

“Learning by Doing: Creating Resources to Help People in Crisis”

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I have one future learning goal that trumps all the rest – to learn by doing. My mission is to help those in crisis by creating meaningful content that can improve their decision making ability under stress. Above all, I need to carve out time from my frenetic schedule so that I can create original content. The work I have done in the MAET program has inspired me to create a number of educational technology solutions to empower families going through challenging, life-altering transitions. I am currently exploring three different initiatives in this space, which include the creation and design of the following educational resources.

	A workbook and companion website for middle and high school students from low-income families on how to get out of, and stay out of, poverty.
	An online resource and community space for parents with a child or children in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) on how to cope throughout their NICU stay and beyond.
	A blog for single moms going through high conflict divorces on how to make well-informed decisions under intense stress.

These three topics are all near and dear to me, because I have personally had to face each of these challenges myself. I grew up in poverty and have been financially independent since I was 14 years old. I gave birth to a 31-weeker who spent 37 days in the neonatal intensive care unit and went through all the ropes to ensure my child had access to all the recommended care. I am also currently undergoing an unexpected, high-conflict divorce. I know there is a need for the educational content that I plan to create, because I lacked the comprehensive resources that I needed during these extremely challenging transitions. After doing market research, I know there are millions of others who could benefit from these problem-solving resources I can provide.

The technical skills I have gained creating multimedia projects over the course of the MAET program has made me confident about creating websites and video, audio, and written content. The extensive research and theory I have learned about improving student learning outcomes and optimizing design for users will guide my approach and inform how I structure the content in each of these educational resources. Combined with my MBA, nearly two decades of work experience in law firms, corporations, and nonprofits, and first-hand life experience managing through complex change, I feel I am well-prepared to deliver this content.

My next steps are to choose which educational resource I would like to design first. To do so, I will need to organize my thoughts into a cogent vision of what each of these offerings could be. I would like to start with sketches of what the online spaces might look like. For the workbook, I will need to come up with an outline for the content and brainstorm a few critical exercises. I plan to identify the top 3 issues each resource would tackle first. Once I have gone from the idea to more tangible offering outline stage, I will have a firmer hold on how many resources it

will take to get each up and running. Then it will just be a matter of deciding which content to start developing first into a working prototype. I have no particular deadline, but would love to see these resources come to life over the next few years.

I consider it my mission and responsibility in life to help ease the burden for the millions like me who have been saddled with these exacting challenges. Each of these three resources addresses unmet needs that real people in crisis have. When a personal foundation is shaken, it can be extremely destructive and impact entire families. The hope, guidance, and love people could receive when they land on each of these resources created by someone who has been in their shoes may be just what they need to power through the devastation. I have been intimately involved in these processes and am personally vested. I have lived this. By creating this content, I aim to help others more efficiently and effectively tackle these challenges and rise out of their crises stronger and better for it.