

The Lion`s Heart with Gary Vaynerchuk

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A Story of Mastery

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Thesis Statement

- a. Following the initial framework of Creative Task, Creative Strategies, and Creative Breakthrough, this article will cross-compare Yoky Matsuoka, a Pioneer in Neuro-Robotics, with the key player in this article, a ferocious fighter of grit, Gary Vaynerchuk (a.k.a. Gary Vee,) who pushed himself on every level, from the biggest emotional pitfall of ambition vs. patience, to breakthrough aspirational self to inspirational being, evolving traditional to innovative, to reach his point of mastery. This essay will explore Vaynerchuk's roots, education, immigration, transformations, characteristics, emotional pitfall of ambition vs. patience, and finally, mastery. It will also include references to the lion in reflections of Vaynerchuk to deeply emulate the person he is today and explore his companies, VaynerX and VaynerMedia, and how they came to be.

The Gary Vaynerchuk Story

- b. **Gary Vaynerchuk's Paths to Mastery**
 - i. **How Gary Vee Explored Creative Tasks, Creative Strategies, and Creative Breakthroughs**

i. **The Creative Task:** Vaynerchuk's father, Sasha, and mother, Tamara, lived in the Soviet Union since the late 1950s, where cultural and political issues were at the forefront. Much of their family was killed; his mother, Tamara, lost her mom at 5 years of age and then had to endure many struggles alongside Vaynerchuk's grandfather. Vaynerchuck was born on November 14, 1975, in Babruysk, Belarus. His family immigrated to the U.S. when Vaynerchuk was 3 years of age. His parents barely spoke English, but with hope and resilience, the family came to the U.S. (Vaynerchuk, 2016) They found a small studio apartment, then Vaynerchuk lived there with a large family of 8. (Sayed, 2021) The story then sheds light on chiaroscuro, the transition from darkness to light as things go from emotional to hopeful, with the marketing obsession that soon occurs. Vaynerchuk always had an entrepreneurial spirit, prowling at every opportunity he could to earn money. At age 7, Vaynerchuk sold lemonade at lemonade stands. Then, at age 14, he sold baseball cards in school. (Sayed, 2021) He would typically pull in around a thousand dollars on the weekend. (Dreier, 2009) By 14, Vaynerchuk assisted with his dad's liquor store, Shopper's Discount Liquors. (Ajiboye, 2025b) He was a fighter for sales, like a lion in the jungle after his prey. After college in 1998, Vaynerchuk took over his dad's wine business and began experimenting. He found a way to use the internet to rebrand the store to online sales, renaming the company to the Wine Library- growing sales from \$4 million annually to \$45 million in just five years. (Adams, 2017) This was the turning point for Vaynerchuk, as he found his creative task (Greene, p. 179), the obsessive element for marketing, that connected deep within him. In a journey of patience vs. ambition, after much time, Vaynerchuk would soon become the CEO of VaynerMedia and VaynerX. The creative task, as referred to by Greene (p.179) in the book *Mastery*, is something your heart commits to, cannot steer away from, and you find yourself

coming back to again and again. This thing whatever it may be, is a lifelong obsession that formulates your life task on your road to mastery.

ii. **Creative Strategies:** Gary Vaynerchuk always believed that working your ass off would lead to success. (Adams, 2017) That may be what led him to become a five-time *New York Times* bestselling author. (PRAVEEN BV, 2023) Vaynerchuk could've been stuck in a state of contentment with his father's wine business but instead came into it ready to roar and fight against the traditional in-store model at the time, best demonstrated by the Alternate The Mind Through "The Current" strategy Greene, (p.187) brings up in the Creative Strategies. Vaynerchuk was big on Greene's Creative Strategy of Alter Your Perspective. (Greene, p.191) Vaynerchuk would look at the wine business by what parts were working, looking at the interconnections, instead of just how it is not working. He would look at what makes everything connect as a whole. Digging into marketing, Vaynerchuk did not just sell wine; he sold himself as the wine guru. As wine has lots of regulations to how you the wine, Vaynerchuk's marketing self-idea to talk about the wine was original, leveraging weekly email blasts, which was very unfamiliar for the time he, grew the business from \$4 million to \$45 million. (Adams, 2017) In relation to Greene's "Revert to Your Primal Forms of Intelligence," strategy (Greene, p.196) Vaynerchuk looked into the senses of how wine can connect to us in our deepest roots, such as our senses, and a year after YouTube launched, he jumped on majestically like a lion on the top of a hill, creating the daily show *Wine Library TV* (Adams, 2017.) This shows how Vaynerchuk wasn't afraid to be innovative, break away from traditional barriers, reshape the mold, and act quickly on the digital marketing we know today.

iii. **Creative Breakthrough:** Vaynerchuk seems to have always had a love for entrepreneurship, eventually landing him even on Late Night with Conan O'Brien. He did

struggle with education, feeling like a failure at 18 because he failed school. He makes it very clear he was a 'D' and 'F' student. (Vaynerchuk, 2016) He tested his life in various jobs by being a plumber, electrician, and general contractor. It wasn't always an easy road, which has led to the raw and direct advice he gives today. He realized that while doing jobs, he wasn't passionate about that, he wanted more. This hunger, this drive, this lion waiting to roar, was finding himself, but marketing his father's wine business was the big creative breakthrough. The internet was his big creative break. He would find the value he needed to prove was: buy this wine, you need this wine, this is for you. Value was everything, and realizing he needed to make customers want that value was key. After he went on and on, pushing for people on his social channels to try to subscribe, he gained that success. It wasn't without the fight, however. After pushing and getting to that success point, Vaynerchuk wasn't done. He handed his father's wine business back to him and realized this marketing he had done for the Wine Library he could begin to do for other companies. (Adams, 2017) In 2009, Vaynerchuk launched VaynerMedia with his brother AJ. They were able to secure clients like the National Hockey League and the New York Jets, quickly leading them to open three offices. (Sayed, 2021) As they started getting bigger and bigger, companies like these came to them for marketing, and this eventually led to Vaynerchuk's other company in 2017, *VaynerX*. Now, Vaynerchuk has a net worth of about \$200 million. (Sayed, 2021)

