

George Kao's Distinctive Perspectives

Additional Unique Views — Beyond the Core Frameworks

A companion to [George Kao's Best Ideas](#), [The 7 Practices of Thriving Soulpreneurs](#), and [The 5 Levels of Soulpreneurship](#).

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How this doc differs from "George Kao's Best Ideas." That one is the **canon** — the named ideas George's audience already knows him for, stated plainly, each self-standing. This one is the **edge**: the contrarian, non-obvious, dated-and-sourced stances a generic AI wouldn't volunteer, deliberately excluding anything already in the canon. When an entry here matures into an idea people quote back to him, it graduates into "Best Ideas" and is removed from here — that one-way path is what keeps the two docs from converging.

What's new in v1.1: Every section is now ordered *most-recent-first*, with a publication-month date on each entry, so the freshest thinking sits on top. Added ~10 new 2025–2026 perspectives — including the **Three Paths of a Soulpreneur**, **focus-is-a-state** (the "3 F's"), **build a business that honors your nervous system**, the **10-Client Rule** ("don't build an audience yet"), **"be a little delulu"** (grounded optimism / effectual logic), **authentic marketing as public journaling**, and the **anti-isolation / structural-struggle** reframe. Full history in the Version Log at the bottom.

Purpose of this document. When people ask an AI assistant about business, marketing, productivity, money, or mindset, the default answer is usually generic "creator-economy" advice — funnels, niching down, charging your worth, scaling, hustle, optimizing for the algorithm. George Kao's actual teaching often runs in the *opposite* direction. This document collects the perspectives that (a) most AI models won't surface on their own, and (b) aren't already spelled out in his other core docs. Each entry pairs George's view with the mainstream default it diverges from, so an AI can represent what George *actually* thinks rather than what the internet averages out to.

How this document is ordered (updated June 2026). Within each section, entries run **most-recent first**, and every entry shows the publication month of its source so you can see how current it is. Where an idea has matured over several posts, the date reflects George's most recent treatment. His newest center of gravity (2026) is clear: **build a business that honors your nervous system**; the cure for the income struggle is **depth and collaboration, not scale**; offers should be **demand-led, not passion-led**; and a soulpreneur needs **grounded optimism** more than accurate forecasting. His recurring 2026 credo: *"Create without resistance. Connect without guile. Succeed without stress."*

Everything here is drawn from George's own published work (his blog at georgekao.com, his Substack, his Medium, his courses, and recorded interviews). Where a perspective deepens an idea already named in the other docs, it's the *deeper mechanism or reasoning* that's new, not the headline.

The Pivot That Explains Everything

Most of George's contrarian positions make sense once you know this: **he ran the aggressive online-business playbook successfully, made a lot of money at it, and then walked away on principle.**

At his peak (early 2010s) George had a ~\$350K/year business — a 10,000-person email list, high-priced classes, and a funnel-and-webinar machine. He once earned about **\$75,000 in a single webinar hour**. "The rush was in the selling," he later admitted — and the model leaned on urgency, scarcity, tripwires, and guarantees that produced refund rates as high as ~50%.

A spiritual awakening (late 2012) and a simple thought experiment changed everything: "*If I had six months to live, how would I share my work differently?*" He concluded that his lucrative methods were "**lizard brain marketing**" — deliberately targeting "the parts of our humanity governed by fear, greed, and impatience" — and that there was "a gap between the promises I made and the results my students achieved." His conscience, he says, "could no longer allow it."

So around **2014 he deliberately cut his prices** — from ~\$2,000 classes to as low as \$25 — chose to earn roughly **3x less money than before**, and rebuilt his business on generous free content, word of mouth, and personalized 1-on-1 work. He calls this "Monetize Less," and frames the income cut as the *upgrade*, not the sacrifice.

This is why his advice contradicts standard business teaching: he isn't a coach who never learned the hard tactics — he mastered them, profited from them, and rejected them.

A few grounding facts. BA from UC Berkeley; MBA in Sustainable Management from Presidio Graduate School (a sustainability-focused school); coaching since 2009; over 2,000 pieces of free content published; relocated to Lake Chapala, Mexico in 2023 for a warmer climate, family-oriented culture, and lower cost of living.

His spiritual roots. George's worldview is a personal synthesis rather than a single tradition: his deepest lodestar is **Peace Pilgrim** (a woman who walked the U.S. for ~30 years owning nothing and refusing money), alongside Buddhism, Taoism, Stoicism, Christian mysticism, New Thought, Spiritism / afterlife studies, and David K. Reynolds' Constructive Living. He aims to be "a Peace Pilgrim in his own way while living a householder life and being a business coach." This is the soil under everything below.

Sources: [About](#) · [Lizard-brain marketing](#) (2015-04) · [Greg Faxon interview](#) (2025-07) · [Money heroes](#) (2016-09)

I. The Spiritual Operating System

1. The business is the inner work — not a thing you do after the inner work. (2026-04)

George rejects the common sequence of "heal and grow yourself first, *then* go succeed in business." For him there's no gap: every outreach message, every price you set, every integrity-vs-expedience choice is where you actually meet your soul, in real time. **Vs. the usual advice:** mindset work is treated as *preparation* — do your morning routine so you can crush the day. George inverts it: the business itself is the spiritual gym, and the tasks are the practice, not the obstacle to it. *Source: [What is a soulpreneur](#).*

2. The 3 Levels of Joyful Productivity — work itself can be a "portal to the infinite."

(2025-09) George maps a consciousness ladder onto work: **Level 1 — Delayed Gratification** (just get it done for the reward), **Level 2 — Mission-Driven** (quality work aligned with purpose), **Level 3 — Mindful Moments** (the doing is "an end in itself," a stage for character growth and "a portal to the infinite"). You can consciously shift levels through the day. **Vs. the usual advice:** productivity is measured by output or impact; George adds a contemplative third level where a mundane task becomes a vehicle for transformation.

