

*the Clear-Minded Creative*

# *Career Masterplan*



*for Mad Geniuses*

*By Milo McLaughlin*

# Welcome..

It's not often I meet a like-minded soul such as yourself.

You know, being a bit mad, and a bit of a genius and all. We're special, you and me.

Trouble is, us mad geniuses tend to be misunderstood, especially when it comes to our careers.

I mean, there's just not enough work out there for people with our talents.

A mad genius just can't sit behind a computer or shop counter all day doing menial tasks. We have creative craziness to share with the world!

We need to mix potions. Hatch ideas that border on insanity.  
Laugh maniacally. Hold disjointed conversations with ourselves in the mirror.  
Weep uncontrollably over seemingly trivial setbacks.

We need a career masterplan that will allow us to do all that and more, from the comfort of our own homes/laboratories/mad genius lairs.

This is it, my friend. This is it.



# The Masterplan



As my glamorous assistant here will tell you (or would if he still had a tongue), there are **6 main stages** to the career masterplan for mad geniuses.

I am now going to reveal the masterplan in full (drum roll).

All 6 stages will be further explored in a series of micro-guides that will be published on [www.clearmindedcreative.com](http://www.clearmindedcreative.com) throughout the second half of 2012.

I've also included a short quick-start guide with simple ways to get started and reveal your inner mad genius to the world.

**#1**

**REFRESH  
YOUR MINDSET**

Being a mad genius has its perks.

We can create strikingly original art and amaze the world with our inventiveness.

We can ignore the bullshit rules that society tells us are important and choose to focus on what's most in line with our own values.

And we can build a body of work that will last for decades and change people's lives.

But it can sometimes mean we are slightly unbalanced too.

Perhaps we are too hard on ourselves.

Perhaps we don't have faith in our own abilities and think that being a full time mad genius is an impossible dream.

And perhaps we are afraid of revealing our secret identities in case the world mocks us for being weird and different.

The good news is, that although we're "slightly mad", we're not certifiably insane (if you are, please see a doctor or another qualified professional immediately).

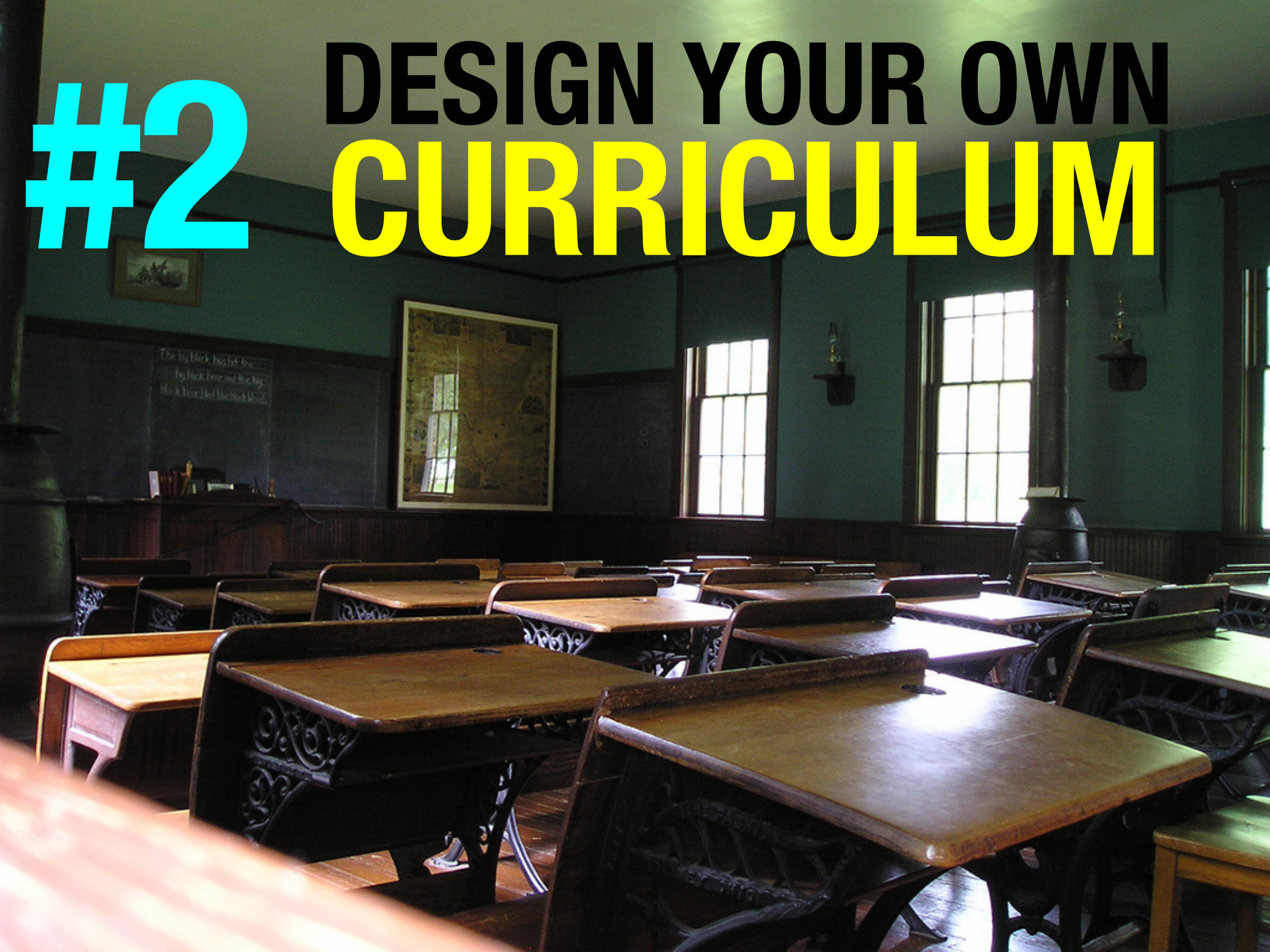
In the first micro-guide, I'll explore how we can work on changing our ways of thinking and get more clarity about our own personalities, values and goals.

