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#498 | Rana Florida Interview | CEO, Author, Editor & Cultural Curator

As Chief Executive Officer of the [Creative Class Group](#), Rana Florida manages new business development, marketing, consulting, research and global operations serving such diverse clients as BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Johnson & Johnson – to name just a few. She brings to this leadership role more than two decades of experience in corporate strategy, communications, and marketing, having directed global strategic communications for [HMSHost](#), the world's largest airport developer, as well as having executed marketing initiatives for such premier brands as Disney and Starbucks and events experience working with The Atlantic, The Aspen Institute and The Knight Foundation.



The Difference Between Good And Great I

People who are great at what they do, have a singular drive and focus; they are dedicated and work very, very hard. They eliminate distractions and stay the course. When I see experts work, whether it's a scientist in his lab, an author deep in his thoughts, or a creator in studio, it truly is a one-of-a-kind experience seeing a genius in their zone.

The Characteristics Of Success I've always been curious, hungry for more information. In

fact researchers say the most important question a toddler can ask is *Why?* It shows that they are inquisitive and want a deeper understanding. I'm always hungry for more information. On the hunt, I read anything I can get my hands on. I remember as a child after devouring the adult rags my father had laying around such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, I would read the packaging on boxes, the back of medicine labels, practically any household item I could get my hands on. Then I discovered the bookstore and would lock away for hours in my room, racing cover to cover on a stack of books.

Principles I Live By | Always be excellent. Why settle for second best? Strive for excellence.

Critical Skills I Develop | To take risks. When I wrote my book *Upgrade*, I interviewed a wide range of successful people. From President Bill Clinton to First Lady Michelle Obama, to tennis champ Andre Agassi to fashion designer Tory Burch and so many others. I found one common theme throughout all my interviews. They were not afraid to take risks. Most successful leaders, thinkers and innovators inherently understand that new opportunities and rewards come only after taking risks. Facebook's motto is "Move fast and break things," meaning, it's okay to take a chance on several things at once. Curiosity is stifled in a risk-free environment. If workers are afraid of getting laughed at for their ridiculous ideas, any number of important inventions won't ever see the light of day. Our society and workplaces need to encourage more risk-taking. Innovative leaders understand that not every risk yields success, but they also don't reprimand their teams for taking risks. They encourage them to think their ideas through and assess their potential consequences.

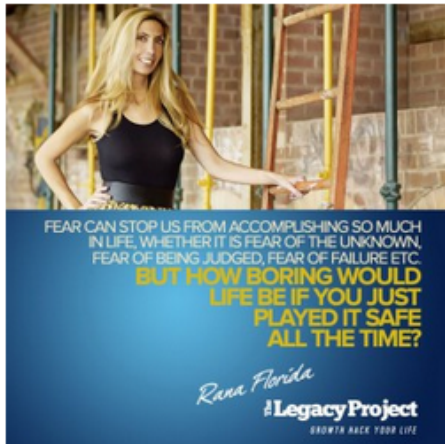
Dealing With Doubt | I always try to tackle my fears head on, I force myself into uncomfortable situations daily, whether it is the fear of public speaking, going on live television, dealing with conflict and more. I was even afraid of heights, so I decided to go skydiving and landed in a tree but I conquered my fear and moved on. Fear can stop us from accomplishing so much in life, whether it is fear of the unknown, fear of being judged, fear of failure etc. But how boring would life be if you just played it safe all the time?



Performing At My Peak | My father ingrained in us as children, the motto, "If you're not going to do it right, then don't bother doing it at all." Meaning don't do a half-jacked job, it won't benefit anyone. His wise words always stuck with me.

Resources I Use To Stay Inspired | There's so much that inspires me. Anything creative, books (fiction and non-), films, independent and mainstream blogs, magazines, travel, food, intelligent and curious people.

The Best Advice I've Received | When I interviewed President Bill Clinton he told me that his first lesson on leadership came at the age of 13 from selling comic books at a local grocery store. Earning his own way gave him confidence. He told me, "From that day on, I never doubted that I could support myself."



I learned to make sure I understood what was expected of me and do it, to be friendly with and helpful to customers, and to talk contracts. From that first job through more than a dozen other things I've done to earn money, I never doubted that I could make a living. That knowledge played a huge role in shaping my identity and building my confidence. The dignity, security, and sense of empowerment that comes with knowing you'll be able to support yourself and your family is as important

to the strength of a society as its economy."

Advice On Building Wealth | It seems as if this celebrity-crazed generation feels entitled to get rich and be famous without any skills, special talent or expertise. I can tell you, that it doesn't happen without persistence and lots and lots and lots of hard work

Useful Links |

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