

'IT'S NOT WORTH IT': Ad exec's brutal rant before he died of cancer is absolutely chilling

JIM EDWARDS

NOV 9, 2012, 2:10 AM



Linds Redding, a New Zealand-based art director who [worked at BBDO and Saatchi & Saatchi](#), [died last month](#) at aged 52 from an [inoperable esophageal cancer](#).

Redding also kept a blog, and after his passing an essay he wrote about the ad business, titled "[A Short Lesson In Perspective](#)," has gained a new and sudden life, on [the SF Egotist](#) and on [Adfreak](#).

It will not make happy reading for the many people who knew Redding, know of his work, or anyone who works in the creative department of an ad agency.

In sum, Redding, wrote, life as a creative isn't worth it. "It turns out I didn't actually like my old life nearly as much as I thought I did," he wrote, after he was diagnosed.

The screed addresses the existential problem at the centre of anyone's career in advertising: Can you marry art and commerce and be fulfilled as a human being?



Read more at <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/its-not-worth-it-linds-reddings-short-lesson-in-perspective-2012-11#zVbtTiicRfA5eQ3b.99>

Redding concludes the answer is no. His story could apply to anyone's job, in any industry. It's sobering stuff. Here's an excerpt of the most brutal bits (you can [read the full essay here.](#))

And here's the thing.

It turns out I didn't actually like my old life nearly as much as I thought I did. I know this now because I occasionally catch up with my old colleagues and work-mates. They fall over each other to enthusiastically show me the latest project they're working on. Ask my opinion. Proudly show off their technical prowess (which is not inconsiderable.) I find myself glazing over but politely listen as they brag about who's had the least sleep and the most takeaway food. "I haven't seen my wife since January, I can't feel my legs any more and I think I have scurvy but another three weeks and we'll be done. It's got to be done by then The client's going on holiday. What do I think?"

What do I think?

I think you're all fucking mad. Deranged. So disengaged from reality it's not even funny. It's a fucking TV commercial. Nobody gives a shit.

This has come as quite a shock I can tell you. I think, I've come to the conclusion that the whole thing was a bit of a con. A scam. An elaborate hoax.

Countless late nights and weekends, holidays, birthdays, school recitals and anniversary dinners were willingly sacrificed at the altar of some intangible but infinitely worthy higher cause. It would all be worth it in the long run...

This was the con. Convincing myself that there was nowhere I'd rather be was just a coping mechanism. I can see that now. It wasn't really important. Or of any consequence at all really. How could it be. We were just shifting product. Our product, and the clients. Just meeting the quota. Feeding the beast as I called it on my more cynical days.

So was it worth it?

Well of course not. It turns out it was just advertising. There was no higher calling.

So how did I survive for thirty years? I mostly hid my insecurity and fear from everyone but those closest to me, and ran fast enough that I would never be found out.

Countless late nights and weekends, holidays, birthdays, school recitals and anniversary dinners were willingly sacrificed at the altar of some intangible but infinitely worthy higher cause. It would all be worth it in the long run...

This was the con. Convincing myself that there was nowhere I'd rather be was just a coping mechanism. I can see that now. It wasn't really important. Or of any consequence at all really. How could it be. We were just shifting product. Our product, and the clients. Just meeting the quota. Feeding the beast as I called it on my more cynical days.

So was it worth it?

Well of course not. It turns out it was just advertising. There was no higher calling. No ultimate prize. Just a lot of faded, yellowing newsprint, and old video cassettes in an obsolete format I can't even play any more even if I was interested. Oh yes, and a lot of framed certificates and little gold statuettes. A shit-load of empty Prozac boxes, wine bottles, a lot of grey hair and a tumor of indeterminate dimensions.

But what I didn't do, with the benefit of perspective, is anything of any lasting importance. As a life, it all seemed like such a good idea at the time. But I'm not really sure it passes The Overnight Test.

Oh. And if your reading this while sitting in some darkened studio or edit suite agonizing over whether housewife A should pick up the soap powder with her left hand or her right, do yourself a favor. Power down. Lock up and go home and kiss your wife and kids.