

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



While you might have great ideas, there are also others out there who do. Why not collaborate with them? Why not connect as opposed to compete?

We're going to use an eco system to nail the point and quite a lot of figurative language in this class.

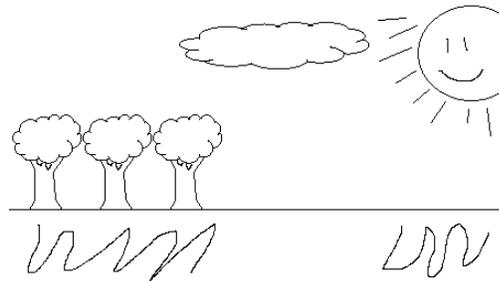
Positive associations and collaborations: what they are and how important they are to you.

- Valhalla and Superhero Academy are standalone brands, but we're really just a tree or a plant among a forest.
- Out there, people are out there competing for your attention, donation, purchase, etc. People are out there, competing for your audience.
- Competition is the framework of most "old story" marketing, one that is not very characteristic of "new story."
- Commodities are sold on the basis of need, of negatives. "This and that are bad, but if you buy this, they will be good." The marketers sell by emphasizing the negatives; and to avoid these negative things, you should buy their product.
- Valhalla, on the other hand, capitalizes on the positive. We're not pointing out where you won't be if you don't engage in our stuff. We tell you where you could be if you do. The focus is on the positive.
- Be centered on the idea behind positive associations and negative associations.
 - o A positive association is something you're attaching your offer, your brand, your flag, your face, your image, your name to. Wherever you are appearing, you want to appear in a positive light. What you want people to feel is positive. That's what you want to get out of them, as it empowers them.
 - o In the old story, most people capitalize on the negative side of things, the fear. After all, we are biologically inclined to look at the negatives. We are naturally more attuned to the negatives, as survival dictates. It's natural for it to catch our attention more than positive things.
 - o We're not urged to not mention the negatives. In fact, we're told to lead with the negatives (the negative reputation environment, the villain...). What we're urged not to do is to end in the negative, but rather shift from it quickly and head over to the positive.
 - o You may be able to sell with the negative but you cannot expect to offer value beyond that.

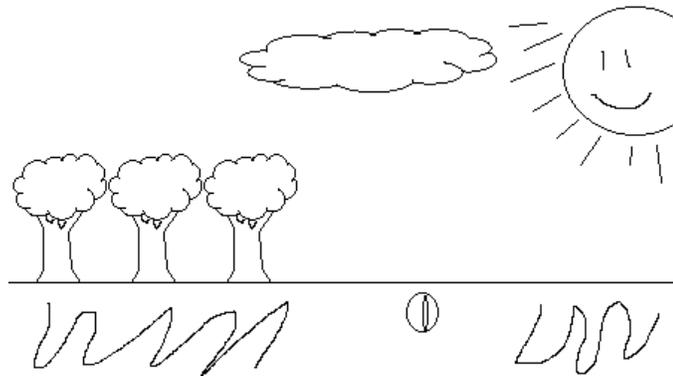
Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



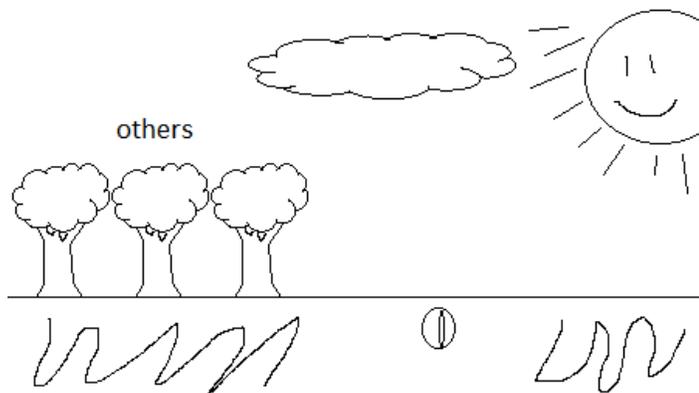
- How do we create collaboration, instead of opposition between entities? For that, we draw an eco system...



- Thinking of the space you are operating in, you're planting the seeds of your idea. You're going to have to pick where you're going to plant those seeds.



- Whatever you plant, it plays along with the other things in the eco system, as you are in the eco system.
- There is an enormous amount of things that must go right if your seed is to flourish.
- The first thing to consider is where you're planting your seed. What is the environment? What does the soil look like? What is the environment of your space?
- In terms of your movement, idea or business, what is the environment of your space? Where are the trees? In this case, where are the "others?" Remember, we are a plant or a tree among others.



Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



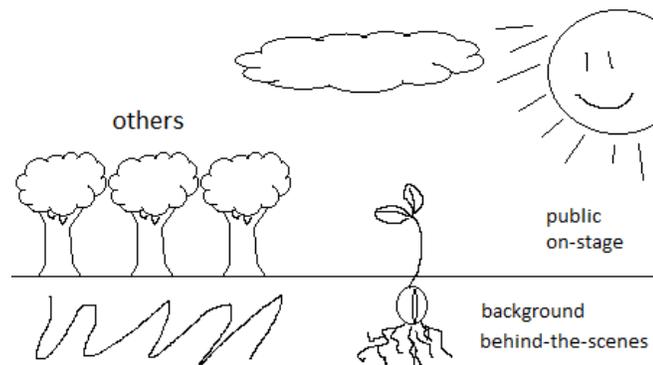
- The “others” are part of the forest, taking up space in the environment, competing for the sunlight, water, and all the different natural resources.
- You may be planted on open space now, but eventually, the forest grows and when you yourself are grown, you’re now part of the competition. That or you can collaborate with the others.
- Let’s say these trees are all the same, maple trees for example. While maple trees are great, they’re not the only necessary thing in the eco system.
- You can then choose to be the same as the others by planting your seed among them or you can plant on open space but not before exploring (market-researching) that open space.

Now for the assignment/this week’s challenge:

- Know who the “others” are in your space. Write down five who you would have traditionally called your competitors but will now call your collaborators.
- They are potential people you can learn from and collaborate with. They have made their own flags and have therefore paved a path for you. Essentially, they have prepared the soil for you.

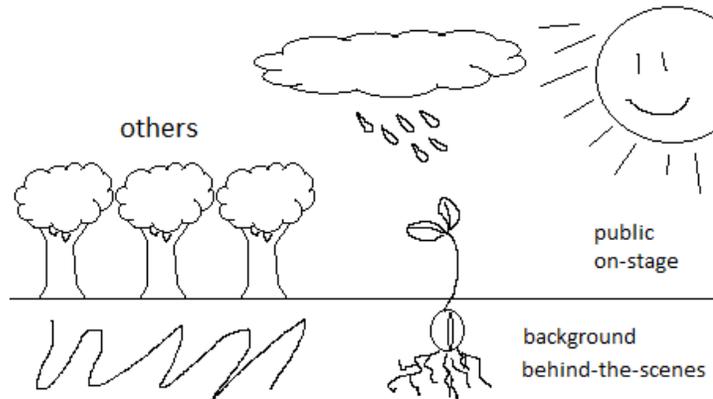
The seed being your story:

- Your seed is your story, the thing that grows. It sprouts and of course it takes root.
- There are two different parts to your plant: the above-ground (the public, on stage) and the below-ground, the “roots” (the background, the behind the scenes).

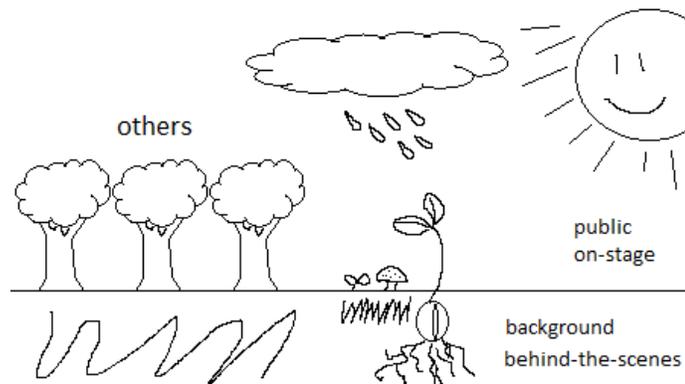


- The “roots” are the infrastructure of your story.
- Superhero Academy is not just Marc. There’s Yannick working in the background to make this happen. Marc has to collaborate with a good number of people to make Superhero Academy happen.
- This is a series of give and take. The seed won’t be taking in all the resources for itself. As part of the eco system, it will have to redistribute the natural resources.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



- Now think: who is needed in your background? Who are the key people in your team to make your movement, business, or idea a reality?
- You may be good at something, but you won't be good at every aspect of your operations. In Marc's case, he's good with creating content, but when it comes to the more technical aspects of operations, he has Yannick. Essentially, he has a team. He has the "roots."
- On the assignment, write who those key people are.
- If you're not good at web design, maybe you need a web master. If you're not good at graphics, maybe you need a graphics designer.
- You, as the plant, will need to play a role, but not all of them. Nonetheless you have to play one key role. Be that significant plant.
- In the eco system of your business, idea, or movement, you're going to need to write down who the key people are behind your being the plant.
- These key people are your buffers and they will keep you out of trouble, as well as bail you out when you get into one.
- In this case, Marc is part of our roots, we being his students, we being the plant.
- Eventually the people in the background also gain some manifestation on the ground. So there you have your mushrooms.

