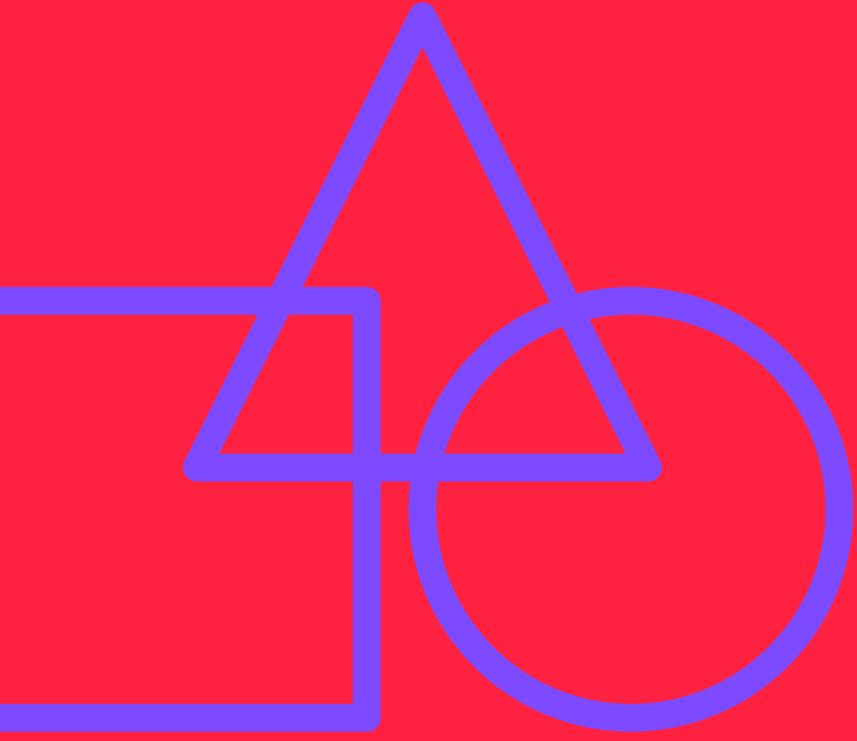


# HOW DESIGN LIVE



## PUTTING THE **HOW** IN HOW

In a career or creative rut?  
We've got you.  
Learn how to silence your inner critic, build your own brand, and evolve into a brilliant leader in our **HOW Insider Guide.**





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# FROM OUR SHOW DIRECTOR

**For those of us who work for HOW Design Live,** it really is more than just a job—and that’s because to our devoted attendees, some of whom have been going to the show for decades, it’s always been more than just a conference.

**HOW Design Live has heart.** It’s defined by passion. It can literally change your life. And I don’t say that lightly. People have found new jobs from connections at **HOW Design Live.** They’ve met lifelong friends. They’ve met future spouses.

An amazing sense of possibility hits you the moment you arrive at the show, when you suddenly realize that there are more designers, art directors, creative directors and creatives of all stripes in one place than you have ever seen before. Your tribe is here—and they’re ready to engage.

And then, of course, there’s the thing that brought you to the ball in the first place: the brilliant lineup of sessions. We don’t take programming the show lightly. We spend countless hours finding talented new voices to bring to the show to keep it fresh and engaging—while bringing your favorites back when you demand them—and we spend countless hours more vetting potential speakers so that when they hit the **HOW Stage,** you’ll get every last nickel of your money’s worth, and then some.

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Every year, so many people ask us why **HOW** is called **HOW**. When the brand first launched, it was because there wasn't anything on the market that focused on how to do things in the design world—how to be a better graphic designer, how to use certain essential programs, how to advance your career, how to balance work and life, and on and on.

***PUTTING THE  
"HOW" IN HOW  
REMAINS ONE  
OF OUR HIGHEST  
PRIORITIES.***

As we approach our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary show in 2020, October 26-29 in Atlanta, we're elated to say that while we've grown a lot over the years, **putting the "how" in HOW** remains

one of our highest priorities. After all, before you can really take your craft and career to the next level, you need to be equipped with the tools to do so. Here are a few ways a trio of our favorite speakers gave audiences just that last year.

