

# "A STARVING KINDIE ARTIST'S 10 COMMANDMENTS TO BEING SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH TO BE ASKED TO BE ON A PANEL AT KINDIEFEST"

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Kindiefest Panelist 2013



**1) Create only what inspires you, don't go through the motions.** Make sure you have soul in the product. Do it for the love. Need some inspiration? Make some priceless moments with your family/community. It's all about the QT--that's quality time. QT makes for QM--that's Quality Music.

**2) Play at your strengths and exercise your weaknesses.** Know who you are as an artist. Manage yourself to enhance those qualities. We've all gotta piece of the whole community puzzle, figure out how yours fits. And manage your energy enhance it and make it count the most. At the same time, practice, practice, practice so that you're always growing. When you grow, the scene grows.

**3) Record your stuff** – find out how you do it – get crafty with computers, 4 track or become so awesome live you'll be quick in the studio so as to save money.

**4) Get a website, facebook, youtube, twitter or instagram.** And get some pics too...express who you are. Audience needs a homebase. Be tasteful, clue the folks in visually with your sound.

**5) And make some videos.** The music video is a whole craft in itself that can immediately hit the core of your audience as to what you're about. Music takes a while to digest sometimes, but if you pair it with some visuals, people tend to more readily have that "aha" moment. We live in an age of information--social media is key. Youtube videos are the new cinema. Kids especially are hooked on those iPads and mobile devices. Might as well give 'em something that's good for 'em. At the very least, have your music ready for streaming online. It's a great way for families and peeps in the biz to instantly get what you're about.

**6) Register your songs with ASCAP or BMI & SoundExchange.** This will get you paid some dough especially if you get radioplay.

**7) Send your CD to DJ's, reviewers, and any Kindie artists you admire.** Especially send it to Mindy and Jack at Sirius XM Kids Place Live. If they spin your stuff, you get instant national exposure. It goes directly to the fans and the royalties through ASCAP/BMI and SoundExchange will go directly into your pocket. Win-Win-Win!

I learned this from Kindiefest 2 years ago: List all your contacts and create a network branch. What's your goal? To get on tv? To tour your city? To perform at Madison Square Garden? Get organized. Plan it all out. Know who's who and how they can get you there. But also, it's cool just to be friends with everybody regardless of who they are. Cuz, come on, we all family!

**9) Know the scene.** It can be overwhelming, but there is so much amazing talent in the community. It's important to really understand what's going on to carve your own niche. Not claiming I've heard every record, or even every important band (I want to!) - but actively investigating the scene can help humanize it. Read reviews, know the Kindie blogs, know the radio stations. Guaranteed, you will be inspired - maybe even frightened. But it'll be good for you, open your soul up wide. The Kindie scene is wholesome, magical, and ultimately, will elevate you. If it doesn't, you might be in the wrong business.

**10) See your local Kindie artists live.** It's a community. Support who's out there. Also, its good to stay up with the scene, breathe it in a bit. Get your creative juices flowing. Make some friends. It's always better doing business with folks you know in real live as opposed to just Facebook.

## **KEEPIN IT FRESH**

As an artist, the most important thing for me to do is to create, stay inspired, and ensure the product is top quality. Whenever I'm stuck in a corner, or reach a plateau and don't know how to get to the next level, I just create stuff and find some new inspiration. The spark of what the craft could be is usually enough to keep motivation going. Artists are not machines, we're usually sensitive, and we gotta keep a healthy heart by dreaming big. The world depends on it! Kids depend on it!

## **KINDIE ZEN**

In terms of marketing and staying organized, there is a zen to it – I tell myself that. I look at it as an art form. Every element can be tweaked in a flash of inspiration to reach your audience. Work hard, stay inspired, don't take it too seriously, have fun with it, and never give up. Like Werner Herzog tries to be a good soldier of cinema, I try to stay true and be good soldier of Kindie.

## **BEING ON THAT "NEXT LEVEL"**

I don't exactly practice what I preach but it's the D-I-Y spirit of it all that I know will always help me get to that "next level"--whatever that may be. Now I'm not saying it's all about getting to the top of the children's entertainment pyramid or even the Kindie pyramid. It's about the process, connecting with your audience, and maintaining the love in the music. The "next level" is personal and only you can figure it out. For me, it's all about how I'm gonna make money to eat next week.

## **"KINDIEFEST"**

Lastly, let me just say, I couldn't have gotten to where I'm at without Kindiefest and the Kindie community. Everything I've learned about self-management has been said here each year. In one place, one can meet the builders of Kindie and participate in REAL conversations – not just e-ones. The bloggers, the DJ's, and the artists, all make this wonderful world what it is. In my experience, it's rare to find an industry so warm and welcoming, based on community and culture. It works like a big happy family because of all the time, energy, talent, care, and craft these movers and shakers have put in to making the word "kindie" mean so much more than just a genre. As DIY contributors, it's a privilege to be part of the movement. It's one's individual creativity that will help it grow. The benefits from Kindie are exponential so long as the movement is grounded in these principles of community. As a true team player, one must always ask oneself, "Ask not what Kindie can do for you, ask what you can do for Kindie!"