

Possible Interview Topics with Michael Shumate, aka the Grand Poobah of Success in the Arts

(Michael can adapt his responses to both long and short versions to fit different interview time constraints)

What It Takes to Make It

Succeeding in the arts takes talent, obviously. But what else? What two other qualities are needed to succeed in the arts and how can aspiring artists use all three to leverage their own careers? (short version answer takes 3 minutes, long version is funnier but takes 11 minutes)

Four Myths about Creativity

After debunking four of the most common myths about creativity, Michael shares some common sense ideas to help understand real creativity and how to develop it. (short 5 minutes, long 8 minutes)

What Is Talent?

What is this mysterious thing called talent? There are different ways to look at it. How do people, especially aspiring artists, discover their own talents? (short 4 minutes, long 8 minutes)

Do I Have Enough Talent?

How does any aspiring artist know if he or she has enough talent to make it? (short and long 2 minutes)

Prima Donna or Professional?

What makes people act one way or the other? How can aspiring artists avoid the posturing “Artsy-fartsy” foibles that creative careers are sometimes prone to? (short 1 minute, long 2 minutes)

Paying Your Dues

Michael explodes some popular myths about people who never paid their dues in their fields and the difference between “wannabes” and “aspiring artists.” (short and long 4 minutes)

Dealing with Criticism

How to find the balance between unfounded condemnation and by justified criticism of our art. The role of personal taste in our art and the critic's eye. (short 2 minutes, long 4 minutes)

Finding Your Own Voice

What is the difference between influence, homage and plagiarism? What are the dangers of trying to set your style too early? Where does finding your own voice come from? Can you force it or stifle it? (short 1 minute, long 3 minutes)

Getting the Breaks

What's the difference between luck and leverage in your career? What is the art of sacrifice and what do you have to do to market yourself? How can beginners underestimate their profession? (short 2 minutes, long 4 minutes)

What if You Don't Make It?

No one wants to be a quitter or a loser. Yet in every career there are people who try their hand at it and it doesn't work out for them. In the arts, because there is so much competition and because it is quite visible, the prospect of not making it can be paralyzing to some, to the point that they won't even try. Learn a way of looking at it that can take some of the gut-wrenching fear out of this question. (short 3 minutes, long 5 minutes)

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