It doesn't matter what type of person you are—extrovert, introvert, student, creative director. There is a place for you here, among the creative glue that binds us all. **HOW** really is so much more than a conference. If I haven't met you yet, I can't wait to in Atlanta. A world of design and possibility awaits. ■

*Amy Conover*



Amy Conover,

**HOW DESIGN LIVE**



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# HOW TO BECOME A CREATIVE LEADER TODAY

LOOKING TO LAND A LEADERSHIP ROLE? HERE ARE 9 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING YOURSELF RIGHT NOW.

**“Are you a leader?”** creative coach Tina Essmaker asked the crowd.

There was a brief hush as everyone considered this. At the very first session of a major conference like **HOW Design Live**, there’s always an incredible energy in the room. Some people are filled with excitement and possibility and can’t sit still. Others are anxious—and they can’t sit still, either, wondering, Did I make the right decision by making the investment to come here?

Regardless of which group everyone fell into, they soon knew they were exactly where they should be, as Essmaker gave them the tools to plot their own creative futures.

Read on for some of those very tools from Essmaker’s session at **HOW Design Live**.

## THE BIG QUESTIONS

Tina Essmaker began her career as a social worker, and then co-launched *The Great Discontent* magazine. But after a while, she was burned out. She realized she was living a reactionary life. She decided she needed to take action. So she did.

As she said in her **HOW Design Live** Creative Leadership session, “We are all capable of leading, but before we can lead others, we must lead ourselves. Leadership

begins with what already is, who you already are, and what you already have. Leadership begins with you.”

She then shared some of the big questions she asked herself back then, which she uses today with clients in her coaching practice for creatives:

- ① What brings me satisfaction in my work?
- ② What are 3-5 North Stars that guide me home and fulfill me? (Essmaker’s included “growth,” “independence” and “creativity.”)
- ③ What do each of these words mean to me—and how do I want them to manifest in my work life?

After, she suggested digging a bit deeper:

- ① What does my typical day look like right now?  
How do I feel during the day?
- ② What does my ideal day look like?  
How do I want to feel during the day?
- ③ What one thing can I do in the next week to get closer to my ideal day?

Essmaker uses her mornings for deep, focused work (and puts her phone in Airplane Mode), saving the emails and calls for afternoons. She advises scheduling one day a week with no meetings; one day a month to be offline with no screens.

As you go along, she said, you can then begin to ask the bigger questions:

- ① What career/business goals do I want to achieve this year?
- ② What actions will I take to meet each goal?
- ③ What are my yearly goals that I can break into quarterly milestones based on priority?

When you put the time in on these questions, she said, your work, life and perspective shift. And people begin to look to you for leadership—regardless of title. And that’s the key: You don’t have to wait until someone says you’re a leader to become a leader.

**In other words: Leadership begins with you. ■**

**START  
YOUR  
JOURNEY:  
REGISTER  
FOR HOW  
DESIGN  
LIVE 2020  
TODAY.**



# HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CREATIVE REVOLUTION

PLEASE, FOR THE GOOD OF YOUR CAREER AND THE GOOD OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY AT LARGE—BUILD YOUR OWN BRAND.

**Things were looking great** for Stephen Gates—he was riding high and driving innovation at a major company. His work was appearing globally in an Apple ad on TV. And then, as he revealed on stage at **HOW Design Live**...he got laid off.

“If you think that you are safe in your job right now and that a business cannot come in and change that, you are kidding yourself,” he told the crowd in Chicago.

But Gates’ message wasn’t one of fear—it was one of empowerment. Because every designer can take control of their future by building their own authentic brand today.

Here are a few strategic highlights from Gates’ session at **HOW Design Live**.

## **TREAT YOUR BRAND SERIOUSLY**

“Your brand is not where you have worked and it is not where you went to school,” Gates said. “You need to work on your brand like it is another job.” Invest in your network. Cultivate a brand that authentically represents who you are and what your talents are. Be credible. Be authentic. Be yourself.

## **LEARN TO TELL YOUR OWN STORY**

“History doesn’t remember well-behaved people. The brands that you love don’t do the same thing as everybody else. If you thought of yourself as a product, you wouldn’t market yourself the way that you do...”

