

VALUE

The regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something

Appreciate the Value you bring to the table

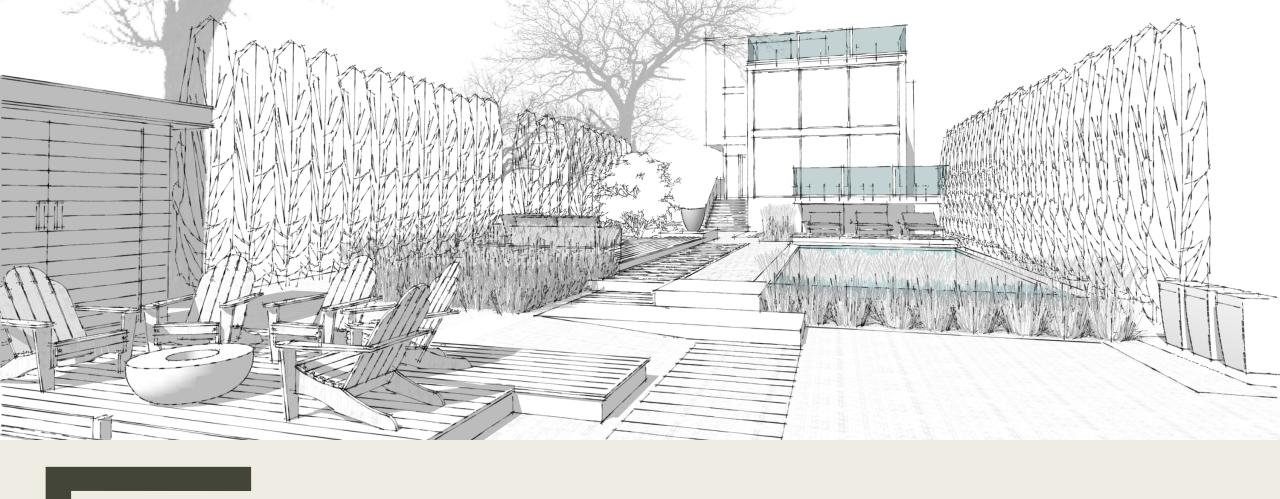
Once you appreciate the value you bring to your projects, it will be easier for a client to perceive that value.

It is hard to assess or identify ones own value, no matter your profession. However, one you arrive at it and deliver it; getting paid for it is much easier.

If clients understand what they are receiving and you give them the best service and don't surprise them, ever, with an invoice they are not expecting – Bills will be paid and they will be paid on time.

To achieve the highest renumeration, you need to have structure and system in place.

WAS I AWAY THAT DAY?



DESIGNS - GOOD AND BAD

Forever and always, my own hardest critic









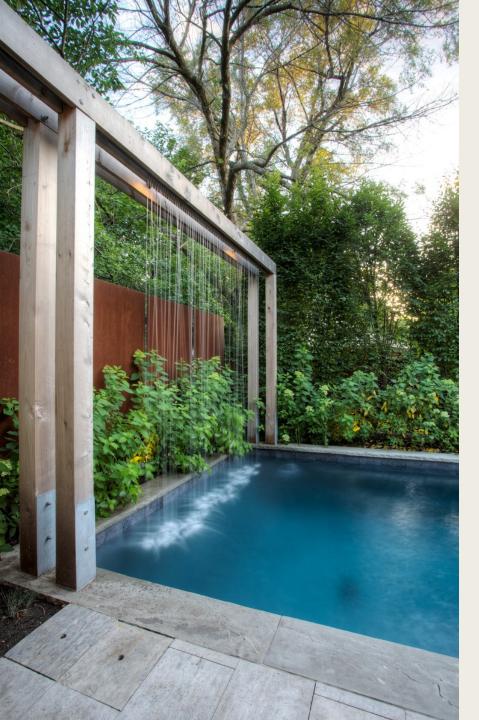












NAVIGATING MY PATH



Education

Varied, ongoing, life long



Professional Path

Career



Networking

Professional Groups and Trades

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Education

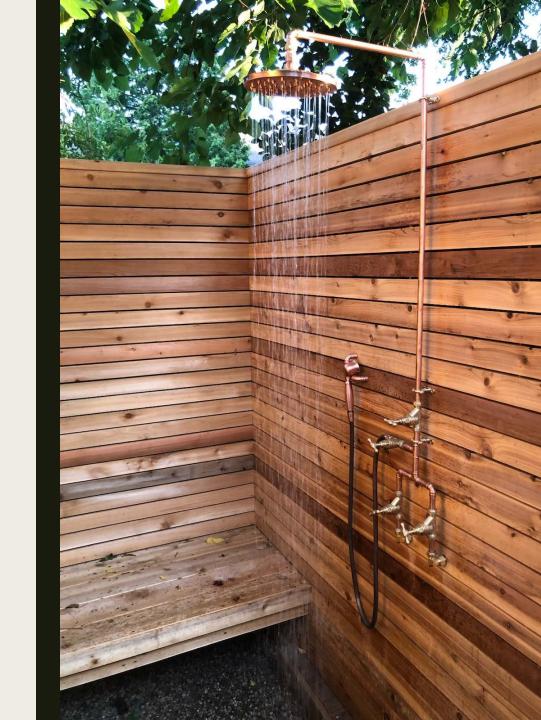
- Guelph
- Ryerson
 - Design
 - Business Management
- BeLoose Graphic Workshop
- Landscape
 Ontario

Professional Path

- Sheridan Nurseries
- All Care Landscape
- Juergen
 Partridge Ltd.
 (Partridge Fine Landscapes)
- Oriole Landscaping Ltd.
- The Site Collective Inc.

Networking

- Professional Groups and Trades
 - Contractors
 - Designers Landscape and Interior
 - Vendors





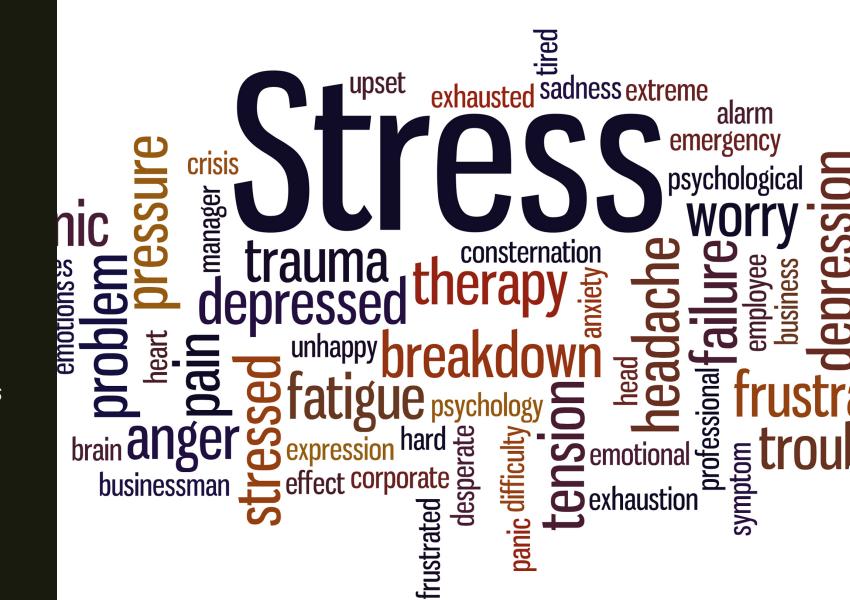


THE WORKING WORLD – STRESS, PAIN AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

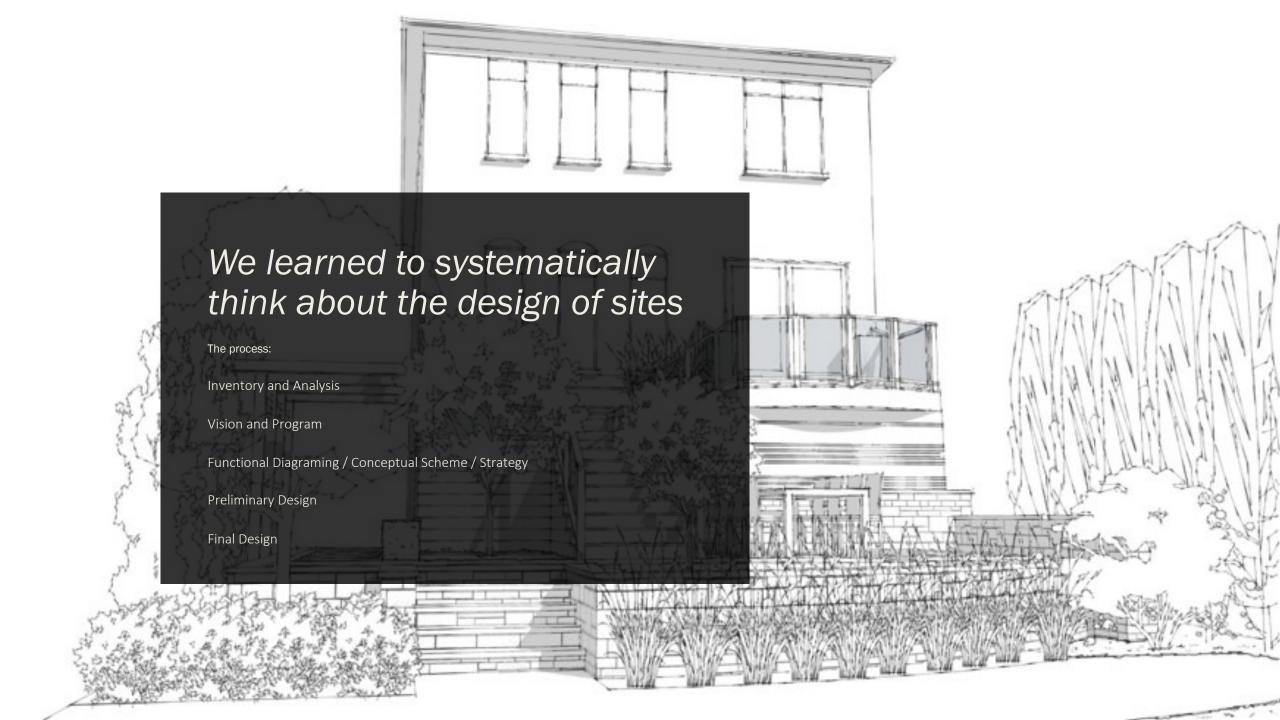
DESIGN AND DESIGN/BUILD

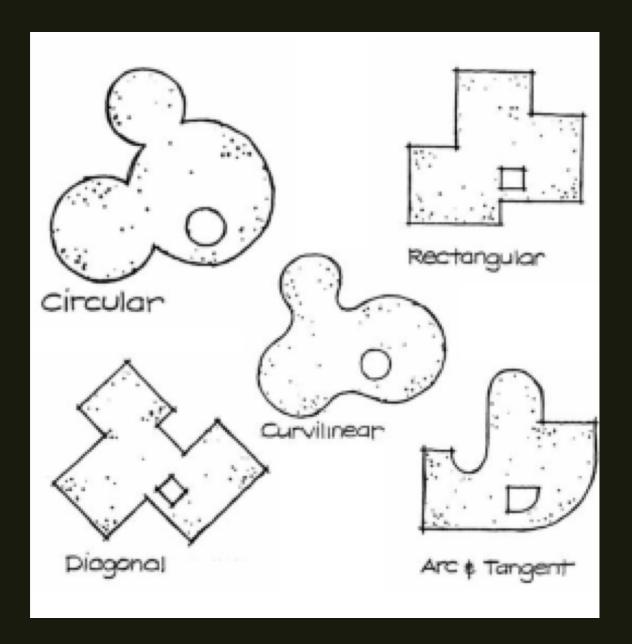
SELF EMPLOYED OR PART OF A TEAM

When the shine wears off and reality sets in



WHAT WE LEARNED AND THE INFORMATION WE MAY HAVE MISSED

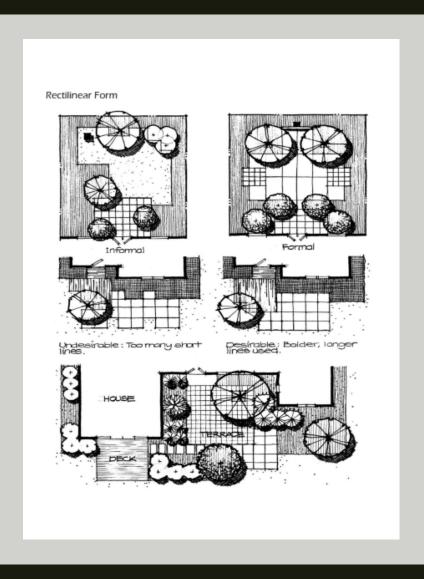


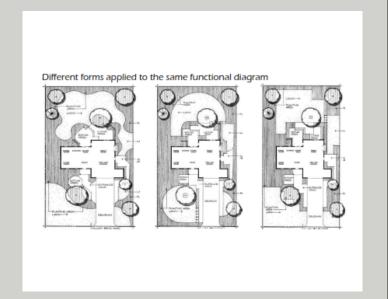


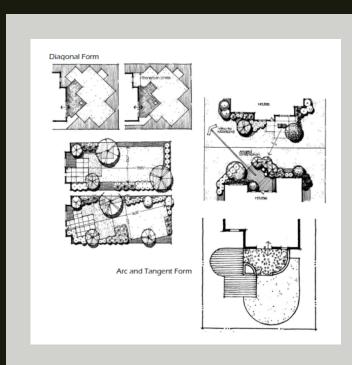
Form, Style, Composition

We spent time learning to layout sites, analyze and arrive at our best solution for the space.

Creatively solving the challenges and presenting the vision and program for the new landscape.







SOME FAMILIAR CONTENT WE ALL LIKELY SAW AT SOME POINT IN OUR EDUCATION:

We may have heard some of these gems over the years...

- Why would they put that plant there?
- That can't be built.
- How much will this cost?
- How much do you cost?
- Ugh, why do designers do that, there are not enough steps.
- I don't want to pay for a design, I can get it for free.
- I know it is built, but I don't like it, its not what I want.
- Why cant that flower all year, I want it to look like that all the time.

Internal Dialogues can be Overwhelming

Don't let your inner voice betray you...

- Negative thoughts and relationships
- Alone
- Frustrated
- Where do I find the information I need?
- How do I know what to charge?
- How do I express information to a contractor? Do they not read drawings?
- How much does it cost?

HONESTLY, REALLY, WAS I AWAY THAT DAY?

WHAT DID WE THINK WE WOULD BE DOING?

Understanding what is needed and how to effectively achieve it

Program Offerings – Critically Examined

- This was always going to be out starting point.
 - Business Plans and Strategic Planning

If projects should be lead by planning and design, should our professional careers not follow the same philosophy?

- Understanding the different needs of all of the players
 - Clients
 - Contractors
 - Designers

Personality Traits, Needs, Wants and Desires

Design Build versus Design

Process and Structure – use the skills you were given.

Sales Process, Client Management Process, Design Process, Project Management Process

OUR VERY PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS

The Art of Problem Solving

Why we are poised to shine with the skills we were given.

The Art of Problem Solving, Creative and Critical Thinking

One looks to the world of academia for information and knowledge.

We achieve this through learning to look at a challenge or situation and use skills to arrive at a final point or solution.

We aren't specifically looking to learn the exact solution to designing the perfect space.

A perfect space is informed by so many factors, There will never be one singular perfect solution.

- University taught me to work and learn with people, think and question, and, when ready, find answers.
- Distilling and delivering the information in a way that was understood by those who were listening.

