The Placement Diaries: Week 4 - Overthinking, Redirecting, and Still Being at Square One

8th October 2021

First of all, I'm better and I've pretty much recovered from that horrible, horrible cold, however, this week wasn't really that productive, well, not as productive as I would have liked it to be. Maybe I need to stop being so hard on myself and trying to set my expectations so high that it's impossible to reach them, and maybe focus more on what I can actually do and how long I can realistically take since that'd probably be better for me in the long run than stressing myself out, but not actually getting anything done since I'm way too stressed to actually do anything about it.

So, my original plan of creating an experimental web design agency pretty much went out of the window since it was too big, too hard, too niche, too vague, and too ambitious (as well as too overwhelming) for me to actually do. I spent the last couple of weeks coming up with lots of plans on how to go about it to the point where I thought way too much of it and didn't actually do anything. I did everything I could with that idea (mainly research wise since I was too overwhelmed to actually bring myself to create and design the websites) only to not end up doing it because I realised that I actually wasn't 100% passionate about coding those awesome sites (sure, I can easily spend all day designing them, but when it comes to actually coding them, I become paralysed by thought and I end up overanalysing it), not to mention that I didn't actually have the skills that I thought that I had, so creating a business based on something that you're not 100% passionate about, as well as doing it based on something beyond your current skill set will only set you up for failure.

I think the main reason why I thought that was a good idea in the first place was because I liked the sound of it, and because I thought it was really cool (I'm not gonna lie, it is cool to see sites that break the mold and go against the grain every once in a while), as well as thinking that I could do something like that with my very basic HTML and CSS skills. However, it felt forced, very forced, and I've come to realise that if you have to end up over thinking and having to convince yourself to do something, it means that it isn't worth your time or energy since it's something that won't come naturally to you.

Sure, you can read all the articles, proper train yourself up in all the areas possible, spend all of your waking hours coding until you can't anymore, but if it doesn't come naturally (you can tell when something comes naturally to you or not since you'll subconsciously do it), and if it feels forced, it means that you shouldn't be working in

that area. Maybe I've given up way too soon, but I think it's because I always put off coding things for as long as possible since it feels like a chore, and the thought of staring at a code editor for hours on end makes me lose the will to live since it's way too technical for my liking (not even making the editor itself aesthetically pleasing will convince me that it's a good idea) because I've realised that it isn't one of my strengths, it's something secondary to me since I'm predominantly a visual person (I mean, why else would I be an art student?) and I like to work on things that I can see there and then instead of working on something invisible most of the time.

However, I did manage to discover my strengths and passions this week (I know I'm saying it like I've found The Ultimate Answer to Literally Everything Ever, but I've got a long way to go yet), and it genuinely made me feel alive after a really long time, like I'd been pulled out of a slump, and feeling everything click together in one place, not to mention that I do it all the time without realising it.

Just in case you didn't know, it's mainly illustration that I'm good at and passionate about (I'm also going to throw in graphic design and art, but I think that illustration is my main passion/strength and the others complement it), so it makes sense to create a business based on what I'm good at as well as what I'm passionate about (the world will always need illustrators in order to make things look good, so there's a market right there and I didn't have to do any formal market research, I just had to look at what others have done on highly visual platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest, which was already one of my favourite pastimes, so it doesn't feel like I'm doing work), not to mention that whenever I crack down on creating a project, 5 hours can easily feel like 5 minutes, and finding that thing that makes time fly really fast means that's the area that you should be working in.

I think I've got it sorted out (*does a little happy dance around the room*), and I'm really excited to steer my business more towards something that I'm naturally good at (I guess doodling during those boring maths lessons in high school is slowly starting to pay off), as well as it being something that I'm really passionate about (I'd literally jump out of bed and probably spend all day creating different types of illustrations if I could), and knowing that there's always going to be a market for it. I know it's right for me because I don't have to overthink about it since I can just get on with it at a drop of a hat instead of burying myself in tonnes of research but not actually get anywhere with it.

So, I'm finally getting there (I hope), so now let's create some awesome illustrations, and focus on what we're good at instead of trying to achieve some impossible thing because that impossible thing sounds really cool in theory, but not so much in practice.