

Rethink's Chris Staples counsels two Humber College advertising students on their future careers in our new *Conversation* series

# KEEP GOING

"In its most effective form, mentorship is an exercise in personal growth. The context may be the workplace, and the path may be a career trajectory, but ultimately, it's about life."

Will Novosedlik  
Writer and branding expert  
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Videography by Don Dixon  
Photography by Nadia Papineau

IN "A LITTLE MORE CONVERSATION," his September 2014 opus for *Applied Arts*, writer Will Novosedlik identified a dire need for more mentorship opportunities. And it got us thinking. What can we at the magazine do to help facilitate these important dialogues between emerging professionals and industry titans? And how can we share those interactions with as many people as possible?

So we're pleased to present the first installment of our yearlong Conversation series, which pairs a senior-level creative pro in the advertising, design, image or production industries with one or more students in a related

field for a 30-minute mentorship session. In each of our 2016 issues, we'll be featuring excerpts from those conversations.

Chris Staples, creative director and co-founder of Rethink, recently sat with fourth-year Humber College creative advertising students Anita Singh (art direction) and Ian Bone (copywriting) to offer his unvarnished opinion on their most burning industry questions.

On the next page, find an edited excerpt featuring some of Chris's most valuable tips. And you can hear more from his conversation with Anita and Ian in a video on our website at [appliedartsmag.com/features](http://appliedartsmag.com/features).



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**Ask the Expert**  
From left to right: Anita Singh, Rethink's Chris Staples, and Ian Bone.



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e have a phrase at Rethink—the 1 or 100 rule. Your best idea will be your first idea or your 100th, but you won't know until you do 100. What you have to do is not stop at 10.

#### On Climbing the Ladder

You have about 10,000 bad ads in you right now. And you've gotta get them out as quickly as possible so you can get to the good stuff. So don't think you're going to graduate and then, bam—I'll be on a TV set next year. It's okay to be bad for a few years. It's okay to make mistakes. And you should be at a place where there's not too much pressure on you so you can make those mistakes. So if you get an offer at a bad agency right out of school, take it! Take it! If they're doing bad ads, that's perfect because that's all you know how to do, too. So you can do bad ads together and then you'll smarten up.

It's really helpful, sometimes, to know what a bad agency is like, because then when you go to a good agency, you treasure it. If you start out at a great agency, and the pressure is too much, and you're doing bad ads because you don't know any better, and you flame out because you have a nervous breakdown that you've inflicted on yourself—there's nowhere to go but down. I always think it's better to start at the bottom.

#### On Finding Mentors

I think a lot of people sit and wait to be mentored. What I've found in my life is that the onus is on the mentee to cultivate that relationship. And if you are actually interested in older people and make the time to hang out at their desk, ask them questions and really listen to the answers, then act on it and come back and say, 'I tried that thing you told me to do and it worked really well'—that's how the relationship will evolve over time. And you'll find this guy is now a mentor.

#### On Partnerships

About partners—don't get married too early. Did your mother ever tell you that?

This whole thing with people going right from school into agencies and then following each other around like they literally are married is stupid. That whole model of the two-person writer-art director thing is collapsing around us. It takes a village now to create stuff. You need social media people, you need digital people, you need writers and art directors and programmers. So don't hitch your wagon to anybody except yourself.

#### On Creating Impact

More and more, people aren't talking about ads because they aren't seeing them. At the end of the weekend, you go, wow, I watched Apple TV and Netflix all weekend and I didn't watch a single ad on television. That's where the game has changed... and I love that. I love it, I love it, I love it. Because it forces clients to realize that nobody gives a shit about them, and the only way to get talked about is to do something that people actually like—and that has an emotional hook.

#### On Ideas

We have a phrase at Rethink—the 1 or 100 rule. Your best idea will be your first idea or your 100th, but you won't know until you do 100. What you have to do is not stop at 10. The phrase "Keep Going" is on t-shirts at Rethink. It's our mantra. Just get up and keep going. Keep going until you've got something awesome, that makes you happy and other people happy.



Watch the full video of the mentorship session with Chris Staples, Anita Singh and Ian Bone at [appliedartsmag.com/features](http://appliedartsmag.com/features).