

Paying the right price

Tara Joyce left marketing and became a Forbes Top 100 blogger by David Ort



Joyce's concept of 'innerpreneurship' combines business with passion

As a communications generalist, Tara Joyce is challenging expectations about what a writer is supposed to do.

In 2008, she left her job in marketing and digital media to start her own communications firm and an award-winning blog.

The blog, called The Rise of the Innerpreneur, was named by Forbes Magazine to their list of Top 100 Websites for Entrepreneurs in 2013.

Since then, Joyce has noticed an uptick in traffic and more inquiries from potential clients for her communications design business, Elastic Mind.

Through it, she helps small, independent businesses with their branding and steers their online presence.

When asked to describe her own blog's voice and central concept — 'innerpreneurship' — Joyce says it's about "harnessing your

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passion, asking, 'What do I feel purposeful doing?' And bringing that out in an external way by building a business around it."

The blog's positive reception has led Joyce to write and self-publish her first book. It's called *Pay What It's Worth: Building Your Sustainable System for Not Setting Prices* and is available directly from her website paywhatitstworth.com.

Readers might be interested to hear Joyce's description of the book's central questions: "What if you don't set prices? What does it

REPORT CARD

STUDENT: Tara Joyce

GRADUATED: North Toronto Collegiate Institute, 2000

BEST SUBJECT: Geography

WORST SUBJECT: French

CURRENT JOB: Writer, Communications Designer and Owner of Elastic Mind

mean? How does it change things?"

Joyce uses this model in her own business by asking her customers to set their own price for the work they hire her for.

The idea is that the person selling the services doesn't put a cap on their value, and the person buying is more engaged, creating a positive and trusting relationship.

That sort of open-ended curiosity is a theme that runs back to Joyce's high school days at North Toronto Collegiate Institute. She remembers geography as one of her favourite subjects, mainly because of her love of travel and curiosity about other countries.

In common with other Torontonians who grew up in gentrifying neighbourhoods, many of her fondly remembered high school hangouts are no longer in business: all three — Fran's Diner, the Second Cup at Yonge and Eglinton and the Great Canadian Bagel — have closed since she graduated from high school.

After high school, Joyce studied business administration, with a focus on marketing, at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her program's co-op format meant that she was exposed to a number of enriching experiences at companies such as Research in Motion.

She agrees that her schooling helped her establish her business, but notes, "I love education but love experience more. And knowledge. I'm always reaching beyond education to challenge myself."

Given her engagement with unconventional business models, it's appropriate that Joyce has a campaign to crowd-source funding for a printed and ebook version of her book.