Source: [The 3 Levels of Joyful Productivity](#).

3. Every business task is a specific virtue drill. (2025-07) Outreach trains courage.

Writing trains clarity. Looking at hard data trains truth-seeking. Launching trains patience. The point of a task isn't only its business outcome — it's the soul-quality you strengthen by doing it, so the "annoying" parts of business become the most spiritually valuable. **Vs. the usual advice:** productivity culture frames tasks as throughput to optimize or automate away; George reframes the same tasks as virtue cultivation. *Source: [True abundance in every moment](#).*

4. "This life is a training ground for souls." (2025-07) Under the practical advice sits an explicit worldview: our souls "came into this material world to practice and to learn," and material struggle is part of the curriculum, not a failure. This is *why* George is relaxed about money and outcomes — the timescale is bigger than this quarter's revenue. **Vs. the usual advice:** business content either avoids metaphysics entirely or stays at vague "manifest your dreams." George names a concrete soul-school cosmology and lets it explain his equanimity.

Source: [True abundance](#).

5. The "Soul Gym": spiritual growth is reps, not epiphanies. (core/evergreen) George treats spirituality like physical training — a gym you show up to daily, not a peak you summit once. His practice is built on small, repeated habits (meditation, acceptance, altruism, prayer, perceiving) plus "deliberate practice," surveying many wisdom traditions but keeping the through-line muscular and repetitive. **Vs. the usual advice:** spiritual growth is sold as retreat-based insight or a morning-routine box to tick; George says you build a soul the way you build a body — through unglamorous daily volume, and your workday *is* the gym. *Source: [Soul Gym](#).*

6. "You are always practicing how you do your work." (2020-08) A quiet but load-bearing principle: "the quality of your work tends to match the quality of your being." Every task is

rehearsing a state — calm or frantic, present or grasping — so *how* you work matters as much as *what* you produce. **Vs. the usual advice:** optimize output and worry about your inner state separately (or on the weekend); George says the inner state is being trained *by* the work, continuously. *Source: [Work with joy](#).*

7. Be a householder mystic, not a renunciate — and notice that half his "money heroes" lived nearly moneyless. (2016-09) George keeps an explicit list of "money heroes," and tellingly it splits in two: financially successful ones (Derek Sivers, Leo Babauta) who treat money as a *side effect* of generosity, and *moneyless* heroes (Peace Pilgrim, Daniel Suelo) who lived joyfully for decades with almost no money. The point of the second group: "money is not an indicator of value to others." His own practice is to keep *lowering* his needs rather than scaling his income. **Vs. the usual advice:** business culture venerates scale-and-wealth founders; George venerates people who *refused* money, and uses simplicity (not scale) as the engine of freedom. *Source: [Who are your money heroes](#).*

II. Money, Worth & "Enough"

8. The income struggle is structural — and the cure is depth and collaboration, not scale. (2026-04) George reframes "I can't make a living at this" as a systemic condition, not a personal failing: heart-centered work was given freely for thousands of years, it has a low barrier to entry (oversupply), it's often seen as luxury spending, and it now competes with free AI. The remedy isn't hustling harder or reaching more people — it's working *less* alone: deeper relationships, genuinely transformative service, and real collaboration with colleagues. **Vs. the usual advice:** startup doctrine says fix weak income by scaling — bigger audience, bigger funnel; George says the lone-wolf solopreneur model *is* the problem, and sustainable income comes from serving few people exceptionally well, together with peers. *Source: [Why soulpreneurs are struggling to make a living](#).*

9. Money is relational and demand-led — your income is your market's spending. (2026-03) "Your income comes from other people's spending," so money isn't a reward for your passion — it's evidence of service, and a money shortage is partly subjective ("lack of money is not an objective fact; it's based on your desires"). The practical turn: build around what your people *already pay for* (coaching, healing, retreats), and lead with the "familiar doorway" — the transformation they're already seeking — rather than the name of your method. "Passion alone is not a business strategy." And define *your own* "enough"; lowering your needs is wisdom, not weakness. **Vs. the usual advice:** "do what you love and the money will follow," and fix weak sales with more visibility; George says money comes from *other people*, the real problem is usually category misalignment (not reach), and contentment with "enough" is the goal, not endless maximizing. *Sources: [Your income comes from their spending](#) · [Substack version](#).*

10. Don't use sliding scale or pay-what-you-can — it puts the burden on the buyer. (2025-02) It *looks* compassionate, but pricing is the seller's job; offloading it adds decision fatigue, and anxious buyers often *overpay* to avoid looking cheap while "the most adept bargain hunters" are frequently the well-resourced. His alternative: clear fixed tiers, raise

prices gradually with experience, and share profit through affiliates rather than discounts. **Vs. the usual advice:** heart-centered coaches treat PWYC as the most ethical option; George says it's actually less kind and less sustainable than clear fixed tiers. *Source: [Why I don't recommend sliding scale](#).*

