

WILL WORK FOR WORK

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If you look at the landscape of design today, you'll notice the trend of self-motivated work. Designers, illustrators and all sorts of creative people are not just merely waiting around for dream clients. They are dreaming up passion projects and bringing them to fruition with their own blood, sweat and tears. Through these labors of love, others (employers, art directors, and possibly clients) may see how passionate you are about your profession and want to work with you.

SELF-INITIATED PROJECTS GENERATE CLIENT WORK

- **JUST DO IT** Creating passion projects, no matter how small or silly they may seem, can lead to client work. The key is that you just have to try it.
- **DON'T LET IDEAS DIE** Many great ideas lie dormant in sketchbooks and never see the light of day. Force yourself to put them out there, or it will just be something you regret. Producing your idea is a risk because you have to see if it's a good idea or a bad one. If it takes off, great. But if it doesn't, that's fine too, at least you know.

GOOD WORK = HARD WORK

- **WORK HARD** Anyone can create a successful self-motivated project, all it takes is a good idea, a little resourcefulness and a lot of hard work.
- **WORK KARMA** If you are putting good work out into the world, then good work will come back to you.

PASSION PROJECTS = \$\$\$

- **KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON** A passion project may not only lead to client work, but can also become a self-sustaining job or at the very least, a modest second source of income.
- **DON'T SPEND MONEY TO MAKE MONEY** Once you put an idea into motion, it's daunting to try to produce it. Start small at first and try to create something that is self-funding.

LOVE WHAT YOU DO

- Choose a project that you are passionate about, and it will be less like work.

An Ohio native, Mikey Burton proudly describes his design aesthetic as "Midwestern" and draws much of his inspiration from artifacts found throughout the hardworking, blue collar Rust Belt: old type-specimen sheets, arcane equipment manuals and ancient textbooks. Burton has received awards from Communication Arts, Gaphis, HOW, Print and, most recently, ADC Young Guns. He is now a freelancer in sunny Philadelphia where he designs and illustrates for such clients as The New York Times, The Atlantic, Newsweek, GOOD, Wired and Facebook. Say "hi" at mikey@mikeyburton.com or follow on twitter [@mikeyburton](https://twitter.com/mikeyburton)