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INTERVIEW SERIES

**Can You Really Make A
Major Life Change...
At 50, 60, 70 Or Beyond?
An Interview With Fred Mandell**



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HardToFind Seminars.com

Expert Interviews On Mind Body & Spirit

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business and health related interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently.

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers.

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtofindseminars.com

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Can You Really Make A Major Life Change... At 50, 60, 70 Or Beyond?

Making a life change at any age can be risky, but for Fred Mandell it was the only way. Although he had a great career (making lots of money) as a financial executive, he always felt like something was missing. So when he was in his 50s, he decided life was too short not to give his dream a try. By taking little risks toward his bigger goal, he was able to quit his job and make a decent living... as an artist, and he's never looked back.

But Fred says his story isn't unique, and he didn't stop there. He set out to interview as many people as he could who had made similar major life changes. He analyzed what they all had in common and examined how they all did it. And in this audio, you'll hear the roadmap for life change that resulted from his interviews – and the book that he wrote about it titled *Becoming A Life Artist: The 7 Creative Skills You Need to Reinvent Yourself at Any Stage of Life*.

You'll Also Hear...

- The four basic questions you should ask yourself that will help you determine if a life change is right for you
- The one largest obstacle most people face when making a life change – and 3 ways to overcome it
- How to build a recovery plan for your goals – so you have something in place for renewing your energy and focus, even when your motivation drops
- The almost-magical power that having a “sacred mantra” creates – how to use it effectively and the one Fred uses for his success
- 7 different examples of the kinds of everyday activities that could help you subconsciously tap into your creative insight
- Clear and straight-forward advice for pursuing your life's calling if you've lost your job or are struggling in this economy
- “Real-life” examples of how to lessen the risks of a major life change – by breaking your large goal into little doable chunks

Life only comes around once. If you're not happy with your current situation, it's never too late to reinvent yourself, no matter what stage of life you're in. And in this audio, you'll be walked through the process – so

you can see it's not as scary as you probably think.

Hi Kris Costello and I teamed up with Michael Senoff, to bring can bring you the world best health-related interviews. So if you know anyone struggling with their weight with cancer, diabetes, ADHD, autism, heart disease or other health issues send them over to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Kris So today we are talking with Fred Mandell, a consultant, artist, and creative catalyst along with Kathleen Jordan, author of *Becoming a Life Change Artist, Seven Creative Skills that can transform your life*. Fred thank you so much for joining us today.

Fred Thanks for inviting me.

Kris So how did *Becoming a Life Change Artist* come about?

Fred I have a 2+ decade career in financial services as an executive. An in my mid-fifties I began to feel stuff rolling around inside of me, stuff that I had always wanted to explore but I didn't really have the opportunity to explore. So, on a whim I enrolled in a sculpture workshop. I'd never taken an art class since the seventh grade, but I wanted to use my hands and my imagination a very different way. So I dove into it. I had some wonderful teachers and instructors. They challenged me, they taught me, and I was really amazed at the kind of ways I could learn to express myself and give form to different ideas. And in a relatively short period of time, I was encouraged to start showing pieces in shows and have my one-man show, and low and behold people actually started buying my stuff. So that was a wonderful surprise and very encouraging and I stepped away from the corporate world to pursue my artwork in a much more serious way. During that time of stepping away. I became curious about other people going to significant changes, and I began to interview them in an informal way. And I really began to discover that there were a lot of different story out there, they were very rich and I began to realize that there is a bigger story here. At that and to the woman who became my business partner and co-author Kathy and together we ended up interviewing over 100 people who'd gone through talk significant life change. At the same time I have really dived into studying

the great artists, that creative process that work, that life and so forth. And I finding that there was some really, really surprising and interesting parallel between individuals who navigate change in their life and the great artist who navigate the creative process in their artwork.

Kris Fred I love that. You said at mid-fifties you had this life change experience. You know a lot of people mid-fifties, they're either looking at okay more years to retirement or they're looking at gee I hate my job but I can't change. And so, you know that's great to hear, there's still a lot hoe people fifty and over.

Fred Absolutely. In fact many, many of the stories that I related in the book are of people who are in their 50's and 60's it's really interesting and remarkable and inspiring the way people make choices and undertake courageous steps to really reinvent themselves later in life. It's really wonderful.

Kris Right. And Fred I wanna ask you, because this is a really timely topic considering where we're at as a country with a lot of people struggling, a lot of people just feeling a little bit lost and needing direction, that one of the things that caught our eye in your introduction for Becoming a Life Change Artist, you've got a list of people. Now are these real people you worked with? A neurosurgeon is forced to leave his profession because of a heart condition and finds a new passion, a single mother on welfare becomes a physician, a Hollywood entertainer becomes a Rabbi at age 58. Are these real?