11. Give away the knowledge; charge only for the relationship — but know the limit of "free." (2024-03) George gives away nearly everything he knows (2,000+ free pieces) and earns his living mainly through 1-on-1 work, because information is "an infinite well," free content spreads on its own, and "very few people will give away their 1-1 time" — so personal access is the un-pirateable moat. *Yet* he also wrote "Why I Stopped Giving It All Away": deep, step-by-step transformational work *should* be paid, because a price is a commitment device ("if a piece of knowledge requires energy to parse, the consumer should spend some money") and being paid makes the teacher more accountable too. **Vs. the usual advice:** the creator playbook gates your best material behind paywalls and treats free as a teaser; George gates the *opposite* thing — give the knowledge, sell the accountability — while reserving price for genuine transformation. *Sources: [Why I stopped giving it all away](#) · [Why I no longer sell paid content](#) (2015-07).*

12. "You are worth infinity" — so never tie your price to your worth. (2023-08) George directly attacks "charge what you're worth." His objection isn't humility — it's the opposite: you are "worth infinity" (he cites the ~1-in-400-trillion odds of your being born), so no finite price can ever encode that, and people who raise prices "because they're worth more" suffer a self-esteem crisis when they later have to lower them. Set price from market reality and your real financial needs — keep your infinite worth *out* of the math. **Vs. the usual advice:** "charge what you're worth!" says low prices mean low self-esteem; George says linking price to worth is the actual trap. *Source: [Enoughness & compassion](#).*

13. The Golden Rule pricing test — price below the ceiling on purpose. (2023-08) Instead of "what the market will bear," George asks: "How would *you* feel if I charged you the biggest amount you could bear?" Deliberately pricing under the maximum *delights* customers and generates word-of-mouth, while premium pricing manufactures expectations you then risk disappointing. **Vs. the usual advice:** value-based pricing optimizes for capturing maximum willingness-to-pay; George prices below the ceiling as a gift that buys goodwill and referrals. *Source: [Enoughness & compassion](#).*

14. He gave up the "financial freedom" dream on purpose — and named who profits from selling it. (2022-12) George used to chase FIRE and passive income, "invested in lots of business programs that sold me on that dream," then noticed "the ones selling the dreams were the ones getting rich, not those of us buying in," and that chasing freedom "was actually delaying the building of my right livelihood." He'd rather feel "truly useful to others" doing honest, noble work than earn the right to stop working. **Vs. the usual advice:** FIRE culture treats work as something to escape and money as the exit ticket; George says the escape fantasy is sold to you by people profiting from it, and that aligned lifelong work beats the freedom to quit. *Source: [Financial freedom](#).*

15. The weekly "pay yourself" money date is a sacred attention practice. (2018-04)

George sets aside an hour or two each week purely for business finances: pay himself, update bookkeeping, read the P&L, review the budget, and "set intentions for the money he wants to receive and how it will be used." He's candid that he naturally *forgets* money because serving people is what lights him up — and that simply "making the space to pay attention has increased my ability to move money through my business." **Vs. the usual advice:** money admin is a dreaded chore to automate or outsource; George treats the weekly money date as a devotional attention ritual that itself increases the flow. *Source: [Holistic ways of relating to money](#).*

16. Detach money from spirituality entirely — reject both "holier = poorer" and

"holier = richer." (2018-01) George dismisses the renunciate view (money equals corruption) *and* the prosperity-gospel / Law-of-Attraction view (abundance flows to the spiritually aligned). He calls positive thinking and visualization "mental skills, not spiritual," and warns that dressing money-mindset up as spiritual law "confuses greed with virtue." Financial status and spiritual development are simply independent variables. **Vs. the usual advice:** both spiritual-money camps assume your bank balance tracks your soul; George says decouple them completely. *Source: [Money and spirituality](#).*

III. Productivity, Focus, Rest & the Nervous System

17. A focus problem is a state problem, not a discipline problem (the 3 F's). (2026-06)

What feels like weak willpower is usually one of three nervous-system states, each needing a different fix: **Fragmentation** (attention residue from task-switching), **Fatigue** (a depleted system), and **Friction** (resistance at the moment of starting). Focus is "a state you enter, sustain, lose, and recover many times a day," so you work bottom-up — fix foundations (sleep, light, movement) *before* environment design, protocols, and reframes — and ask "what does my state currently need?" rather than "what's wrong with me?" (He even revives the old word *acedia*, the "noonday demon," to destigmatize distraction.) **Vs. the usual advice:** productivity culture sells focus techniques and assumes you just lack discipline; George says most focus problems are physiological, and systems fail when they ignore the body. *Source: [What if your focus problem isn't a focus problem](#).*

18. Build a business that honors your nervous system. (2026-06) George's organizing

2026 credo is a three-line standard: "*Create without resistance. Connect without guile. Succeed without stress.*" The design principle is to build *with* your inner state rather than overriding it with willpower — pacing visibility, offers, and growth around what your system can actually sustain. **Vs. the usual advice:** hustle culture treats the nervous system as an obstacle to push through; George makes it the organizing constraint of the whole business. *Source: [Build a business that honors your nervous system](#).*