And I'll provide examples of other people who have somehow managed to combine being mad, a genius, and successful, proving it's possible for us too!



#2

# DESIGN YOUR OWN CURRICULUM



## The Clear-Minded Creative Career Masterplan for Mad Geniuses

There is no college or university on earth that is fully equipped to teach a mad genius how to ply their trade. That's because mad geniuses follow their own path. They blaze a trail. They create something entirely new.

With his or her unique combination of skills, and one-off personality, our mad genius was born to bring something unique to the world.

There's value in dusting off an ancient tome from the local library, and unearthing the hidden secrets it holds. But opportunity tends to lie at the cutting edge. So a mad genius needs to be aware of current trends too, and keep one eye on the future.

The second micro-guide will recommend ways to learn what you want to learn without spending thousands of pounds on an out of date and under-appreciated qualification.

It will explore how you can 'learn on the go' and pick up knowledge and skills which will enable you to stride ahead of the competition and truly earn the moniker of mad genius.

And it will advise how to avoid common pitfalls such as analysis paralysis, information overwhelm, spending your granny's inheritance on snake oil get-rich-quick schemes or buying a small furry creature in a back-street shop that looks perfectly cute until it gets wet or eats a big tasty snack after midnight.





**#3**

**PIMP  
YOUR**

**ONLINE  
PRESENCE**





Gone are the days when creative geniuses needed to hawk their wares to disinterested passers-by from soapboxes in public parks and on street corners, or submit to the sexual charms of an over-enthusiastic Steven Seagal in order to get their film script made into a movie starring Steven Seagal.

Why? Because of the mad geniuses greatest secret weapon, the internet!

The internet is a magical superhighway of creative pixie dust, which means you are able to read this very manuscript from your mud hut in the congo or from a James Bond style boat in the Maldives or from a bouncy castle whilst high on peyote. (As long as the wi-fi connection is decent.)

And so, as the Doggfather himself would no doubt drawl, you need to pimp da shit out of

your website, online portfolio, social media profiles and everywhere else the digital version of you exists.

You need to have a memorable name or brand. When people type what they're looking for into a search engine, you want your site to appear. And when they click on your site, you need to hit them with your rhythm stick, or at least wow them with a display of mad genius magnificence.

The third micro-guide will go into much more juicy detail about this. At least I hope it will, at the moment I have no idea what it's going to include, it might just be more pictures of Snoop Dogg.

Disclaimer: the use of the word pimp and imagery of Snoop Dogg by no means suggests that you are going to need to resort to prostitution in your search for mad genius success (unless you REALLY like Steven Seagal), or that I condone prostitution, or Snoop Dogg's possibly questionable attitude towards women. 'Who Am I (What's My Name?)' is a classic tune though.