It's amazing to me how everyone tries to be different by acting the same." By refining your personal brand and your true narrative—and putting that out into the world—it'll help you in your current job, not to mention the job that you land tomorrow.

### **EMBRACE YOUR BACKGROUND**

Your past is your strength—not your weakness, Gates said. It doesn't matter where you went to school, where you have worked. "The moment I started to make peace with myself is the moment my work got better," he continued. "You, from now on, have the answers." Stop looking to others for validation. You're already smart enough. "This is why stupid people are successful: Because they're unencumbered by fear. Stop making stupid people famous."

***"YOUR BRAND IS NOT WHERE YOU HAVE WORKED AND IT IS NOT WHERE YOU WENT TO SCHOOL."***

### **EMBRACE THE HATERS**

This year, Gates said, he started getting his own trolls online. But he wasn't bothered—he was excited. "Build a brand that someone will hate. It sounds strange, but at the point that you have built something that is that clear, that is so strong that people will stand up and say "I'm all about that," you're on the right track. Yes, some people will hate it. And that's OK."

### **BE BRAVE**

Have courage. Step up and say and do what you're afraid of. "There is a fine line between crazy and stupid, but crazy people do change the world because we're willing to risk something," Gates said. "Here's my only ask: Exist loudly. We all have voices that the world needs to hear." ■

**BEGIN TO  
TAKE YOUR  
OWN STEPS:  
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# HOW TO SILENCE THE CRITIC AND FEED THE CREATIVE

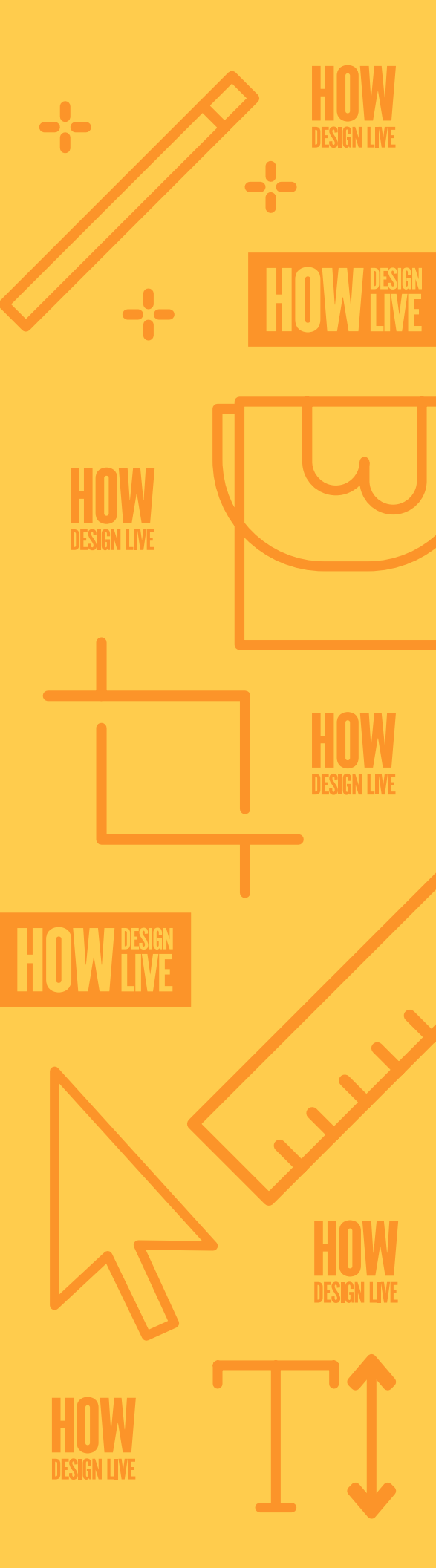
REDEFINE YOUR APPROACH TO FEEDBACK AND YOU JUST MIGHT REDEFINE YOUR ENTIRE CAREER.

**There's always a fair amount of talk** in design and creativity circles about “future-proofing” your career. But as brand advisor Terri Trespicio said in her **HOW Design Live** session “Discover, Capture and Communicate Your Best Ideas,” that’s not really the best way to look at things—because the implication thrumming below the surface is that the future is going to, well, suck.

“That’s a terrible way to see the future,” she said.