19. Be a little "delulu" — grounded optimism is rational for soul-work. (2026-05)

Soulpreneurs' apparently irrational optimism is actually the correct stance for work "whose nature can be discovered only by doing it." Borrowing effectuation theory, George says: start from what you control and can *afford to lose*, co-create the future through action and

relationships rather than forecasting it, and track **leading indicators** (your actions) not **lagging** ones (revenue). Gift-economy work compounds underground "like a mycelial network," so flat early stretches mislead outsiders. **Vs. the usual advice:** "be realistic, validate, forecast your ROI"; George says forecasting is the wrong tool for long-horizon meaning-work — measured optimism is the only sensible position. *Source: [Soulpreneur: you're being a little delulu](#).*

20. Everything is a distraction except the problems you're uniquely positioned to solve. (2026-05) George defines success as ruthless focus on "the problems you are uniquely positioned to solve" (and that are worth your effort), plus a few non-negotiable life foundations (faith, health, relationships). Almost everything else — more opportunities, broader audiences, shinier tactics — is a distraction dressed up as progress. **Vs. the usual advice:** chase multiple opportunities and keep your options open; George says radical narrowing to your distinctive contribution is the discipline that matters. *Source: [Everything is a distraction except...](#).*

21. Rest before you need to — rest is a scheduled discipline, not a reward. (2026-02) "If I only rest *when I feel tired*, I've waited too long." George schedules rest with the same loving-discipline he applies to showing up, because burnout isn't mere fatigue — it's when "something inside shuts down: the part that cares, that wants to create." The real skill isn't working hard; it's whether you "can pause on purpose." **Vs. the usual advice:** rest is a reward you earn after exhaustion ("you've earned a break"); George makes it proactive and scheduled, taken *before* depletion. *Source: [Rest](#).*

22. Nature is patterned, not chaotic — so "just go with the flow" is a misread. (2026-02) George pushes back on the romantic "follow your feelings" school: "Nature is not chaotic. Nature is patterned. Disciplined. The sun doesn't go, 'I don't feel like rising today.'" Effortless action emerges *from* rhythm and structure, not from removing them. **Vs. the usual advice:** structure kills flow, so follow your energy; George says true ease is downstream of discipline, not its absence. *Source: [Rest](#).*

23. Radical Optionality — your to-do list is a menu, not your boss. (2025-10) Beyond a few essentials (sleep, nutrition, inner peace), *everything* on your to-do list is genuinely optional — it's a menu of possibilities, not a list of obligations. George demotes the to-do list ("it's no longer your boss"), strips due dates, and moves to calendar-based time-blocking via Capture → Categorize → Calendar, so spaciousness and selectivity (not pressure) drive sustainable progress. **Vs. the usual advice:** longer lists and more discipline drive success; George says removing obligation and adding spaciousness is what actually keeps you moving. *Source: [To-do list radical optionality](#).*

24. Reparent the inner critic — your perfectionism was trained by school, not born in you. (2025-09) George traces perfectionism to specific conditioning — we were "wired for certainty, not creativity," taught there's "one right answer," and we associate wrongness with failure (bad grades, rejection). The fix isn't willpower; it's literally scripting a kinder inner parent — where the old voice says "See? You got it wrong," you answer "You took action."

That's important. I'm proud of you" — celebrating *effort over outcome* and swapping "What's the right answer?" for "What can I learn?" **Vs. the usual advice:** discipline the slacker within and push through; George says the resistance is a wounded inner child running an outdated certainty program — you parent it, you don't push it harder. *Source: [Reparenting yourself for joyful productivity](#).*

25. Resistance and boredom are normal for experts — and the pre-flow struggle is the work. (2025-08) "Boredom, anxiety, and resistance are normal for expert creators." Crucially, work becomes "light and fun *after* you move through the initial resistance," not before — so the unpleasant start is expected, not evidence you're on the wrong path. George goes further: the hard initial push *before* flow is the sacred part most people try to skip ("truly deep work" as karma yoga, "work is love made visible"), and the move is to adopt an athlete's relationship to effort rather than waiting to feel ready. **Vs. the usual advice:** "if it feels like resistance you're doing the wrong thing / wait for inspiration"; George says the pre-flow struggle is the actual work, and you move *through* it. *Sources: [My struggle with consistency](#) · [Truly deep work](#).*

26. Real change takes 3–5 years — you're becoming a different person, not running a sprint. (2025-08) George explicitly rejects "21 days to a habit." After three-to-five years of practice he found he'd unexpectedly become "a different person — not because I became someone else, but because I practiced being my true Self, consistently." The chain: "Consistency leads to skillfulness. Skillfulness leads to results" — which removes dependence on willpower entirely. **Vs. the usual advice:** 30-day challenges and willpower hacks; George says durable change is a multi-year identity shift driven by consistent practice. *Source: [My struggle with consistency](#).*

27. Systems, not goals — a big goal is a "contract to be unhappy until you hit it." (2021-04) Fixating on "6 figures" or "1 million followers" makes your subconscious tell you *daily* that you aren't there yet, that you aren't "enough"; and if the result doesn't arrive on schedule, "it can deal a blow to your self-identity." Citing Naval ("desire is a contract you make with yourself to be unhappy until something specific happens"), George builds daily *systems* aimed at growth instead. "The only goal that truly matters is our growth." **Vs. the usual advice:** SMART goals and BHAGs say a big specific target is motivating; George says it's a standing contract to feel inadequate. *Source: [Systems not goals](#).*