- The profession of landscape design needs to be looked at in the same way.
- We must think critically of our wants and needs, our goals.
- What is our vision for our industry, profession and careers?
- What program will we write for ourselves, personally, and/or with our peers to arrive at a fulfilling and engaging professional life?

The Art of Problem Solving, Creative and Critical Thinking

Can you create a vision statement for yourself as a landscape designer?

What will your program be for your career?

How will you navigate all of the obstacles and hurdles?

Destinations, focal points, circulation patterns, areas of use...

- For many, landscape design allows for an incredibly diverse mix of tasks and offerings.
 - Meeting new people
 - Working outside
 - Working inside
 - Technology
 - Analytical thought
 - Creative thought

TAKING CONTROL

The creation of my personal narrative

When were my projects most successful?

This would inform how I would take on projects. Long before I decided to start my own business.

I decided – I will not let the dialogue that is typical to projects continue.



When were my projects most successful?

- Spaces with emotional connections to the user, let the landscape freely breath
- The relationship and proportion of plants and built form must be considered
- Relationships between myself and the client will be positive
- Relationships with trades will be dynamic shaped by informed communication and discussion
- If the project, client, or situation doesn't feel right, listen to my gut.
- Firm and fair, yet, adaptable.

This informed how I ran projects in design/build firms and then how I structured myself to work independently when the time came.

CREATING LANDSCAPE
EXPERIENCES THROUGH
INSIGHTFUL DESIGN,
THOUGHTFUL PLANNING
AND THE SKILLED
CONSIDERATION OF
IMPECCABLE TRADES.

COL·LEC·TIVE

DONE BY PEOPLE ACTING AS A GROUP

FINANCIAL HEALTH

We are professionals, business professionals, first and foremost

BUDGETING AND STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Business and financial planning need to be mainstay of designers
- Without solid financial systems and an understanding of what it truly takes to run a business, you will be constantly distracted by the nagging background noise of the business.
 - Where is the next project coming from?
 - Where is your next paycheck coming from?
 - Rent, payroll, corporate tax, HST, vendor payments,
 - Can I afford to buy...?

DO YOU HAVE AN OPERATING BUDGET?

Sales Budget?

How can you ask what to charge if you haven't created a budget?

- Bookkeeper / Accountants
 - If you aren't able to start this on your own, find a resource who can help

Operating budgets are not meant to be static. They are most useful when you modify projections and compare budgets to forecasts.

Keep an original version but also create modified versions that can be used day to day to track how well the business is doing.

Budgets, generally speaking, are created from your Income Statement, projections of sales and expenses.

Budgeting

Sales

- Where do your revenues come from?
- What are your projections for each revenue source for the year?
- Design, Project Management, Consulting, Commissions, Material Brokering

Labour

- What are the costs for generating sales?
- Hours, salaries

Equipment

- What do you need to generate the sales?
- Vehicle

Budgeting

- Materials
 - Brokering of materials, or billable items to the client
 - Plants, lights, stone, etc.
- Subcontracting
 - Costs from vendors
 - Surveyors, structural/engineering
- Overhead Expenses
 - Rent, Advertising and Promotion, Supplies, Dues and Subscriptions,
 Communication and Tech Services, Insurance, Bookkeeping/Accounting,
 Licenses and Fees

Costs and Sales – now, how much will you work?

- Once you project what you want to sell and how much it can potentially cost to create the sales...how many hours will you work to do this?
 - Remember, you need to allow time for work to be done on the business that isn't directly billed to a client.
 - The average 40hr work week is 2080hrs per year
- Billable versus Unbillable
 - Hours directly applied to the generation of revenue

or

Hours needed to allow revenue to be created

Typically...

- Principles are billable 50% of the time
 - Half the time is working on revenue generation
 - So, if you work 40hrs a week, 52weeks a year, for 2080hrs per year and only 50% is billable...then you could project to bill for 1040hrs.

Have you ever tracked how many hours you work?

How many hours does it take you to create a project?

If I look at my sales projections for designs, and the potential billable hours I have to work – what is the rate?