#4

# PRODUCE THE GOODS





If you're not creating something original and brilliant, then you're not a mad genius, you're just mad.

Without a body of work as evidence of your unique talent, you're just a deluded weirdo, muttering in the corner. Stop that!

Put the work in. Make sacrifices. Make difficult decisions. This is the only way to truly fulfil your creative potential.

People will still think you're a deluded weirdo muttering in the corner, but you'll know the truth.

And one day your genius will be recognised by the world, wohahaha. Hopefully.

And if it isn't, then at least you tried. You can rest easy knowing you did your best, right?

The fourth micro-guide will explore what it takes to consistently produce your important creative work.

This is the toughest stage, but the rewards are potentially huge.



**#5**

**SHARE YOUR WARES**



Whether you're a writer, photographer, illustrator or musician, it doesn't matter how good your work is if nobody knows about it.

It can be tough to find the courage to shout about yourself and your creative work, and it can be even tougher to be heard amongst all the competing voices out there.

Words like 'marketing' 'self-promotion', 'networking' and 'selling' strike fear into the hearts of us often introverted mad geniuses.

Apart from the occasional visit by the local pizza boy, we just want to be left alone in our basement to tinker with our latest project (or maybe that's just me).

Thankfully, sharing your wares isn't just about tweeting into the vastness of cyberspace and hoping it gets noticed by Ashton Kutcher or Kim Kardashian.

This is about figuring out how to find the people who are really important – the ones who really need or want what you can do – and are willing to pay you for it too.

That's why the fourth micro-guide in the series will look at how you can spread the word about your creative work online and off, how you can ensure your audience keeps coming back for more, and how you can start earning real money from doing what you're good at.

Sound good?



#6



**WRITE YOUR OWN**  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**



Now here's where we get to the point of all this hard work.

At the moment you might only be a part-time mad genius. You might be working in a job you don't particularly enjoy, in order to take care of those irritating, but essential human needs, like food, shelter, DVDs, beer and chocolate.

You crave more freedom, and more rewarding and meaningful work. You know that given the chance your madness and geniusness\* could wow the world.

The good news is, that following these six simple steps is going to empower you and give you leverage.

You're an original thinker. You've developed a unique combination of skills. You've got an online home which makes people swoon and possibly go a bit faint in the head because it's so attractive and impressive.

Most importantly you've produced great work which is evidence of your genius, and you've grown a small audience who actually want to hear from you.

Do you see what this could do for your career? You can use your new skills and knowledge in your existing job. You could become a freelancer and sell your work or knowledge, or set up a micro-business providing products to those who want what you can offer.

You could go for a job in a completely different field because you are now suddenly an expert in that field through your 'extra-curricular' activities.

It's no small thing to say that if you put in the work in the previous 5 steps, you will now have the opportunity to write your own job description, if you so wish.

\*yes, this is a real word.

# Quick-Start Guide

Can't wait until the first micro-guide hits your inbox in August?  
Here's a few things you can do to get started right away.



## Refresh Your Mindset

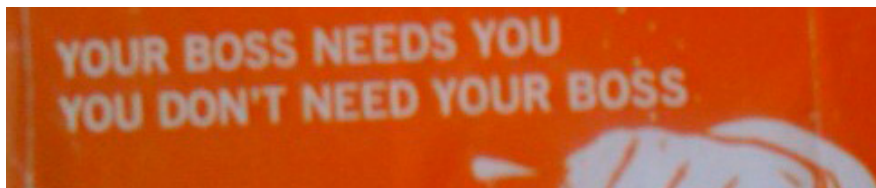
It's time to be your own private detective. Patiently observe your own behaviour and habits. Make a note of what these are in a daily diary. Report back to yourself. Charge yourself \$100 per hour (that last step is optional).

Don't try and change anything yet – once you've got a month or even a week of observations you'll have a much more realistic idea of what you actually spend your time doing (our capacity for self-delusion is huge).

## Design Your Own Curriculum

Is there something you'd really like to be able to do, such as play the guitar, use Photoshop better, or breakdance? What's stopping you?

Start looking into how you could learn that skill (or at least make a start) without paying for an expensive course. For example, has someone posted a how-to video on YouTube? Is there a class on it available for free in iTunes U? Do you know someone who will teach it you in exchange for cakes, pizza and beer? Worth a try, right?



