



# CREATIVE BRAVERY

## Lesson 3 Supportive Material - Dave King's Top Tips for how to be brave.

Being creatively brave isn't easy, as Dave King, Design Director at **StudioLR**, knows. His D&AD Award-winning work for **Seamab School** very nearly never made it... if it wasn't for a bit of bravery and positive thinking. Here, he shares his top tips to create brave, creative work.

Brave creative work works. If your work is eye-catching, thought-provoking and memorable, then your clients will reap the rewards. But bravery and fearlessness are not the same thing. Fear is an innate response. It never goes away and you can't control it. Bravery is the choice to act despite fear. It's not a personality trait that some people have and some don't. It's a discipline, a choice, a skill. You can learn bravery.

### **No.1 - Make It Personal**

The shortcut to bravery is to be yourself – it's easy to make brave decisions when you're genuinely passionate. Find the bit of the project that makes you feel something. Then try to bring that emotion and humanity into the work, be vulnerable and honest. People can feel genuine emotion.

*Try this...*

*Once you've read the project brief, try and think of a personal anecdote that relates to it. What happened to you? How did it make you feel? Tell somebody your story. What can you take from your experience and use to help solve this problem in the brief?*

### **No.2. - Some Risks Are Worth Taking**

Doing something new is inevitably risky, it could fail spectacularly, but the potential reward is huge. All successful creative work starts with a risk. But it's never as big as the risk of doing something safe. Clients aren't buying an output (like an ad), they're buying an outcome (like sales). If you make something bland that nobody notices, they might as well just burn their money.

*Try this...*

*Look at what the rest of your client's market is doing. Is there a common theme? If so, is there a way you can do the opposite without becoming irrelevant?*



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### **No.3 - Build Momentum**

Everything is easier once you get going. Try to replace perfectionism and doubt with curiosity and playfulness. Make fun of your comfort zone – enjoy the mistakes and the bad bits, laugh at them, share them, look for the good in them. And always do the worst thing on your to-do list first thing in the morning... your day can only get better.

*Try this...*

*Get used to just doing it. Practice it when you're out... send a meal back if it's not right, introduce yourself to a stranger at an event. Do things that make you feel a bit nervous. And never stare at a blank page. Fill it with the first ideas that come into your head – no matter how bad they are. Now immediately share those with somebody. Once you've shared your worst ideas, you'll have no fear in sharing the good stuff when it starts to arrive. And it will arrive.*

### **No.4 - Bravado Is Not Brave**

Saying 'I don't know' is brave and something you should be doing regularly. Don't get into the habit of pretending to be knowledgeable when you don't know something. Tell people you're stuck and ask them for help. Nobody will thank you for keeping a problem in your head when it all explodes outwards – that definitely doesn't make you look brave, it makes you look bad and upsets everybody. Never be ashamed of what you don't know or can't do.

*Try this...*

*Make a list of the things you don't really understand about the project and figure out who can help you with each. Ask the client, your colleagues, your friends. Look for the skills and experience other people have that you don't.*



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## No.5 - Enjoy Yourself

There are no rules and there's no limit to how brave you can be. You're allowed to have fun and make people laugh. Most of the best ideas start with "but we can't show that to the client can we?" Try to present work that's so fun you almost feel like you shouldn't be getting paid for it.

### ***Try this...***

***Take all the rules off the brief and imagine you were doing it for fun only – to make your mates laugh. What would you do? Think of this as catwalk fashion. Nobody wears catwalk fashion but they are influenced by it. Now take your mad ideas and figure out how to make them work in the real world.***



Once you develop your confidence and practice bravery, it becomes part of your everyday approach. You won't think you're being brave but your work will get better. What's the worst that could happen?

Dave King is Design Director at StudioLR. Working with clients like Prudential, SSE, Balfour Beatty, John Lewis, and the National Trust, his ethos is to design for real people and to try to make a difference to their lives... thinking about who's going to experience the work rather than who's creating it or who's paying for it. Dave lectures at Napier University, judged at the 2016 D&AD Awards, and has given talks at New Designers and D&AD.