is what I did.

I determined the clutter was stuck in all areas of my life: physical (body); intellectual (mind); emotional (all those negative patterns I learned); and spiritual (what’s this all about, Alfie?). All of these impacted my relationships as well as covered up my heart. To say it in another way, I wanted to begin anew without all the excess baggage.

My particular method of doing this was not at all a straight line to success. In fact, it took me about three years of trying various methodologies, from reading, talk therapy, visualization, seminars, meditation and even going through a so-called mid-life crisis. I was not a happy guy during much of this time and looked in the mirror at the person looking

back with gut-wrenching disdain. I was confused about what all of this work had led to other than more money, material possessions and an overhead that had to be fed by my very soul. I had lost my reasons for loving life.

My wife of 22 years was instrumental in keeping most of my negative behaviors and troubling introspections at a safe distance so that our marriage did not implode. For example, when I told her of my desire to turn in my ultra-practical SUV for a hedonistic sports car... or to get a mistress, as some men my age have been known to seek. Her answer was contritely, "Hey, why not get both?" I chose the Porsche and we were both okay with my choice.

Ultimately, my rewiring was achieved though a personal growth retreat a friend told me about that turned out to be the finest experience I have ever allowed myself. In about a week, I emerged from this thing called the Hoffman Quadrinity Process with a refreshed human spirit. Indeed I felt uncluttered, ready and able to experience the world as a simpler, easier and happier place.

Thus, the "new me" is now doing what I'd call a smorgasbord of everything I find delicious: inventing and marketing new products, writing, professional photography, yoga, travel, volunteering, cooking, and most of all being a husband, an involved dad to my middle-school son, and from time to time, a creative marketing maven for select local clients.

You might think, "that's nice" and that my transitioning from workaholic ad man to renaissance Zen man is complete. It is not. I secretly hope a bolt of lightning will strike with the answers to the proverbial question of "what's my life's purpose supposed to be?" Short of that happening, I advise myself to be productive, compassionate, give without expectation, love unconditionally, laugh often and remain curious.

As Rumi, the poet said, "Be with those who support your being." That is how I choose the people and volunteer work where I spend my free time. I'm encouraged that I'm finding a new wave of joyful friends, clients and connections who all have one thing in common: they are taking responsibility for their lives and have moved away from blame and guilt.

I don't look back and think what could have been. I don't look forward and think what will be. I am abundantly committed to making my day a spontaneous learning experience beginning with having my body, mind, emotional-self and spirit in synch.

I have the confidence again that this journey called life is transitioning where I need to go. One day at a time.

Addison is currently building "Buz's Bungalow," a combination of writer's/photography studio and sanctuary on his property in the San Carlos Hills and works on his inventions and creative assignments for clients.



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