Fred These are very, very real, folks. In fact, the Rabbi who was a Hollywood entertainer, is probably not too far from your neck of the woods. In fact, I interviewed a (inaudible) priest who entered ended up entering the theater. I interviewed people all over the country, all different age groups, all different circumstances. In some cases they made these choices by choice. And in other cases the rug had been pulled from under them and they decided they had no choice but to make some changes.

Kris You talked about people making changes 'cause they have to. You know I have a friend who works in a bank, he's very

unhappy head of household, doesn't know what he's gonna do, he doesn't feel he has the freedom to change. What do you do about people like that?

Fred You raise an interesting because I really think that, and this is based upon the interviews I've done. I really think that the greatest obstacle in an individual making changes is himself or herself. There are opportunities out there. There are new ways of looking at ourselves and uncovering interesting possibilities, but what ends happening is we either get stuck or we tamp down these feeling of attention that are in our lives. And I think if we began to pay attention to those and look for fellow travelers, look for other resources outside of ourselves we can bounce some ideas off of. Then I think you can open up some opportunities that you didn't think were there. You raise a great point because the single biggest obstacle making changes, tends to be our self.

Kris So how do you get around? What are some steps people can take?

Fred I think that there are professional resources that you can go to. I just want to mention quickly because there other things I think you can do on your own. But there's a whole new profession out there called life coaches, and it are individuals who are very practiced and experience in facilitating a process where people can make changes in their life. So that is a resource that is certainly available to you. But you know one of things that I learned in diving into the artist lives and looking at the skills that they developed over time, was that they develop a set of skills that enabled them to be objective about their creative process. So they develop the skill of being and they employed a number of different strategies in terms of how to look at things new and fresh ways. One of those strategies, I called stepping back from the canvas. You might laugh from time to time because you this classical image of the artist who in the studio and is up close and personal with his canvas, and his paint, his brush working away and every once in while he or she will step back from the canvas maybe ten or twelve feet and there's a good read that because it refreshes the eye. It gives you a brand new perspective on the painting that you've been working on so closely. And only when

you gain that perspective can you see of the painting is working if the color combinations are working, if the design is working and so forth. We can take that skill of stepping back from the canvas apply it to our own lives. We can step back from the canvas of our own lives and to separate ourselves from the hectic day-to-day routines and demands in our life. So I encourage people to do is to steal, if you will, a few hours in the morning, or the afternoon and go to a favorite peaceful spot. It could be for a walk in the woods, it could be to a park, it could be near the water, it could be up in the hills, it really doesn't matter and bring a notebook or a sketchpad or a journal with you and when you do that begin to ask what I think is very simple but compelling questions. You may reach complex answers. Ask yourself questions like, what I really want to do with my life and listen to yourself. Don't be afraid of things that might come to the surface that are not especially comfortable. You might ask yourself how I really want to be in the world. It might be that way right now. If not, how can I get more aligned with that are there thing inside of me that I want to get out, that I'm not paying attention to and if I give it the opportunity they may lead me to develop new parts of myself? These are really basic questions, but if you listen to your answers and you don't have to come up with answers right away. But listen to your body. Listen to your imagination. Listen to your mind. New things begin to bubble up and over time you arrive at some answers that require your attention.

Kris In Becoming a Life Change Artist Fred, you and Kathleen came up with 7 really important things that creative minds in history share. And I think it's really important we talk about some of those things. You just mentioned seeing. What are some of the other ones?

Fred In terms of how we arrived at that, we really dove into the great artist and that creative process. We tried to ask ourselves what it that accounted for their creative output was. You know the first answer might be, well these are geniuses or theses were very talented people. But there have been geniuses in history that never rose to the level of being a master. So there must have been other attributes that they had besides some talent which catapulted them to creative success. And what we found

