Hi there and thank you for subscribing to TheSketchMonkey Newsletter!

I’m really excited to have you on board! I’ve put together this E-book with tips and tools that will help you get to the next level as a designer. Enjoy!

Hey, that’s me, Marouane Bembli - TheSketchMonkey
Now, you might be wondering

"Why Should I Read This?"

TheSketchMonkey is all about sharing knowledge and teach you how to sketch and improve your design skills. I believe it’s possible for anyone to develop the skills needed to become a great designer, as long as you’re willing to learn and put in the effort. This is what I’m here to help you with :-)
Change Your Mindset

It’s over. Years of dedication, hard work, sleepless nights and partying at the frat house has gone by quicker than you could ever have imagined. You’ve been dreaming about this day and looked forward to it since the first day you set foot on the campus. You finally got your diploma. Congratulations!

I am going to be honest with you. That piece of paper with your name in calligraphy is nothing but a waste of high quality paper. It doesn’t mean anything. Especially in the design industry. Not one single client I’ve worked for has ever looked at my masters degree diploma. None of them said “oh, please don’t forget to bring your diploma, it’s important to us”.

When I was I little kid I told my brother, on a chilly winters day in the suburbs of Stockholm, that one day I’m going to work as a product designer somewhere warm and close to a nice beach. Fast forward 15 years and I am blessed to say I now live in South Florida, working as a designer with the office 5 minutes from the crystal clear blue Atlantic ocean. I want to help you live your dream as a designer. It’s possible. It wasn’t my diploma or education that got me here. Let me tell you what did.
1. Visualization

It might sound childish and stupid, but to visualize your dreams and where you want to be in life is more powerful than one might think. Turn off the TV for a minute or two, think about where you see yourself a year from now. Who are you with? What’s the weather like? Where are you in the world? Are you happy? What about this place makes you happy?

It doesn’t take much, 5-10 minutes a day is enough. But you need to do it every single day. If you really want it, it comes naturally. This is called day dreaming. It’s when you let your thoughts sail off to someplace in your mind and you visualize yourself there and you get this subtle smile on your face until someone calls your name and you snap back to reality. When you do this every day, it gets imprinted in your brain and you’ll see that you will start to take tiny steps in that direction without you even knowing it.
2, Take Action

This is something a lot of people forget. Day dreaming only gets you so far, what we need now is action. Think about what you can do now, this minute, to get one step closer to your goal. Maybe you need to talk to your family about your plans. Just putting it out there in the open sometimes makes it feel more real. Or maybe you should research who can help you and give you advice on your journey.

The Internet is pretty amazing and you can contact almost anyone in the world if you put some effort into it. Ask for advice from people who already did what you are trying to do. I am certain they will be glad to help out. Research, send emails, pick up the phone, start a blog or whatever it is you want, as long as you take that first step and keep going.
3, Surround Yourself with Positive People

Time is the only thing we can’t get back so I try to make sure I spend it with positive people that inspire me and motivate me. It doesn’t matter what your goal is – to lose weight, to start a business or to move to a new city, you need to be around people that will build you up and push you forward. The rest is just noise that we don’t have time or energy for. One of my favorite quotes is “You’re the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with”. I couldn’t agree more.

I try to be the dumbest person in the room and listen to what others have to say and constantly learn and grow as a person. Every single one around you is more knowledgable than you in so many areas. Try to find those areas in everyone and learn from them. This doesn’t necessarily mean only physical interaction, but to read books, listen to podcasts or go to seminars as well for example.
Sometimes when you think about companies and huge corporations it gets a bit overwhelming. But when you think about it, all that a company is is a bunch of people just like you and me with feelings, interests and struggles. Say you’re applying for a position that you really want and you’re trying to make the best impression with your application, editing it over and over, making small adjustments and fine tuning it until there’s nothing of you left in it. Stop and think of the person who is going to review it. What if you were the person in charge of hiring, what would you want to see in an application? There are probably hundreds if not thousands of people applying for the same position, how do you stand out? Research the company or the person in charge, see what their core values are and try and implement some of that in your application. And don’t forget to send a follow-up email or phone call a couple of weeks after the application has been sent just to make sure they know you’re the right person for the gig. Go the extra mile and do something that’s above the expectations of your application. Make yourself memorable. The diploma is less important.
5, Get Uncomfortable

Leaving Sweden for the United States alone without knowing anybody was uncomfortable and scary. Trying out the new roller coaster with triple loops is scary. Working out is uncomfortable. Speaking in front of a large group of people is scary. Something I’ve noticed is that the reward you get from stepping out of your comfort zone is so much more valuable than anything you could have done comfortably.

