

Your Stage

During the holiday season, I saw a short portion of a documentary that featured an interview with a Mainland Chinese lady who expressed her gratitude for one of the major e-commerce platforms that enable her to make a living from live-streaming. Previously, she was a stay-at-home mom living in a rural village with scarce job opportunities. She can now broadcast her work live to viewers and sell her products thanks to the live-streaming platform. Not only is she earning a decent living, but she is also teaching other people in the village how to make a living. She feels fulfilled.

Whatever we call it, the stage, platform, system, medium, or forum, the right platform for us is one that plays to our unique strengths, provides for us financially, keeps us engaged and inspired, and enables us to endure the ups and downs of working life.

Steph Curry, considered to be the greatest shooter of all time, was doubted by basketball scouts and sports analysts as he entered the league as a skinny, undersized player. According to one scouting report, he is unlikely to make it to the highly competitive National Basketball Association (NBA), and his best chance may be somewhere in Turkey's minor leagues.

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Although Curry had a relatively good start to his NBA career, it was widely felt that it was unlikely that his freewheeling style of playing would lead to any championships.

This changed when the team brought in a new coach in Steve Kerr who designed his tactics around the strengths and weaknesses of his players. "I don't think you were used last year in a way that was effective for you, but if you buy into what we're saying, I think you can be successful." Steve said this to the players individually when he first took on the position of coach. Steve created a basketball system that played to individual players' strengths while highlighting Steph Curry's uniqueness. As a result, Steph and his teammates won three championships in five consecutive Finals appearances and Steph literally changed the way basketball is competed. Steve's created a platform that unleashed the potential of the individuals as well as the team.

For Steph Curry, Steve Kerr was like the great artist Henri Matisse's teacher Gustare Moreau. As a talented teacher, Moreau refused to impose his views or style on his students, but instead encouraged them to learn from the treasures in the Louvre and express their own personalities and styles. Moreau is widely credited with opening Matisse's eyes to the possibilities of painting.

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Unfortunately, not everyone is as lucky as the Chinese woman who found the right live-streaming platform that works well for her. Although all of us deserve a teacher like Moreau who believes in us and inspires us, it is not always easy to find one. There are even fewer of us who can count our blessings like Steph Curry, who has a coach who fundamentally changed the system of his team to revolve around him. Suzanne Valadon might be a source of inspiration for the rest of us.

Suzanne Valadon grew up in poverty and worked many odd jobs before becoming a model for several renowned artists in Paris. Because she couldn't afford formal art lessons, she learned by observing and asking. Like her mother who moved to Paris to escape poverty, Suzanne had a streak of rebellion and boldness in her to create the life she wanted rather than accept anything less.

Unhappy with how male artists painted her; they always distorted her appearance to make her look like a doll and devoid of emotion, Suzanne the model became Suzanne the artist. Her artwork revealed her true feelings and showed male artists how to look at women properly.

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Suzanne challenged the convention of the painted female nude and infused her paintings with women's emotions. She painted the female body in a way that reflected women's experiences and perspectives. Among her famous works, 'The Abandoned Doll' shows the psychology of transition from a girl to a teenager to an adult woman, as well as the temporal and vanity of life. At one point Suzanne reflected on her own career and said, 'I found myself, I made myself, I said what I had to say.' By forging her own path Suzanne found herself and became the first woman painter to be admitted to The Societe Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

Whether you are looking for your own stage, working with someone to improve your own positioning, or creating your own medium, may you truly enjoy and excel on your platform. Like the girl in 'The Abandoned Doll,' you may need a transition as well. Don't stick to anything that leads to nowhere; get ready to take off. Have a great 2022!

Let's chat!

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