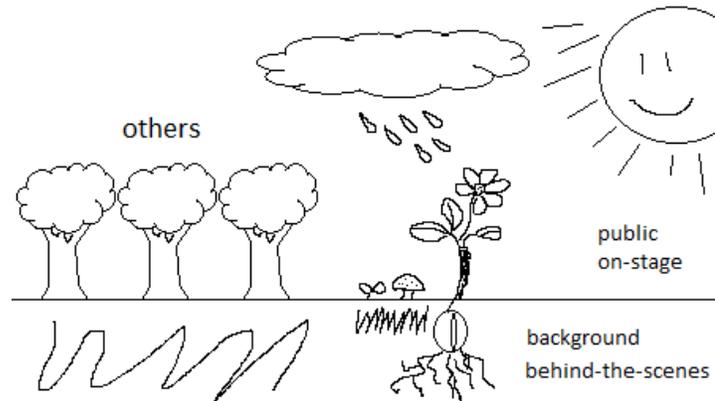


- Sometimes, they may not necessarily be people but tools/the nutrients (web tools, PayPal, etc.). In the eco system, they are what you, the plant, needs to continue growing, and for your business, movement, or idea, to keep it going, operating.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



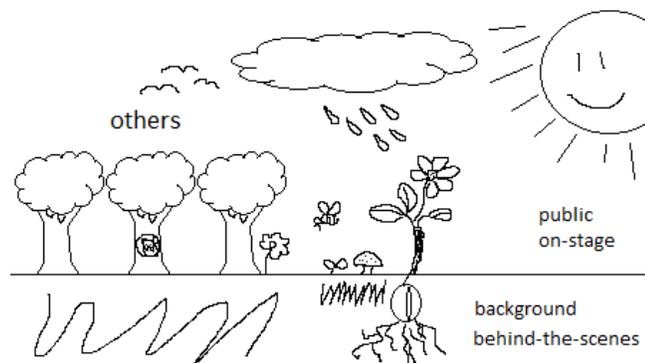
- We need all of these right conditions if we are to eventually bloom flowers and ultimately bear fruit.
- And while the collaborations are mostly taking place behind the scenes, below the surface, they eventually become the positive associations in the light/on the surface.



- Then there you have your bloom, all because of the nutrients, the right conditions, and the other parts of the eco system that made it so.
- Marc mentioned that he will be sharing the tools they are using at the end of the class, tools that could be of use to you, in addition to what tools you might uniquely have on your own.
- In this collaborative mindset, you will eventually want to shine.

The other people in the eco system now to help you pollenate that flower:

- Pollination: for a fruit to be born, there needs to be another flower and a pollination agent, such as a bee.



- This agent could be one of the competitors, now bringing in cross-pollination.
- Cross-pollination happens when you and a competitor directly or indirectly help each other.
- You're coming together to work together through your commitments.
- By using the pollen of the "others" in the eco system, you are attracting them into your own eco system.
- You can only do that if you're nice to them, them being probably bigger than you are or more established; and one of the fastest ways to grow is by looking up to others who have done it by replicating the moves that made them progress and learning from their mistakes.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



- You're not urged to make another maple tree but learn from them.
- Stop seeing the whole thing in terms of scarcity, as tradition states. Start seeing things in terms of abundance. After all, the sun that shines on all of us has more abundance in it than we can name!
- While you might grow into a tree that then shades off other plants, and those under you might start stealing your nutrients, you need not see them as entities leeching off your nutrients, as you may see them as contributors.
- In perma-culture, there is promotion of plants that grow well together. A tomato plant grows well alongside a basil plant. Such relations are explored and practiced in perma-culture: one plant growing naturally aiding the other type of plant in various ways.
- In essence, we have to find a way to collaborate and be "companion plants."
- The easiest way to do that is to craft not just an offer to your suspecting audience but also the "others." They can be some of your unsuspecting audience.
- If you have something to offer these "others," your unsuspecting audience, you can be surprised at what you can do for the "big boys" that they aren't doing well themselves.
- It's hardly surprising to find huge companies with lots of money flowing into their businesses failing on the little things.
- Not only is the public your unsuspecting audience but also the big entities you will have seen as your competitors.

Sharing to add associations:

- You can use the "others" image and ideas to become positive associations for yourself.
- In the case of Superhero Academy, it shares the content of other people it wants to be associated with. In return, it shares things other people might share.
- With Valhalla, it engages in spreading sustainability, something other advocates of sustainability can connect with. In turn it gets things from the other advocates it can positively associate itself with. The pool of content only grows ever larger.
- What's the easiest thing to offer the "others"/the "big boys?" Offer to share their content. Furthermore, you can even offer to sell their "fruits."