Staying in the safety of my home in Sweden never would have introduced me to the amazing people that are in my life now. The triple loop roller coaster had me laughing harder than ever when I got out of it. Speaking to an audience is only scary the first five seconds you’re up there then it becomes a pleasure. Getting yourself to the gym on a rainy day is uncomfortable but I guarantee you’ll feel amazing afterwards every single time. Just get in there and do whatever it is you know is the right thing to do and don’t let fear stop you.
There are a few things that I need in my life as a designer and creative professional. Here are

5 Essentials for Every Designer
1, Pen & Paper

Before jumping into the digital world, pen and paper is definitely the way to go. Whatever you’re sketching products, cars, fashion, landscapes or maybe concept art, it’s always a good idea to just throw down some ideas on paper. This will loosen up your arm and unleash your creativity faster than you think. I usually use a BIC Round Stic which can be found everywhere and for the paper I grab whatever is around me may it be a napkin, printing paper or if I’m really lucky - Canson marker paper. If you temporarily have what I call sketchers block, check out my linked video on how to unblock your mind and get into a sketching frenzy down below!
2, Markers

Now that you have some scribbles on your sheet of napkin you might want to add some shades in there to define the sketch more. For this I personally use Copic markers. They do tend to bleed a bit while sketching over the pen lines but I always go back and fill those out as a final step of the sketch. If you don’t want to do this step, Chartpak markers do not bleed. Just make sure you wear a gas mask while using those, they do smell pretty strong.
3, Wacom Tablet

So now we have an amazing sketch in front of us on paper and we want to jump into digital to really make this piece as detailed as we want it. For this I take a photo of my sketch and just import it into Photoshop. Most cell phone cameras are sufficient by todays standard but you could use a scanner if you have one laying around. To sketch I still use an ancient Wacom Intuos 3 wide. I can throw it in the wall or run it over with the Jeep and it will be fine. I love it. They don’t sell these anymore, the newer and most similar model is the Wacom intuos Pro Pen, which you can find on Amazon.com
4, Software

For the software I use mostly **Adobe Photoshop** to render stuff out. If I’m doing line work and quick ideas I think **Sketchbook Pro** is the better alternative. It has a better flow to the lines and it feels more natural to me for some reason. I did try Painter back in the day, I like it for making illustrations and paintings since they have some really nice standard brushes that represents the real life brushes you would use to paint on a canvas. But for product design, car design and concept art Photoshop is great. You can now subscribe to Adobe CC which is the full package of software for a reasonable monthly price instead of buying it for a larger, one time amount.
5, Inspiration

I know I sometimes need a push to get going with my sketches and designs and it depends on the day where I get that push from and what I want to sketch. Sometimes closing my eyes and listening to a song is a good way to set up the mood in your mind for example landscape paintings and concept art. I think I’ve listened to M83 Oblivion OST about 200 times and all of a sudden there’s a spaceship on my canvas. When working on more industrial design related projects I like to check out Pinterest and a couple tumblr blogs and take a couple of designs I like, mix them up in my head and see what comes out. Another great way which I think a lot of people don’t think about is exercise. It doesn’t have to be an hour heavy lifting at the gym, but just going for a walk or a short jog will definitely get those lines going!
Say Hello!

Instagram - @thesketchmonkey
Facebook - Marouane Bembli, TheSketchMonkey Facebook Page
I hope you enjoyed this read! This is only the beginning. Keep a lookout in your email inbox for updates and news from TheSketchMonkey. I’ve got some really exciting stuff coming up soon that I can’t wait to share with you. Thanks once again and now let’s start sketching :-) 

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