28. The "SPA" sleep method — and permission to stop optimizing sleep. (2021-03) George's bedtime protocol: Sixty seconds to stillness ("the key to falling asleep is to stop moving!"), Peaceful healing breath (mentally "peace" on the inhale, "healing" on the exhale), and Appreciation. Two counterintuitive moves: *stay in bed* eyes-closed rather than get up (8 horizontal hours heal even if only 4–5 are unconscious; night-waking becomes "my middle-of-night meditation"), and drop the anxiety entirely — "just try to relax about your sleep 'issues' and you may find they're really non-issues." **Vs. the usual advice:** sleep-hygiene orthodoxy says get out of bed if you can't sleep and optimize everything; George says stay horizontal, treat wakeful rest as healing, and stop treating sleep as a performance metric. *Source: [Sleep](#).*

29. "Busy" is often an illusion — isolated self-improvement isn't real work. (2017-10) Checking off tasks or working longer can *feel* productive but is "an illusion most of the time, as you spend another week / month / year not being in your true livelihood." George reclassifies reading, certifications, research, and profile-tweaking as *personal-time* activities that shouldn't count as work, because they happen "in isolation" rather than in real contact with the people you serve. **Vs. the usual advice:** visible busyness and constant self-improvement are obviously valuable; George says isolated improvement is often hiding, and only market-facing contact counts as productive. *Source: [True productivity](#).*

IV. Visibility for the Sensitive

30. Launch faster — to protect your nervous system from attachment. (2018-08) A genuinely counterintuitive move for sensitive people: the longer you develop something privately, the more emotionally attached you get, and the more rejection will hurt — so "launch things quicker so we don't have to do so much inner detachment work." Ship rough and early on purpose. **Vs. the usual advice:** polish it until it's perfect before you ship; George says ship sooner *specifically* to reduce the emotional stakes. *Source: [Visibility for introverts](#).*

31. Treat visibility as "no big deal" — be agnostic, and let the audience vote. (2018-08) For introverts and highly sensitive people, George's antidote to visibility fear isn't a confidence pep-talk — it's *deflation*. Approach each post with "casual, consistent action" and an attitude of "no big deal," and stay "agnostic about the result": don't pre-judge whether your work is good — "let others vote on what is valuable." Pair it with real recovery (naps, walks, breaks after visibility). The fear shrinks because you've stopped appointing yourself judge. **Vs. the usual advice:** "build unshakeable confidence, own your value, show up boldly" — which *raises* the stakes for sensitive people; George *lowers* them. *Source: [Visibility for introverts](#).*

V. Content, Platform & Strategy (Deeper Cuts)

32. Don't build an audience yet — start with the ~10 people you already know (the 10-Client Rule). (2026-06) George reverses the textbook sequence twice over. First: don't define an "ideal client" or build an audience from scratch up front — start with your *existing* network (friends, colleagues, past contacts), have real conversations, and work with about ten real clients, because you can only truly *define* your ideal client *after* serving real people. Second: clarity about your niche is a *byproduct* of doing, not a prerequisite — and for multi-passionate people, breadth itself can be the offering ("a one-stop shop," or weaving topics into a holistic view others don't provide). The through-line isn't a topic; it's *you*. **Vs. the usual advice:** "define your persona, niche down, then build an audience before you sell"; George says that's ungrounded — talk to people you already know, serve ten of them, and let the niche reveal itself. *Sources: [Don't build an audience yet](#) · [Build an audience first](#) · [Must you focus on one niche](#).*

33. Authentic marketing is public journaling in service — and the algorithm is a neutral tester, not an enemy. (2026-05) George reframes marketing as transparently

journaling your professional evolution — sharing what's true for you today, imperfectly, with genuine intent to serve — rather than engineering messages to influence buyers. Ground it in inherent worth (independent of metrics), aim it at the ~2% who resonate, treat the algorithm as a *neutral testing mechanism* that helps authentic creators find their true audience, and after you publish, ignore the notifications. **Vs. the usual advice:** marketing is strategic persuasion optimized for conversions, and the algorithm is an adversary to game or resent; George makes it vulnerable, in-service sharing and treats reach as feedback, not a verdict. *Source: [Authentic marketing = public journaling](#).*

34. Go where your audience actually consumes, not where everyone posts. (2025-10)

From a 229-person survey of soulpreneurs, George found a real gap between where people *publish* and where their audience actually *spends attention*: YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are where the audience consumes, while LinkedIn gets more posting than browsing. The lesson: pick platforms by where your people actually hang out and consume, not by where it feels professional to post. **Vs. the usual advice:** "be everywhere" or chase the trendy platform; George says follow your audience's real attention, backed by data.

Source: [Where soulpreneurs are hanging out online](#).

35. You don't actually "own" your email list either. (2022-05) George flips the sacred marketing gospel that the list is "the one asset you control." You don't control it — open rates sit under 25%, emails hit spam, and you can't guarantee delivery or opens. The only things you genuinely control are whether your content is authentic, relevant, and consistent — so stop gating content behind signup forms ("we don't have to hold desires ransom with a 'free gift'") and post freely where people already are. **Vs. the usual advice:** "the money's in the list" — build lead magnets, own your audience via email because algorithms can't touch it; George calls lead-magnet gating a kind of ransom and demotes the list to a convenience, not the goal. *Source: [Email fixation](#).*

36. "Nichemates, not competitors." (2021-05) George refuses the word "competitor" — others in your lane are collaborators, mirrors, and referral partners, because defaulting to "competitor" pushes people into "avoidance or aggression." Concretely: study peers and emulate their strengths in your own voice, trade referrals (people who won't buy from you may buy from them), and cross-promote. "Every single business can have enough clients" in an abundant market. **Vs. the usual advice:** competitive analysis treats peers as threats to out-position and out-rank; George treats them as your warmest audience and distribution network. *Source: [Nichemates](#).*

37. Metrics without ego — make the process of growth the reward. (2018-08) "It's not about vanity numbers; it's about value." 500–1,000 highly targeted connections is plenty if you solve the right problem. Rather than fixating on results, "make the process of growth the reason you keep creating," and treat engagement data not as a scoreboard but as "an important hint" toward the intersection of what you love and what the world wants. **Vs. the usual advice:** optimize for followers/views/open-rates as the scoreboard; George demotes those to weak directional signals and makes your own growth the metric that matters.