So how do we envision a better future, one that we can’t wait to reach? We have to change how we see our work today. Our brains have a negativity bias—meaning the bad thoughts are the ones that tend to stick around, instead of the props and praise. And it’s something that society is continually reinforcing in us, such as how we’ve been taught that criticism is good for us, if not essential: if it doesn’t hurt, it won’t work. “This is almost masochistic,” she said. “We’re all on some level suffering from Stockholm Syndrome around criticism. We have to undo a lot of the things that we’ve learned. Criticism shuts down your creativity.”

***“WE’RE ALL ON SOME LEVEL SUFFERING FROM STOCKHOLM SYNDROME AROUND CRITICISM.”***







HOW DESIGN LIVE

Her solution to that problem: “Silence the critic, feed the creative.”

She does just that by practicing and teaching Suzanne Kingsbury’s Gateless Method—a combination of neuroscience, Buddhism and the practices of literary masters. Here are three strategies from it that you can put into play in your feedback group, design division or your everyday engagement with your work and the work of others.

### **DON’T DECONSTRUCT—BUILD**

The Gateless Method isn’t about competition—it’s about establishing a safe place where one can create without fear. Trespicio described how participants in workshops are given, say, a writing prompt. In response, they put pen to page, and subsequently read what they’ve written aloud. There’s no time for editing or polishing—in other words, everyone starts on the same page. After the author has read, the other participants give them feedback—but they don’t focus on criticism. Rather, they focus on what’s working. What has power and energy and possibility. The bad in the work then falls away, and the good rises to the top. “We let the work speak for itself.”

### **DON’T BREAK THE RULES—EMBRACE THEM**

Workshop participants never refer to the speaker in first person—they use third. Why? As Trespicio said, what the creator needs to see is the work separate from himself. “The work takes on a life. Isn’t that the thing we really want when we have people looking at our work? When you hear everyone talking about the strengths of the work, it takes shape in the room. It becomes real. And that will change you more than anything else.”

Participants also aren’t allowed to make assumptions about any speaker (e.g., “She just must be having a bad day”). Instead, they focus strictly on the work. They also avoid self-referential statements that lead

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to stolen spotlights, such as “that happened to me once.” The attention is kept right where it should be: on the speaker’s work.

### **DON'T FEAR—CREATE**

As Trespicio said, rather than finding flaws in others’ work, “be a heat-seeking missile for meaning and energy.” She also clarified that this approach isn’t about praise or flattery—it’s about looking at the power of the work. Show that it’s real and that it touched you, and explain how. Doing so empowers everyone to let go of their fear of criticism and really explore their ideas. “You’re free to swim around,” she said, “And you’d be astonished what you’ll find.”

***“IMAGINE WHAT YOU COULD ACHIEVE IF THE CRITICAL MIND HAD LESS OF A HOLD OVER YOUR LIFE.”***

We’re often told that we should be getting outside of our comfort zones to be creative—but Trespicio said that’s probably not the best advice. When you’re outside of your comfort zone, you’re focused on survival—and as any creator knows, survival is

never a great mode to be in when trying to create. By practicing strategies like these, you build your comfort zone and begin to retrain your brain to associate creating and sharing with ease, pleasure and reward—and it’s not just limited to art and writing and design. It can help your marriage. Your approach to parenting. So many other facets of life, simply by asking: What if you just focus on what’s working?

“Imagine what you could achieve if the critical mind had less of a hold over your life,” Trespicio said in conclusion. “Probably everything.”

**Now that’s the key to the future. ■**

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# READY TO GO?!


That's all just a bread crumb trail of the mind-blowing creative feast that awaits you in **Atlanta, October 26-29, 2020.**

We're deep in the midst of planning the show, and are bringing some truly amazing speakers and sessions to the stage. Moreover, this is the **30<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of **HOW Design Live**. If you've been before, we promise to exceed your expectations. (Seriously. We have so much in the works that we can't wait to announce once the ink is dry!) If this is your first time—well, get ready. There's no way to fully prepare yourself for the overload of awesomeness on stage and off.

Stay up to date with all the latest goings-on here, and follow us on social media for special announcements in real time.

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When you're ready to register—[use code HowTo](#) for 10% off you Big Ticket.

**See you in Atlanta!**

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CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS