roadtrip nation

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Home sweet home  motor home

Define your own road in life

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Hi there,

So… you’re probably going about your day, checking your calendar… firing off emails… thinking about what you’re going to eat next (mmm, sandwich). But before you commence scheduling your next meeting answer this: when’s the last time you stopped your assembly line of daily motions, and really thought about where you’re going in life? Have you looked up from that Google doc and coffee mug to reflect on your fulfillment? We know it’s easy to get swept up in the cycle of day-to-day responsibilities and internet cat videos, but we’re here to disrupt your routine. To challenge you. We want you to turn off your laptop, stop thinking about what’s on TV tonight, and break out of routine. **We’re calling on you to define yourself.**

Get out and explore!

Maybe you’ve been wandering aimlessly with no compass, wondering “What am I doing in life? Maybe you’ve been speeding down a particular highway, but you need to slow down, take an exit, and reassess if you’re going the right way. Even if you’re confident in the direction you’re headed, getting off the Road you’re on everyday can reveal something new to you- something inside yourself you didn’t know was there, or new opportunity beyond the bend that was just waiting to be found.

**Wherever you find yourself in life, a Roadtrip can jumpstart your life in ways you never expected.** Out on the Open Road, far from the pressures of emails, deadlines, and 30 minute lunch breaks, your vision is clearer. You’re in the driver’s seat. That Noise of society’s expectations that echoed so loudly at home is finally silenced, letting you instead listen to yourself. **On the road, your heart- not other people’s opinion- becomes your GPS.** And it can guide you towards meeting new, inspiring people; eating new, exotic foods you have to
Instagram; seeing new sights you’ve only seen on screensavers. Released from the leash of daily obligations, you can truly tune time into your values, Interests, and ambitions: Who would you be if you didn’t have to wake up at 6:30 every morning to beat rush hour? What choices would you make? **Who are you, really?**

**This idea of exploration as a means to self-discovery:** that’s the beating heart of Roadtrip Nation. Defining your own Road doesn’t require packing into a Green RV for 6 weeks and winding along the infinite landscape of America like we did on our first Roadtrip. Just break out of your comfort zone. Do something you’ve never done before. Hitting the Road is less about logging miles, and more about changing the way you look at the world. Questioning things you wouldn’t ordinarily question. Talking to people you wouldn’t ordinarily talk to. Being open to opportunities.

Whether you drive 4 hours to Interview a CEO, or you have a spontaneous conversation with a truck stop manager who happened to fly planes in Vietnam and got a PhD at MIT (true story of someone we met), you never know who you’ll meet and what you’ll learn on the Road. If your mind is open and your heart receptive, you’ll fill your tank up with experiences and insights that will continue to impact you years down the road. So pack up the car, stock up on beef jerky, and hit the gas. Read on and we’ll give you some tips for the Road. We’ll see ya out there.

-Roadtrip Nation

**How to build your Roadtrip**

**So, how do you create this experience for yourself?**

As mike lazzo, Senior Vice President of Programming at the Cartoon Network, once said to us: so much of it is “just about getting behind the wheel and going.” So let’s get to it. You hold in your hands a Road map of sorts- a guide that’ll take you from “Did I pack enough socks?” all the way to “Hey guys, check out the pics from my awesome Roadtrip!” You’ll find *everything you need* to know in bite-sized chunks, Roadtrippers spread throughout.

**How to Create Your Route**

**Before you go anywhere,**

You first have to figure out where you’re going to go. Make a list of kinds of people you’d like to Interview. If you’re into the art scene, you might point yourself in the direction of New York
City. Like the outdoor lifestyle? The Pacific Northwest is a great place to go. TV and movies? Set your sights on Hollywood.

Whatever your reason for hitting the Road, make sure you create a route that puts you in places you’ve never been before. A big part of your trip is about getting out there and putting yourself in foreign environments that open up parts of yourself you never knew existed.

Once you’ve figured out your basic route, do some research to find out what else you can get into on your trip. Leave time for weird little side trips. See the world’s biggest ball of twine. Eat at hole-in-the-wall restaurants. Jump in all the lakes you see. Ask locals what there is to do in the area. Travel the side roads. Stay away from guaranteed experiences at home. On the Road, you can learn from anyone and any experience.

How to Find People to Interview

Okay, so you’ve got an idea of where you are headed. Now what? Well first off, set a goal of meeting ten people, and start making a list of potential interviewers.

1. **Pick three people in fields related to your Interests.**
   - Think about your hobbies: enjoy taking photos? Look up the people working at *National Geographic*. Like surfing? Call someone who works for your favorite surfwear company.
   - Look around your room: your favorite DVD’s, posters, magazines, books, software… find out who’s behind that stuff!
   - Check out the “about us” sections on your favorite websites.

2. **Now pick three people who work in an area you might be interested in:**
   - Never had a pet, but think you’d like to be a vet? Find someone who works at an animal hospital. Think you’d be interested in advertising, but not sure what it’s like? Look up someone working at a successful ad agency.

3. **Got it? Good. This time, pick three wild card interviews.** These are the impressive, inspiring people you look up to, you never thought you’d meet- until now! Don’t be intimidated by someone’s fame or success- that’s how we got the courage to talk to Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.
   - Think of your idols, your heroes- who do you find inspiring? Flip through newspapers or magazines for ideas.

4. **Let someone else pick an Interview for you.** Your cousin Bob may know an eccentric cake decorator. Your old gym teacher may have gone to school with an NFL Hall of
Famer. You’ve got resources surrounding you, and getting referred by someone is way easier than making a Cold-Call.

5. **Stay open to Interview opportunities while on the Road:**
   - Strike up a conversation with a ranger while driving through a national park. Talk with the waitress serving you hotcakes. The best conversation you have could be with an old man in a coffee shop or a gas station attendant.

   **And remember**- don’t worry about finding people that match your exact career goals- just meet with someone you think might have a good story to tell. You never know who you might get inspired by.

### How to Find Someone’s Contact Information

So you’ve made a list of prospective interviewees. Now if only you could actually get a hold of them. **Here’s how:**

1. **Do an Internet search.** Put your web sleuthing skills to work and try to guess this person’s website or place of business. If their organization has a website, then they’ll most likely have a “contact us” section where you’ll find a phone number and/or e-mail address.

   You can also try to guess your target’s e-mail address. Suppose you’re trying to contact Barney Rubble, the CEO of BedRock, Inc. there are usually only six possibilities: barney@bedrock.com, barneyrubble@bedrock.com, barney.rubble@bedrock.com, barneyr@bedrock.com, Brubble@bedrock.com, barneyrubble@bedrock.com

2. **Look in the phone book.** You’ll be surprised by how easy it is to get a hold of someone by just calling the general number of their place of business.

3. **Call 411.** Ask whomever you can to transfer you to the Leader you want to speak to. You might have to speak with operators, secretaries and assistants (and deal with a few rejections), but if you tell people about the authenticity of your project, you’ll be surprised by the support you’ll get.
How to Cold Call

Cold-Calling is calling someone you don’t know, out of the blue, without an appointment or prior introduction, and asking for an Interview. Sounds simple, now doesn’t it? Actually it can be, if you break it down.

- Before you dial that number, make sure you’ve got a solid pitch in your head. Your pitch is just your intro: who you are, what you’re doing and why. **DON’T use a script.** Just jot down a few bullet points. **Keep it short and sweet.**
- Make it clear that you’re not selling anything and you’re not looking for a job- you’re simply looking for advice on how to build your future.
- Think of an attention-grabbing phrase that nails your point home, like “I would love to speak to someone who loves what they do.”
- **KEEP IT SHORT!** [so important, we had to say it twice]

You can even use our name to help you get an Interview. Here’s a sample pitch:

“Hi! My name is Amy Bush and I’m a member of the Roadtrip Nation network. It’s a Movement of people who Interview inspiring individuals to learn how they got to where they are today. We then share the experience with an entire community of people at roadtripnation.com. I would love to include [insert amazing Leader here] in our project. Do you think he/she could spare some time to meet with me and share his/her story at his/her convenience?