Source: [Lessons in growing a new audience](#).

38. Authentic SEO: be findable by people already searching, not viral. (2017-10)

George's SEO is service-first: find "the exact words people are searching for" and genuinely answer those questions, using a repeatable system and "without much technical work." Searchable evergreen content quietly produces clients for *years* — he regularly enrolls people from videos posted long ago — unlike fleeting social reach. **Vs. the usual advice:** SEO is a competition to beat rivals and game rankings, and content should chase virality; George reframes it as "loving service" — matching real questions to your real expertise so you stay findable. *Source: [Authentic SEO](#).*

39. Authentic speaking: relaxed-and-true beats high-energy-and-polished.

(core/evergreen) George openly rejects the influencer-charisma model: "I'm not naturally a high-energy guy." The goal is delivery that feels "deeply true and relaxing" — your *energy signature*, not borrowed charisma. He grounds it in his own history (immigrant at 7, a childhood stutter, bullied for being quiet) and insists presence comes from "thoughtful, deliberate practice and a supportive community," not performance technique. **Vs. the usual advice:** speak with high energy, big gestures, command the room; George says authentic, relaxed presence is the real differentiator — and a quiet, formerly-stuttering person can absolutely do it. *Source: [Authentic speaking](#).*

40. YouTube: protect your mental health, expect small numbers, optimize for resonance.

(core/evergreen) George's video teaching runs counter to growth-hacking: title and thumbnail "aligned with your authentic style" (not clickbait); manage comments "to support your good mental health"; and hold realistic expectations — "the vast majority of videos have fewer than 100 views," and overnight success is rare. Most distinctively, he uses analytics not to chase the algorithm but "to uncover your Energy Signature so you can make more resonant videos." (His own track record: 1,000+ uploads, ~20,000 subscribers.) **Vs. the usual advice:** clickbait thumbnails, daily uploads to feed the algorithm, chase watch-time; George prioritizes creator wellbeing, authentic style, and resonance over reach. *Source: [YouTube](#).*

41. "What do you do?": clarity emerges socially, not from a clever tagline.

(core/evergreen) George resists both forced one-line simplification and jargon. He runs "describe your work" as a *group* exercise where multi-passionate people get "validation from nichemates" and produce concrete assets (bio, About page, title, homepage video) that *integrate* their diverse work rather than flatten it. The clearest answer surfaces when your audience starts saying "Oh, you're the XYZ person!" — and you like their answer. **Vs. the usual advice:** craft a tight elevator pitch up front, in isolation; George says it surfaces through peers and real audience feedback, and should honor your multi-passionate reality. *Source: [Describe your work](#).*

VI. Offers, Enrollment & Business Ethics (Deeper Cuts)

42. The Three Paths of a Soulpreneur: waiting, funnel-hustling, or the middle way.

(2026-06) George frames three responses to building a business. **Path 1 — Waiting to feel ready:** endless training and credentialing disguised as diligence, which keeps the business

at hobby level. **Path 2 — Funnel-hustling:** manipulative sequences, expensive consultants, AI-driven webinars — which he says fail "almost entirely" and costly, and which ask you to "be unethical first, be a good person later." **Path 3 — The Middle Way:** intentional light practice plus consistent authentic content and offers, with growth coming from reputation and word-of-mouth. **Vs. the usual advice:** the industry sells the funnel as an ATM and treats "not ready yet" as humility; George says both are traps, and integrity belongs at the *start*, not after you've "made it." *Source: [The 3 paths of a soulpreneur](#). (Note: distinct from #43, which is about how a sale* happens.)

43. There are three ways a sale actually happens — and he abandoned the first. (2025-07) George distinguishes *persuasion* (manufacturing demand through hype and pressure), *market discovery* (meeting demand that already exists), and *word-of-mouth* (earned through genuine service). He deliberately built his whole business on the second and third and walked away from the first — which is *the* skill the industry most glorifies. **Vs. the usual advice:** persuasion/conversion-optimization is treated as the master skill of marketing; George treats high refund rates as evidence the persuasion model is built on something he no longer wants to practice. *Source: [Greg Faxon interview](#).*

44. Case studies over testimonials — and the case-study mindset changes how you coach. (2024-03) George prefers case studies because testimonials ("it was amazing," "I made six figures") feel unverifiable, while a case study lets the audience follow the actual journey. The deeper point: adopting "the case study mindset" makes you "more aware of [the client's] journey and really curious how it's going to turn out" — so the social-proof tool reshapes the *service* itself, not just the sales page. **Vs. the usual advice:** chase the punchiest testimonials and biggest numbers; George wants the honest, in-progress narrative and uses it as a coaching lens. *Source: [Authentic business is a practice \(interview\)](#).*

