**Shifting to a “Gift Economy” Approach In My Work in 2018**

Starting in 2018, I am experimenting with operating within the confines of a "gift economy" where I focus my time, skills and passions on helping people navigate and make sense of the future of work without expectation of payment in return for services. I am focused on aligning my energy with what I am most passionate about, which put simply would be:

*Help as many people as possible adapt to the Future of Work to help them unlock their creativity to do work that matters*

**Why Am I Doing This?**

First, I believe it will help me create a deeper level of engagement with my clients because I will be more focused on doing the work I am passionate about, without trying to pursue monetary rewards.

Second, I believe we are in the midst of a fundamental shift in terms of how we work and I want to role model the changes I believe in. Too often we have the mindset of “what is the least I can get away with?” which leads to companies shortchanging employees and everyone feeling a little used.

I believe the "future of work" means power is shifting to the creators instead of managers, gatekeepers and bureaucrats. If we want to create a thriving economy and world with this shift, we will have to honor the gifts of those creators, instead of letting large platforms accrue the rewards for a small number of employees and shareholders.

Finally, in my early experience, the gifts I have received from people for my work (sometimes without expectation) have unleashed enormous amounts of gratitude in me and nothing is better for my personal motivation and thinking about how I can continue to invest in those relationships.

**So...do you accept money?**

Yes, of course. However, in a gift economy approach are not paying me FOR anything. I may help you, work with you or create for you. However, any gift you offer me is in service of helping me meet my basic material needs and continuing to try to live a good life.

**So no invoices or anything?**

I am happy to still use invoices, but I am not going to chase you for the money.
Okay so how do I figure out how much to “gift”?

This is really a question about how generous you feel it is appropriate to be. I suggest thinking through three questions:

1. How much can you or your organization offer over a certain period that can help me meet my material needs?
   a. Is there an amount too large that causes me distress if I were to offer it?
      Is there an amount too small that causes me distress for not valuing me as a person? (It’s probably somewhere in between)
2. If you were to offer that amount, would it make it impossible for you to meet your own material (or organizational) needs? (If yes, go back to step 1).
3. Are you able to offer this wholeheartedly?

For Organizations:

For organizations, I want to prioritize working with leaders and organizations that are generous, support the sustainability of the gig economy and have a fundamental belief in people. Similar to individual, I would suggest the company start with asking the question, “If I am generous, will I risk going out of business in the next year?” and then move on to “What is the most I can give to meet someone’s basic needs that also supports the sustainability of relationships where people do the work they care about and do it at a high level?”

The Boundless Principles for the “Gift Economy” - I practice what I preach:

1. Means: What are you reasonably able to contribute?
2. Sustainability: How can we think about a gift in a way that encourages sustainability of our economy and the people that depend on each other?
3. Generosity: How does generosity encourage people to do what matters to them and moves past a scarcity mindset in our economy?
4. Community: How will my contributions encourage a deeper connection between people?
Other Ways to Support My Work:

- **Patreon Community:** I have a Patreon community for which I offer special content, tools and previews of podcasts, writing and other things I am working on. I have been floored with the initial support and I believe it’s a great way to bring people together around the topic of the Future of Work – Learn More Here
- **Paypal:** I accept donations through this link
- **Sharing:** Share my newsletter with a friend, tweet about my podcast, share some of my tools with someone struggling in their career
- **Recommendations:** Offer suggestions, feedback or ideas for me to continue to offer support to people trying to make sense of their careers, life and work

You’re not living hand to mouth, are you?

Good question. No. As I experiment with this, I am lucky enough to have savings from previous jobs and also have some work with the “old economy” which I am increasingly looking to shift away from.

However, I live a modest life. Here is some details on my core expenses:

**Basic Needs**
- Rent: $850/month
- Food: $600/month
- Healthcare: $283/month

**Additional business expenses (not basic needs):**
- Co-working space: $430/month
- Accounting software: $13/month
- Business registration: $500/year
- Podcast Annual Cost: ~$500 (Editing and external support would add additional cost but I do everything myself right now)

**Savings:** I do aim to save some money annually, but more with the goal to deal with future health challenges and other needs I may have.