Now that you’re ready to talk to a real live person, it’s time to make that Cold-Call. Follow this rough outline:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Say who referred you(even if it’s an operator)
3. Say why you want to talk to them,
4. Make your pitch.
5. Make it clear you aren’t asking for a job.
6. Rarely will you get your prospective interviews on the first shot. So here’s a few things to remember:

1. **Avoid calling on Mondays**- People have too much to do on Mondays- they don’t need a random phone call in the middle of it.
2. **Be nice to assistants.** They are the gatekeepers, the holders of the schedule. Having an assistant on your side is golden.
3. If you must leave a voicemail, leave it at the end of the day. And if you do leave one, **keep it short**.
4. **Be patient.** They may not call back right away.
5. **Be persistent, but not annoying.** Follow up every few days.
6. **Know when to give up!** A “No” means no

The sad truth is that you’ll get rejected—don’t let it get you down. Pretty soon you’ll hear a yes or two after you make your pitch. Congratulations, you’ve booked your first Interview! Now, before you hang up the phone and do a little dance, remember to do these things:

1. **Set a time and date for the Interview (even if it is tentative)**
2. **Schedule at least an hour for the actual Interview.**
3. **Get directions (you definitely don’t want to get lost after working hard!)**

How to Conduct an Interview

The interview is where all that work pays off. Here are some tips:

1. **Keep it casual.** Don’t worry about dressing up— you want your presence to reflect that it’s just a casual conversation between a person and a mentor.
2. **Be respectful.** When you meet these Leaders, look them in the eye and shake their hand. Make sure they know you appreciate being able to meet with them.
3. **Share your own story.** You want the Leader to be comfortable sharing their story, so start by sharing your story with them (where you’re at in life, the issues you face).
4. **Have a few talking points in your head:** where was this person when they were your age? Did they ever have pressure from family to conform? How did they figure out their passions? Let your curiosity guide you.
5. **Keep it personal.** Small talk is cool, but make sure most of the conversation is geared towards the Leader’s personal story and the issues they faced on their life Road.
6. **Avoid the PR autopilot.** Sometimes a Leader wants to talk about the company they work for. You want them to talk about their personal Road— not things you could read in a press release or LinkedIn profile. Steer the conversation back to the personal side of things.
7. **Be flexible.** If the conversation goes longer than planned, that’s awesome! If another person wants to join in, that’s great! Allow yourself to go with the flow and see where it takes you.
If you sense the conversation is winding down or the Leader will need to leave soon, let them know that you want to be respectful of their time, and ask if they have any last words of advice for people in situations like yours. If you felt like a bond was created, ask if it would be okay to correspond with them from time to time to continue the dialogue.... not to get a job. Email is usually best.

**Coming home and Reflecting**

Coming home can be the most defining part of your trip. While it reminds you of how loud the Noise of conformity is, is also reveals how much you’ve grown. You comfort zone has expanded. You’ve changed. You’re more open and miles closer to the person you really are.

You’re filled with the stories of people who have renounced convection, defined their own Roads, and come out the other end with passion for their lives. Maybe you met a filmmaker who worked 3 side jobs instead of going to law school so he could finish writing his first screenplay. Maybe you met someone who quit her high-paying job in finance to become a yoga teacher, relinquishing a traditional career to pursue the fire within. You’ve seen first-hand inner satisfaction comes with following your passions- not following a rigid, pre-prescribed path, Regardless of what people tell you, it’s possible to build a life around the things that bring you joy.

**Remember:** you’ll still be bombarded by the Noise of society’s judgment. But shed that Noise. Leave it for the conformists. Let your own values ring louder and steer you towards the track that most resonates with you.

*Your journey doesn’t end when you come home- you’re just better prepared to map the rest of it.*