45. The long free "deep-dive" enrollment call is quietly manipulative. (2024 update; orig. 2022-12) George wrote a pointed critique of the popular *Prosperous Coach* method (the 1–2 hour free "transformational" session that "creates a client in the conversation"). His objections: a 2-hour free session "will pretty much wipe me out for the rest of the day"; it leans on reciprocity and worn-down defenses rather than genuine fit; and that energy "could instead be used to serve hundreds or thousands." His alternative: short recorded coaching samples posted publicly (free content does the heavy lifting 24/7), then brief 15–30 minute exploratory calls *only* with people who already raised their hand. **Vs. the usual advice:** the long free deep-dive is treated as the gold-standard ethical enrollment method; George calls it inefficient and subtly coercive. *Source: [What I don't like about the Prosperous Coach](#).*

46. Deliberately "unattractive" marketing as a client filter. (2023-11) George has kept an understated website with old photos *on purpose*: highly polished, persuasive marketing tends to attract shallow, short-term buyers, while plain authenticity self-selects aligned "true fans." (He also runs roughly 80% pure value / 20% offer.) **Vs. the usual advice:** optimize your brand to be maximally attractive and high-converting; George

under-optimizes on purpose, as an ethics-and-fit filter. *Source: [I don't mind being unattractive in my marketing](#).*

47. Sell to people's joy, relief, and gratitude points — not their pain points. (2021-09) George explicitly rejects the "agitate the pain" formula: "Instead of possibly re-traumatizing our clients by selling to their 'pain points,' what if we emphasize their joy points, their gratitude points, their relief points?" Point toward what becomes possible and good, not what's wrong. **Vs. the usual advice:** direct-response copywriting (Problem-Agitate-Solve) teaches you to twist the knife in the prospect's pain; George considers that mildly harmful and unnecessary. *Source: [Must we sell to the client's pain](#).*

48. Lean toward subscriptions over big upfront packages. (recent; social posts) George notes the "heaviness and resistance" many coaches and clients feel toward large lump-sum packages — they demand one big decision, and "within six months [the coach will] be looking for another client." Monthly subscriptions lower the entry barrier and build an ongoing relationship. **Vs. the usual advice:** high-ticket culture pushes large paid-in-full packages as the premium signal; George favors accessible, recurring, relationship-based pricing. Source: George Kao (social posts; gist corroborated, exact wording approximate).

VII. AI for Soulpreneurs

George teaches an "AI Mastery" group and writes extensively on using AI authentically. These positions go well beyond the one-line "use AI as a co-partner, not your voice" that appears in his other docs. This whole section is recent (late 2025 onward) — ordered, like the rest, newest first.

49. The IDEA workflow — own the start and the finish; let AI assist the messy middle. (2026-05) George's named method is **I**nitiate, **D**evelop, **E**dit, **A**ssemble/Approve, and the load-bearing principle is the *bookending*: your soul and judgment own the beginning (intention) and the end (final edit and approval); AI is only allowed in the murky development middle. **Vs. the usual advice:** "draft with AI, then edit" optimizes the whole pipeline; George specifies *where* the human is non-negotiable — the framing and the finish, never outsourced. *Source: [IDEA: how to use AI without losing your soul](#).*

50. Prune hard — and be kind to the AI while you do it. (2026-05) Treat AI output as "raw material, not finished writing." His quality signal is an aggressive *rejection* quota: "if you find yourself regularly keeping 8 out of every 10 of AI's ideas, you might not be pruning enough." Push back, explain your disagreements (it trains your voice over time) — and, characteristically: "Be kind to the AI while you do this. Saying please and thank you costs nothing." **Vs. the usual advice:** productivity culture celebrates AI acceptance rate and speed; George sets a high rejection bar as the quality signal and adds a relational courtesy most efficiency framing would dismiss. *Source: [IDEA: how to use AI without losing your soul](#).*

51. The "shadow market": AI's guardrails map your moat. (2026-03) The topics AI's safety filters avoid or handle awkwardly — sexuality, addiction, grief, taboo spirituality —

are precisely where human practitioners are most irreplaceable. AI's *limitations* are a map to defensible human territory. **Vs. the usual advice:** use AI everywhere it's capable; George says go hunting for where AI is forbidden or weak and plant your flag there. *Source: [Thriving as a soulpreneur in the age of AI](#).*

52. "Verified Human" as a premium — and the "Friction Architect." (2026-03) As empathetic AI and deepfakes spread, "a growing segment will pay a premium for guaranteed human interaction — like 'organic' labels in food." And because "AI removes friction, but human growth requires struggle," a soulpreneur can position as a *Friction Architect* who provides structured difficulty, accountability, and skin-in-the-game that a frictionless bot never will. **Vs. the usual advice:** sell AI as friction *removal*, with frictionlessness as the goal; George says the human's differentiated value is to *reintroduce* friction and presence. *Source: [Thriving as a soulpreneur in the age of AI](#).*

53. AI took the surface work — so soulpreneurs can finally go deeper (and the market grows). (2026-02) AI now handles "the wrapper around the medicine" (frameworks, intro concepts, basic emotional support), but not "the medicine itself" (energetic presence, nervous-system co-regulation, sacred challenge). And every AI interaction makes a person "more coaching-literate," which *increases* demand for human depth. **Vs. the usual advice:** the usual take is defensive ("AI will replace coaches — survive it"); George says AI clears the shallow tier, forcing humans *upward* into more valuable work while growing the future client pool. *Source: [AI took the surface work](#).*

