

Dear constituents at the Focusyear academy,

I have been forging a dual career as a jazz musician and a multimedia engineer for the past ten years. To be a good engineer is not that difficult, but I realized early in my life that good is the enemy of great. Becoming a great engineer is a lot tougher. One must combine media-savvy intuition with the ability to listen to subtleties the way a sensitive musician can. It has been a goal of mine to balance both lives, and continue to search for how to be great at both.

There is one problem: I am out of control! This past year has pulled me in dozens of directions outside of my intended path. I have done corporate videos, kickstarter campaigns, full website development for woodworkers, Bar mitzvah receptions, computer repair, hard drive recovery, and a whole sleuth of other things completely unrelated to my original intention. I have said yes partially because I cannot say no, and partially because I need to making a living.

My hope upon starting down this path was to blend music and technology together as my life's work. I have an entrepreneurial mind and spirit, with a passion for helping and caring for others. I want to be producing high-quality media at an artistically satisfying level to contribute something meaningful to my community and society as a whole. I am doing that, but sometimes I have felt as my inspiration, which is currently deeply-rooted in the sphere of academia, has reached its limit.

I have lived a semester-based lifestyle since the age of 5. To look back and reflect on my experience after graduating, I have noticed some very stark issues. The university system bases its learning on a fear and deadline-driven learning style. Within the current system, students get into the habit of being scared of what will happen if they don't complete their objectives. They will get reprimanded by their teacher, receive a bad grade, and feel guilty if they cannot complete all of their tasks that they have been assigned. I have realized exactly how dangerous that is for one's creativity. To be in an environment that cultivates fear and guilt for such a long period of time sucks all of the encouragement and positivity out of an artist's soul. I want to be in an environment that fosters enthusiasm, love, commitment, and others who are also striving to be GREAT.

A large part of why a program of this scale captures my attention so intently is because of the name. Focusyear will provide me the opportunity to focus. For a year. The chance to work with industry professionals who are great, within an environment that is disconnected from that of the traditional conservatory. My hope for 2017 would be to live in a progressive city such as Basel, with engineers and musicians who are willing to share as openly as I am. Musicians who are engaged in the process of being part of the solution of this planet, and can recognize that when we work collectively we inspire each other to push the boundaries of the art.