was that are these 7 core creative skills. Now what was also interesting is that when we interviewed over a 100 people for the book, we discovered that the skills that enable them to navigate change in their life mirror the same skills of the great masters have all had. Because life change is a fundamentally creative process: so, what are those skills? We've mentioned seeing which basically is looking at things with a fresh perspective, and the ability to make new connections that's 1. And I gave you an example of stepping back from a canvas. Another one what is what we call preparation. And what we learned there is really fascinating because modern science is just now catching up with the great artist. Modern science is demonstrating that if we engage in certain preparation practices or routines we can predispose the mind to creative insight. The artist used to do it on a regular basis without the science. And now we're learning through science that in fact it works. What are some of those practices? Some of them might be yoga or meditation or listening to music that such as Mozart or Bach or your favorite music. But some of them are actually kind of everyday things going for a walk in the woods, taking a nice bicycle ride washing the dishes, taking a shower. In the workshops that I do I like that if people, where were you when you last had a creative insight. And invariably the answers are, I was not at work. I was going to walk or take a shower and playing golf, I was taking a long ride in the car. You have all of these other kind of activities which trigger creativity, but it appears that where we work is not the most conducive environment for creative insight. So, preparation is another one. A third creative skill is using context and what we mean by that is that we all live in many different contexts. We live in the context of a personal history. We live in the context of our social and cultural environment. We live in the context of our political buyer and on and on and on. Our professional and the important thing here, that the great masters teach us, is that we need to understand the trend in each of our context and in the context of you're thinking of entering, in order to make wise life decisions. So being aware of the broad context beyond simply ourselves becomes important.

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Kris These days that's pretty easy to do too. You know I was noticing on Google insight you can search any topic and you can find out what people are looking at. You know there's such a wealth of information out there now to help you pinpoint what is popular and interesting.

Fred Absolutely. I mean the sources of information are huge. What we have to learn is how to discern good knowledge from just information that's out there. And when we tap into that good knowledge in let's us describe the context to ourselves in a way to the very helpful.

Kris Fred another thing you talk about the 7 important competencies are embracing uncertainty and taking risks. And that caught my eye, especially. I've done that my whole life, but is there a point when it is too much? Because I'm starting out nearing 50 going you know, like an office job.

Fred I think they work together these 2. And as you referenced earlier in the conversation that we're living during unprecedented times in terms of change. Whether it's crazy economy or this new technology that's introducing change or global competition. People are feeling less in control of their lives and it presents itself in the form of uncertainty. As a result of that people can kinda shut down. They could save themselves, it's just too overwhelming for me and I am not even begin to think about what kind of changes I want to make. On the other hand, what we learn the great masters is that when you embrace this uncertainty as a source of creative insight and you are willing to begin to step into a process of exploration and discovery itself in the risk. When you step into exploration and discovery, which in itself is a risk. Because when you step into exploration and discovery you're stepping into the unknown. So to be very concrete, a person might say, well I am doing this kind of work I don't want to work anymore. I'm not sure what I want to do, but I just don't even know where to begin. So I think that there are opportunities for people to explore alternatives. It may involve taking a workshop or reading some things they've never read before. Or having conversations with people in other fields, that is a non-risky step. But it is still stepping into the unknown

because you're moving in the direction of things that you're not familiar with and when you embrace that journey it really surfaces of information is gonna help you make good decisions. Now the risky part of it, and this is really interesting when I interviewed all these people my jaw fell to the ground because some of the made such a big, big changes I would say wasn't his risky. And their response was: when you look back. Yes, it might appear to be risky, but what we did was we made the big risk bite sizable. We chunked them down and took small steps and beginning, small risks, and once we did that and were able to come out in a good spot that developed our confidence so we took another small risk and another small risk. And now I look back and I say: Wow, did I really do that? We tend to awfulize risk. We think that well if I make a change I'm gonna make less money or gee can I really do that kind of work? Were you don't have to make that commitment and decision all at once, there is an opportunity to break it down into smaller learning steps.

Kris And Fred have you seen people do both ways? Where they take tremendous risk all at once and then the smaller step process. Have you witnessed that in your travels?

Fred The answer is yes. But most of the time people don't leap off the cliff. You know sometimes people are not given a choice, because the rug is pulled out from under them. They may have a job and they get terminated for reasons beyond their control. And they've got to do something different, they've got to do it relatively quickly. But even there, I encouraged people that while you may need to put yourself in a position where you can generate revenues for yourself and your family. There's a lesson here and having you combine taking care of yourself in a practical way with more long-term thinking about how to call up what is best in you and what your talents are over a longer period of time. Just because you land back on your feet to get a secure job, it doesn't mean that's the best situation for you over the long-term.

Kris So you've gotta do that step of preparation and seeing and kinda trying to figure out really where your passion lies.

Fred Yes, all of these skills kinda work together. And we have found that when a person develops and uses the full portfolio of skills that's where all the pistons are running on the engine.

Kris And Fred you have a couple more key competencies there on that list. But I also want to talk with you, I know you do workshops around the country, share with our listeners a little bit about what you are doing.