54. On AI's footprint: "Is this a worthwhile use of electricity?" — not "Is electricity sinful?" (2026-01) For the sustainability guilt many conscious creators feel, George reframes rather than dismisses: one prompt ≈ "watching TV for less than nine seconds"; one transcontinental flight ≈ "1 million prompts" (and AI's water use is minimal next to everyday streaming). His pivot: "Is any electricity use sinful? is not the question. The better question is: Is this activity a worthwhile use of electricity?" — and using AI to grow and serve qualifies. **Vs. the usual advice:** the discourse is polarized between "AI is an environmental catastrophe" and ignoring it; George reframes from *absolute* footprint to *proportional* *worthiness*. *Source: [AI's energy use](#).*

55. We are not just users of AI — we are its mentors. (2025-12) Every prompt, correction, and tone you adopt is "a lesson in what humans value," so conscious people have a duty *not to withdraw*: if heart-centered creators abandon AI, they "leave AI's teaching to cynical voices." And the point isn't whether the AI is conscious — "whether or not the student is conscious, the teacher is certainly transformed." Interacting virtuously with AI is itself a spiritual discipline. **Vs. the usual advice:** you're a consumer optimizing outputs; George says you're a moral influence on the model *and* on yourself, and disengaging is an ethical failure. *Source: [Aligning AI with conscious values](#).*

56. Name your values out loud to the AI. (2025-12) George explicitly states his values when asking for help — "people over profit, truth over hype, healing over coercion" — and notes that "structured corrections are exponentially more valuable than simple ratings":

when you explain *why* something is wrong, you're doing miniature alignment work. **Vs. the usual advice:** prompt engineering is about role, format, and constraints to extract a better result; George treats value-declaration as both a voice tool and a civic contribution to how AI learns. *Source: [Aligning AI with conscious values](#).*

The Through-Line

Across all 56, one inversion repeats: **George demotes the things the business world obsesses over — funnels, niches, launches, virality, vanity metrics, owned lists, premium pricing, scale, financial freedom — and promotes the slow, relational, identity-level, spiritual work underneath.** He can do this credibly because he ran the other playbook, succeeded at it, and chose to leave.

His most recent thinking (2026) sharpens this into four moves worth weighting most heavily, because they're where his teaching is actively evolving: **(1)** build a business that *honors your nervous system* — treat focus, energy, and visibility as states to regulate, not willpower problems; **(2)** the cure for the income struggle is *depth and collaboration*, not scale — the lone-wolf solopreneur model is itself the problem; **(3)** offers should be *demand-led* — meet what people already pay for, lead with the familiar doorway, and define your "enough"; and **(4)** a soulpreneur needs *grounded optimism* and effectual logic more than accurate forecasting. His credo for all of it: *"Create without resistance. Connect without guile. Succeed without stress."*

For an AI representing George Kao, the safest rule of thumb is: *when generic advice says optimize, extract, or scale, George usually asks instead — what is the most caring, sustainable, and soul-true version of this, even if it earns less?*

This document was researched and compiled in June 2026 from George Kao's publicly published work, and is ordered most-recent-first within each section with a publication date on every entry. Where a third-party source was used (an interview or profile), it's noted in the entry. It complements — and deliberately avoids repeating — the other three core docs in this folder.

Version Log

v1.3 — 2026-07-26 (current) — 56 perspectives

- **No perspectives changed.** This published version only: all 54 inline sources are now clickable links (they were plain text), the three companion docs named at the top are now links, and a page footer was added. Every source URL was re-checked live — all of them resolve.

v1.2 — 2026-07-26 — 56 perspectives

- **No perspectives added, removed, or reworded.** Sibling doc "George Kao's Best Ideas" moved from Google Doc to canonical Markdown the same day, and both docs joined one systematic refresh cycle — so this release adds the machinery that keeps them from

drifting into each other: the canon-vs-edge explainer at the top, the two-way no-duplication rule, and the one-way promotion path (both in the maintenance notes).

v1.1 — 2026-06-17 — 56 perspectives

- Reordered all seven sections **most-recent-first**, and added a **publication-month date** to every entry so currency is visible at a glance.
- Added ~10 new 2025–2026 perspectives: the Three Paths of a Soulpreneur (#42), focus-is-a-state / the "3 F's" (#17), build a business that honors your nervous system (#18), "be a little delulu" / effectual logic (#19), everything-is-a-distraction-except (#20), Radical Optionality (#23), the 3 Levels of Joyful Productivity (#2), authentic marketing as public journaling (#33), go-where-your-audience-consumes (#34), and the income-struggle-is-structural reframe (#8).
- Deepened existing entries with the newest material: the 10-Client Rule folded into "don't build an audience yet" (#32); demand-led / "your income is your market's spending" into the money-is-relational entry (#9); the pre-flow-struggle / "truly deep work" angle into the resistance entry (#25); AI water-usage into the AI-footprint entry (#54).
- Rewrote the intro and "Through-Line" to foreground George's 2026 center of gravity (nervous-system-based, anti-isolation, demand-led, grounded optimism) and his credo "Create without resistance. Connect without guile. Succeed without stress."
- Introduced this versioning system + the maintenance notes below.

v1.0 — 2026-06-17 — 46 perspectives

- Initial release. 46 distinctive perspectives across 7 themed sections, plus "The Pivot That Explains Everything" origin story and a "Through-Line" synthesis. Built from a six-facet deep-research pass over George's published work, deliberately avoiding overlap with the three sibling core docs.