ii. Gary Vaynerchuk's Emotional Pitfall: The biggest emotional pitfall for Vaynerchuk has always been ambition vs. patience. He has made this very clear through several videos. He was very down for a long time as he realized he was working in his dad's liquor store much longer than he originally wanted, feeling complacent (p. 202) as one of Greene's Emotional Pitfalls, just being there—but that feeling of complacency didn't last long as he wanted more. Vaynerchuk,

being a 'D' and 'F' student (Vaynerchuk, 2016) really had big dreams and felt impatience, another of Greene's describes Pitfalls (p.203) with a very strong ambition. This was Vaynerchuk's biggest struggle as well as what Greene describes as THE biggest Pitfall of them all. Now, he feeds this idea of being patient and the dream will come as long as you fight for it into much of the advice he gives to this day. His biggest emotional pitfall was this: being 34 years old and still working in his dad's liquor store. He knew he wouldn't be there forever and had the drive to escape this world by being aspirational and fighting for these aspirations; then, later, this led him to become the inspirational person he is today. Today, you may notice much of Vaynerchuk's advice stems from his roots. He wants people to feel, regardless of whether they are in their 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, and so on, that today can be your day. (Vaynerchuk, 2016) This can also be reflected in Greene's book *Mastery* (p.179), how he refers to the Creative Task similar to Life Calling. This is just something that lives in you forever, regardless of your emotional pitfall.

i. **The impact of Vaynerchuk's Emotion Pitfall:** Vaynerchuk didn't let his pitfalls of staying at his dad's liquor store get in the way of where he wanted to be. While at age 30, he freaked out about still being in the liquor store, he continued to push. By transforming his mindset to a humble, straightforward, goal-driven, SMART goal-achieving attitude, he took the pitfall and made it into something transformative. Like how Pausch would look at a brick wall (Pausch, 2007) as existing for a reason to show us what we want to fight for, Vaynerchuk saw the liquor store as the wall that proved his calling; digital marketing was worth fighting for. He pushed through experimenting in 03', 04' and 05,' when he realized the internet was becoming hot for chatting online, with marketing until he opened his own media company. The impact of fighting through the pitfall is the \$200 million net worth he is today along with the advice he

continues to give throughout his career. He also took his past, like the selling of baseball cards, as a moment to realize people connected to emotion when selling, using that as part of his marketing strategies to this day. (Dreier, 2009)

iii. Cross Comparison of Vaynerchuk and Yoky Matsuoka: Matsuoka was a real pioneer in neuro-biotics, loving to tinker, she had a real calling to the engineering of robotic hands. (Greene, p. 228) She took a high-end approach while everyone, mostly men, focused on engineering aspects, she focused on something different—the study of the anatomy of the hand. Like Vaynerchuk, they both found a way to depart from the traditional ways of doing things and found a way to be innovative. While everyone would engineer the robotic hand to have all the wires in the palm, she would realize the essential gripping element of the palm, which proved the need to flux to grip better. This forever changed the way that the hand was looked at. Vaynerchuk similarly took a departing from the crowd approach, analyzing different mediums of doing marketing, such as YouTube, using an emotional appeal element, and capitalizing on online digital marketing as forms fighting against the grain. Similarly, both of them also took it upon themselves to make these items (marketing or engineering) their life task. They dedicated their lives to mastering their subject areas and were not afraid to learn new things. Vaynerchuk, like Matsuoka, would allow for serendipity (Greene, 184) by studying the subjects that encountered questions that would add to their area of mastery.

c. Conclusion of Mastery, The Gary Vaynerchuk Essay Ends, But Legacy Continues:

Vaynerchuk went through it. He had a hard life. The biggest lesson is he never let that stop him. He was willing to fight with extreme grit. He was a digital powerhouse. Using his biggest positive traits of grit, ambition, and entrepreneurial attitude, he reached a net worth of \$200 million. In a journey of Creative Tasks, Creative Strategies, and Creative Breakthroughs, he took

his Emotional Pitfall and overcame them. He later used this struggle as the very thing that defined the advice he gives to this day. Like Matsuoka, he was not afraid to fight against the grain. He very much made clear it is never too late to begin your journey, which is what makes him so inspirational.

i. **Vaynerchuck's Journey Led Him to Mastery:** If it hadn't been for the big moves his parents made by moving to the U.S., he might not have been the same person. He always made it very clear that the people that inspired him were his parents, coming to the U.S. when they could barely speak any English. The hardworking spirit of his dad rubbed off on Vaynerchuk, and he used his grit every day to become the person he is. Vaynerchuk went through it by immigrating to the U.S. in a tiny apartment with eight siblings, working hard in his dad's liquor store until age 34, doing jobs he wasn't passionate about, and trying to fight the battle of patience vs. ambition. In the end, we can see that perseverance and grit will pay off if you fight through with the courage of a lion. The story of Vaynerchuk isn't an unachievable fantasy; it is not a *Disney Lion King* Hakunamata, it is a true testament to how tackling digital marketing with a go-getter, knowledgeable approach can lead to success, even if you're not at the top of the class.

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