## Pimp Your Online Presence

Okay, so you're back to being a private detective and investigating yourself again. Feels a bit creepy, right?

Go to Google and type in your name. What comes up on the first page? Is there anything you don't want to be there, for example your dormant MySpace account from 8 years ago showing you prancing around in your y-fronts? You might want to delete that account now. MySpace is so 2004 (although it may still be slightly beneficial for musicians to keep their account).

If you have a common name, then most of the search results will be irrelevant. In this case you may want to think up a name for your website that will stand out more.

Either way I'd advise trying to get the domain name for your own name or the name of your new project.

Go to [www.namecheap.com](http://www.namecheap.com) and search. Ideally you want the '.com' version. Pay approximately \$10 and now you've got an official domain name ready for your own website or blog, even if you won't be using it for a while, it's a small annual investment to make sure someone else doesn't get your name!

If you don't have an online presence at all yet, you can set up a simple home page at [about.me](http://about.me) or a basic, free blog at [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com) or [tumblr.com](http://tumblr.com). (There will be more info on this in the micro-guide.)



# The Clear-Minded Creative Career Masterplan for Mad Geniuses

## Produce the Goods

If you're not managing to be creative on a regular basis and need some inspiration, it might help to read my reviews of Clear-Minded Classics [The War of Art](#) and [The Artist's Way](#).

You could also sign up for [750words.com](#) and start keeping a daily journal. Even if you're not a writer this will help you create the habit of daily creativity.

If you're really struggling with this, could you begin by doing even ten minutes a day of something creative?

## Share Your Wares

Dig up something creative you did ages ago, and share it with friends on Facebook or Twitter.

it doesn't really matter if it's not finished at this stage – it might even spur you on to finish it.

You could also post something on the [Clear-Minded Creative Facebook page](#). It can be a song, a video, a great blog post, a poem, a photograph – anything you want (hint: you'll have to 'Like' the page first, and please only post one item per person).

Too shy or despise Facebook with every cell of your being? Email me something creative you've done. I promise I won't laugh (unless it's meant to be funny).

## Write Your Own Job Description

It's time to dream. It's time to think big. It's time to think long-term. What could you be doing in ten year's time?

What would your ideal day, or week, look like? Where would you be, who would you be with, what would your schedule look like?

Imagine your ideal lifestyle and way of making a living. Allow yourself to believe, for just a moment, that it might actually be possible.

Now work backwards. How can you make it a reality in the next ten years if you did something small each day in the right direction?



# Conclusion...

Wahey! Despite me referring to you as “a bit mad” throughout this micro-manifesto (sorry about that), you’ve read the whole bloody thing. I’m proud. I’m delighted. I want to buy you a beer (or your beverage of choice).

If I ever meet you, I probably will. Or you could buy me one. Whatever.

I’m planning on releasing the 6 micro-guides on a monthly basis from August – December 2012. However I reserve the right to delay publication should an unexpected emergency occur or the second series of Game of Thrones arrive in the post.

I also reserve the right to change the name of one or more of the guides, and generally screw around and screw things up, because yes, I’m a human, and yes, I’m possibly quite mad.

But I do promise I’ll do my very best.

If you would like to receive regular updates please [subscribe to the Clear-Minded Creative newsletter](#).

And if you enjoyed this micro-manifesto I’d be really grateful if you would [share it!](#)

# About Clear-Minded Creative

Hi, I'm Milo. I'm 34 years old and live in Edinburgh, Scotland.

I founded the Clear-Minded Creative blog in 2011 in order to help creative people fulfil their true potential and improve their lives and careers.

In February 2012 I took voluntary redundancy after ten years as a civil servant and am currently working as a freelance copywriter. I'm documenting my journey through a regular video series called 'The Ditch the Day Job Diaries'.

If you're a fellow mad genius in the making, I'd love to hear from you. You can get in touch by emailing me at [milo@clearmindedcreative.com](mailto:milo@clearmindedcreative.com) or via Twitter - I'm @milomclaughlin

And please do visit the blog at:  
[www.clearmindedcreative.com](http://www.clearmindedcreative.com)



"Milo McLaughlin's fascinating blog does exactly what it says on the tin - help creative people stay focused."

The List Magazine:  
Scotland's Best Websites





Please note: this micro-manifesto is not to be taken too seriously.

If you are genuinely mad - seek proper help!  
If you are genuinely a genius, congratulations!

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