Counterproductive "opportunities:"

- There are ventures that can and will make you money, at the expense of your flag. Be mindful of these things.
- Never ruin your flag by trading something that does not exist in your eco system. If Valhalla engaged in trade of hummers, something that goes against its advocacy of sustainability, the money earned out of it could be its own undoing.
- Do not go out there and start contributing to things that are "outside" of your eco system.
- While opportunities are generally seen as favorable things, sometimes they are there as distractions.
- Going to events are generally a good thing. You learn a thing or two; but going to one that does not help out in the growth of the things in your eco system is a waste of time.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



- While taking a job or doing something else can be quite an attractive prospect at times, it only hurts your business, movement or idea if that other thing does not have anything to do with it.

On time-offs:

- Consider the “size” of your plant. If you’re still this little plant, taking vacations might not be such a good idea as compared to if you’re already a tree that can more or less fend for itself even if you go away for a couple of days.
- In any case, however, should you opt to get some time-off, make sure to water your plants before heading out. Make sure that the needed nutrients will be in constant supply and that their distribution keeps running while you’re out.

On starting out:

- There are times you don’t even really have to come up with offers that could profit you at the moment. You can start by helping others out and from there, see your movement, business or idea grow.
- Valhalla started building earth ships through the Kickstarter they had that exceeded their goal. They did not invent earth ships or perma-culture. Instead, they built a good foundation of good associations and by the time they really moved in for the kill, money and people started pouring in and real help came their way.
- They jumped into an eco system that was already flourishing, bringing with them the goods, such as media, creating websites, marketing, and so on and so forth. All they had to do was show up and show that eco system they entered that they’re playing their role.
- There are other bigger “others” in the same eco system, but since they are in the same eco system, Valhalla found little to no reason to compete with them, rather come in as a complement for them.
- The whole thing was motivated by being part of the community, not by the money that would line their pockets. This is association and collaboration at play.
- More specifically, Valhalla offered the “others” more exposure through their podcast, inviting the “others” over to be interviewed and to have their content shared all over the place, cross-pollinating with them, creating win-win scenarios.
- You’re not only after drawing people in from the outside. Best look at those from the same eco system.
- While the goal of the eco system is to expand, the best way to go about it is to build strong foundations first, from within.

Choosing your eco system:

- Different eco systems exist for different purposes. It’s up to you which eco system to enter and be a part of.
- Once done, go build up the right team with the right people who will collaborate with you to help you start out in that eco system.
- Make sure to share the different common resources.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



- You're far from having to think only about yourself. There will always be an eco system you can join in. If you don't join in on one, you're just going to be a lone plant and chances are, you won't flourish.
- Go back to the two mindsets you can choose from:
 - o The old story mindset which operates in terms of scarcity.
 - o The new story mindset which operates in terms of abundance.
- Eco systems are always an abundant thing.
- You can serve a very small portion of the eco system and yet gain significance in that eco system.
- Your offer does not always have to be something for the wide public. It could even just be for that one squirrel in the eco system, which then plays its respective role in it.

The Challenge:

- Find the people in your system:
 - o Who are your roots?
 - o Who are the people who are fundamental to your idea taking flight, and your plant will grow?
- What is your plant?
 - o What are you offering specifically to this portion of the story?
 - o What is the role that you are taking?
 - o How are you attracting sunlight and water (investors, investments, potential clients, audiences)? How are you attracting these people?
 - o What are you doing very specifically to make this whole thing fruitful?
- What is the flower you're going to offer in a win-win scenario, to cross-pollinate which will eventually lead to your true fruit being born? It all happens in this order.
- Identify all of the above. Build your plant.
- What are you putting out there on the "above-ground?" What are you saying to say, "We're open for collaboration?"
- What are you saying to say, "We believe in abundance, not scarcity; collaboration, not competition?"
- If last week we built our flag, this week we build our plant.
- Build your eco system. Be as specific in assigning every part of the eco system to what and who they are.

Wrap-up:

- We've pointed out every part of the eco system here.
- We now have to identify who's who in each and every part in terms of our business, movement, or idea.
- Now, it's not all going to be "collaborative" as is the ideal discussed here. There might be a time when you would really have to show some muscle in competition, but it is hoped that it is not some real muscle put to play but the muscle of the mind.
- Understand your season. Prepare for the rainy days. Prepare for the drought.

Be Your Own Hero: Positive Associations and Collaborations



- What does your eco system look like? Who are the people in them?
- If you have no idea, you can always look up others. Observe and learn from others!