Fred Well, I do workshops I work with a couple of other people to do these. But it's basically the concepts and principles and tools in the book. And creating a powerful experience for people. The workshop either be a day or two and half-day workshop. We call them the Light Changed Studio. Because the studio is a place where you can come, it's a safe place where you can experiment you can share and exchange ideas. And you end up really brings new possibilities and building relationships with fellow travelers. And we do that I said around the country and will continue to do that because they are very, very powerful experiences, both for myself, my co-facilitators and for the people are experiencing. But I also work with organizations and organizational leaders in developing the creative capabilities of leaders and their teams. And for profit and not-for-profit organizations. I get a lot of satisfaction out of that. Because it's taking all of this material from the book and bringing it into the workplace and helping people improve their performance. So that's another thing I do. And then I spend my time painting and writing and speaking.

Kris Great and how about a website or a phone number where people can get more information on the Life Change Studio workshop?

Fred It's fredmandell.com.

Kris Fredmandell.com. and that's with 2 L's. Right?

Fred Yes.

Kris Now the other thing that creative minds in history share is a sense of collaborating and the last one, which we all need to work, probably, applying discipline. Let's talk about those.

Fred Well the collaboration came as a complete surprise to me, because when we think of the great artist, we think of them alone in their studio laboring away trying to create masterpieces. They are these isolated geniuses. But what I learned when I dove into their lives and their work was that in fact they were tremendous collaborators. They worked and actively sought out relationships with other artists who could help them look at their work, critique their work. In fact, Picasso worked with a French artist by the name of George Brock. And as they say in his biography Brock would often put paint brushes on Picasso's work and Picasso would put paint brush strokes on Brocks work. So they really worked together very tightly and together they created the art movement called cubism. Which is the beginning of modern art, though, unless these artists had not collaborated, we wouldn't have had modern art as we know it. So what I've learned in also interviewing real live life change artist is that navigating change can be a challenge. And it is difficult to go it alone, so if you could find individuals to connect with who are fellow travelers who are also going through change, your resources in the community. As I mentioned earlier, the life coaches, these relationships can help you exchange ideas, give you feedback. Hold you accountable for things that you say you're going to do, and so forth. So that whole collaborative relationship becomes very, very important in supporting the transition life change process. Now we come to applying discipline, because we know that major life change even small changes often require heavy lifting. They are not easy to do. And is not unusual that sometimes motivation takes a walk, it just goes out the door and we just feel flat were are not able to continue to do the kinds of things we need to in order to move ahead. And that's why discipline becomes so, so important. Now an element of discipline which people often don't talk about is this dynamic of resilience. Resilience is sort of bounce back ability, where you fall off a horse, you get back on it. So one of the things that I encourage people to do, at the beginning of their processes is to build in what I call a recovery plan. Where they will find ways to renew their energy, which then allows them to continuously apply discipline, even when motivation has taken a walk. One of the things that modern research and actually imprint new pathways on our brain. And those new pathways enable us to develop new habits. If we couldn't

develop new habits we wouldn't be able to change. We couldn't shed our old habits. And the science shows that the key dynamic in enabling us to imprint new neuro pathways is what they call attentional focus. Were we really focused our attention on the task that we need to do in order to make the changes we want to make. And when we do that it's not simply a matter of on the surface shifting behaviors. But it's a matter of imprinting these new behaviors in our brains neural pathways so that they become new habits.

Kris And how do people increase that attentional focus?

Fred They do it in a conscious way so that they think about what it is that they wanted to do. They have a vision of where they want to go and they literally envision it, they visualize it in an intense period of time each day, and over time that will imprint itself on your brain. I created a sacred mantra, creative mantra, every morning when I get up I ask myself how my going to live my creative mantra and every night before going to bed I ask myself in concrete ways, how have you lived your creative mantra? So I am continuously reminding myself. And when things come my way, opportunities, I always run it through the filter of my creative mantra and they will enable me to live my mantra. Now my mantra is create, integrate, make a difference. Those are the things that energize me, that motivate me, that keep me true myself in this world. And if every day I cannot demonstrate to myself that I am living my creative mantra then I need to make adjustments. I put the creative mantra on my website. I have it on my business cards. Whenever I give a business out to somebody, I will say to them if you want to contact me here is the information on my coordinates, but if you flip this card over, I will say, but if you really want to know what I am all about, this is what I'm all about create, integrate, make a difference. So that's an example of how people can develop a attentional focus, they can develop their own creative mantra to do that.

Kris Well, Fred that is just a great amount of information, really helpful and thank you so much Fred.

Fred Yeah, I appreciate the opportunity to chat.

Kris Oh, I do too.

That's the end of our interview, and I hope you've enjoyed it. For more great health related interviews go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).