Is this rate realistic?

The Market versus the Math

Yes, one must consider the market and billable rates of others, however, the math needs to work as well.

- Today, make a point of asking every person you meet:
 - What are your rates?
 - How do you bill? Lump sum? Hourly?
 - What revenue categories do you have?
 - What do your contracts and admin look like for each stream of work?
- Above all SHARE WHAT YOU DO WITH THEM AS WELL! Today is an opportunity for growth, connection and engagement.
- What do I do for budgeting....I use a resource that has been helping contractors, as there is never a need to reinvent the wheel – LMN – use a free resource!
 - Look at different scenarios, create different budgets, what works best for you?

Beyond your budget...

- Remember to be healthy financially, one must review, consider and adjust when needed.
 - Monitor cash flow
 - Create monthly sales goals/projections
 - If there are slower months, can the busy months make up the deficit for what you need? Adjust the sales according to history and patterns.
 - Always be realistic
 - Stay on top of receivables!
 - Monitor your financial reports, even beyond that of the accounts receivables. Accounts Payable, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows
 - Check in with your bookkeeper or accountant if you need support in understanding this

 Check in with your supervisor at your firm, understanding the financial side of the business is beneficial to all involved.

You have Value!

- In speaking freely about your rates with your peers, one hopes that you will become more comfortable and confident in expressing how much you charge.
- Everything you have learned to this point informs you and creates value for your clients.
- If you can not comfortably express what you charge, your expectation for receiving payment and how it relates to the services your provide you are opening yourself up to bad debt and lost sales.

Confident Collection and Dialogue about money is paramount!

CLIENT MANAGEMENT

From inception to completion, each time, every time.

SET A STANDARD

Consistent,
Collected and
Strategic

Client Management

- Understanding what you can handle personally, learn to find your voice in different situations.
- From the first interaction with a client to a final goodbye at the end of the project, know when and what you are wanting to express.
 - Client Connection
 - Know your process from beginning to end, as formally or informally as need be
 - Have you ever sat down and written out every step you take from the start to finish of your time with a client?
 - When do clients need to hear from you?
 - How does information need to be presented?
 - How can I save time and not get lost in endless administration?

Client Management

As we have discussed, past experience is a valuable tool for informing your process and how you will look to connect with your clients.

Understanding:

- Who you want to work with
- Who should you work with
- Who do you have to work with

Understanding the wants versus should versus have to's can inform your decisions when sales are needed or as economies change.

Client Management

- Do I want to work on projects that are not my ideal?
 - No, however, if I needed to, can I create a situation that allows me to be successful.
- What interests me?
- What projects do I want to take on?
- Who/What should I avoid?
 - Am I avoiding out of need or desire?

Client Management

Opportunity - increasing revenue sources

If a client is confident in the value you bring to a project as a talented, informed and experienced landscape designer; as you work through their project, can your process allow for different revenues to be generated?

- Strategically encouraging clients
 - Are there different revenue sources that you could take on for clients that are currently not a part of your services?
 - How do you present this information to clients?
 - Avoid the feeling of presenting unknown extras versus allowing the client to choose to add work to their projects.
- However formal or informal, your sales process and structure must be able to allow for the flow of tasks from one to the next.

Consider how you get from design to construction and all of the small steps in between.

Client Management

Does the client know what to expect?

- What was discussed?
- What is being delivered?
 - Have you defined the deliverables based upon the discussion?
- What is the fee for creating the deliverable?
- How will the fee be collected?
- What defines the beginning and end of the work?

Contracts, Letters of Engagement, Meeting Summaries, etc. – again, formal or informal, are ways of keeping clients informed and on track to be successful projects.

Client Management

Contracts, Terms and Conditions

 Respectfully setting boundaries, limits and expectations.

Not all designers use them, not all contractors use them. And I would guess, that you wont know that you needed it until you find yourself in a situation where things are not clear and you are potentially not getting paid.

Fine print and contracts can feel off putting; especially if you are not able to explain it confidently.

Learn to express information in a way that is easily understood and respectfully stated. Look for counsel and guidance legally, when needed.

THE ART OF COLLABORATION

Incredible projects don't just happen.

GREAT PROJECTS DON'T JUST HAPPEN

Understanding the value and needs of all of the members of the team

If you don't tell them, people don't know what you are thinking.

As with clients, we must understand that trades are looking to be part of successful projects.

Challenges and negative outcomes hurt.

Successful Projects don't Just Happen

It goes without saying that you should be looking to work with trades that are competent and reliable. However, knowing more about the trades helps to make projects run smoothly.

How will communication happen?

Will it be consistent and timely?

What do they need from the site in order to complete their work?

Is there scope of work clearly defined? Do all parties know what is expected and what has been expressed to the client?

Starting Projects Successfully

Was the scope of work clearly defined?

Who are the team members?

What order does work need to occur on site?

Can different components be completed at the same time without limiting site efficiency?

Are there any limiting factors that are client or site created that were not known when the project was budgeted?

Use the trades knowledge and experience to your advantage.

- Comments on materials and design components
 - If you don't have trades to comment on the buildability of a feature, look to vendors/suppliers
- Site Reviews for budgeting

Confirm logistics, queries and budget qualifications with clear, concise and direct comments.

ORDER OF OPERATIONS

Consider the order in which work must occur when setting up scopes of work. A poorly structured bid form or tender is limiting the success of the project.

Definition and confirmation deliverables is not just limited to clients.

Clearly define the beginning and end of the project.

What information do you need to ensure the project gets set up correctly?

- Scope of Work
- Exclusions
- Timing
- Cost
- Extras, options
- Limitations site, weather, materials, etc.

Manage the expectations of the trades as you would the clients. Everyone deserves to be on the same page and informed with the information they need.

Your experience now guides you on translation of the information.

PROFESSIONALISM

Always.

Skills, Competence and Expertise

The creation of your opportunities.

Every situation, every meeting, every project is a potential opportunity for future projects.

The more you are able to understand the players in the game, the more power you have in driving your professional path forward.

- Leads my skills, competence and expertise
 - Designers, trades, vendors
- Understanding what you are likely to expect from projects or people is informed by your experiences.
- Beyond leads, what can your past relationships do to enhance your current state

PEER GROUPS

Opportunity is surrounding you.

CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS

Learn from it, and absolutely everything else.

The Importance of Satisfaction

Professional, Career Satisfaction.

If you work from someone, although varying, many note satisfaction arises from many factors:

- clarity of role and goals
- appropriate recognition of value and contribution
- meaningful work that has a clear purpose
- work that enables each person to express his or her skills and attributes
- opportunity for advancement
- to be respected and supported

To those here who are self employed, or even employed by a firm - Why not look to similar factors in forming and informing your personal career path – ensure that you set up your professional path to achieve this for yourself each and every day.

Forgiving yourself and protecting yourself

With everything in life, there will be times of incredible growth and times for reflection.

There is no race, set a pace that works for you.

Define goals.

Understand what you need from your career and allow it to change and evolve over time. Protect your mental and physical health.

Is where you currently stand on your path working for you?

Your current position may look very different down the road. Or, it could be the same. Know what you need.

A journey, taking many forms, shapes and directions.

Years ago, I would have told you I would never work for myself. I was very happy working in an organization, contributing with vigour. Life changes, people change and the evolution of a career that works for my life brings me to where I stand today.

If you had asked me if I would find enjoyment and fulfillment in tackling projects the way I do, it likely wouldn't have been on my radar. Lecturing at a conference, oh, most definitely not on my radar.

I was likely naïve to the realities of this profession when I entered it. But, I enjoyed it and worked to make it successful on my own terms.

Continual Improvement and Learning

- 1. Networking
- 2. Communication
- 3. Stand Out
- 4. Sketch
- 5. Work Ethic
- 6. Educate Yourself
- 7. Mentorship and Peer Groups
- 8. Learn the Business
- 9. Embrace your Failures
- 10. Keep an Eye on the Prize

