

BOLD JOURNEY

Meet Rana Florida

May 2, 2023



We're excited to introduce you to the always interesting and insightful Rana Florida. We hope you'll enjoy our conversation with her.

Hi Rana, thank you so much for making time for us today. Let's jump right into a question so many in our community are looking for answers to – how to overcome creativity blocks, writer's block, etc. We'd love to hear your thoughts or any advice you might have.

As basic as this may sound, I find that I have the most creative energy after I've enjoyed a good night's rest. People tend to underestimate the value of sleep for their mood, outlook and overall well-being. When we don't sleep enough, or when our sleep is disrupted, it's harder for our brains to form ideas and perform at their best. Researcher bears this out: REM sleep is beneficial to the creative process. If you want to get your brain firing on all its cylinders, make sure you prioritize sleep. For our brains to perform optimally, most of us need seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

Also, once you feel burned out, don't keep at it. Take a break and walk away from the work or project. Creative ideas don't happen all at once, they need time to take shape or form. Churning them over in your mind and finding new avenues or paths is part of the creative process.

Immersing yourself in nature is like pushing a reset button—countless studies in environmental psychology show that experiencing nature confers huge benefits, including stress reduction and an enhanced sense of wellbeing. So unplug your devices and take a walk in the woods or a park. Listen to the sounds around you, smell the plants, and enjoy the sights. Nature has a profound effect on our creative thinking and focus.

Thanks, so before we move on maybe you can share a bit more about yourself?

As Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Class Group, I manage new business development, marketing, consulting, research and global operations. I have the pleasure of working with such amazing organizations, including Meta (Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram), BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Starwood Hotels – to name just a few.

Prior to this role, I was Vice President of Marketing for HMSHost, the world's largest airport developer. I was based in Washington, DC, where I concentrated on corporate strategy, communications, and marketing.

I had a lot of fun prior to that serving as Vice President of Communications for Disney on Ice and Disney Live! I wish I had my kids then. Feld Entertainment produced the largest family entertainment shows around the US.

My husband is the well-known urbanist and professor Richard Florida, who wrote the book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. We helped found and launch CityLab, a digital platform for *The Atlantic* (which is now a part of Bloomberg). I also worked on events and programming for The Aspen Ideas Institute and the Bloomberg Foundation.

I enjoy writing about business and leadership and have contributed numerous articles to *Fast Company*, *Inc.com*, the *Huffington Post*, the *Miami Herald*, *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Market Watch* and the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. I served as a guest business analyst on The Today Show and MSNBC's The Cycle and have been a contributor to Fox News for several years.

I have had amazing opportunities to interview high profile luminaries, from President Bill Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama to Andre Agassi, and many more. My most important

work, however, are my philanthropic endeavors, which include projects for The United Nations Global Network on Digital Technologies and Sustainable Urbanization for UN-Habitat, The International Olympics Committee, the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association, Silver Art Projects, The National Ballet of Canada, St. Mike's Hospital Neo-natal Intensive Care Unit, the Luminato Festival, *Travel & Leisure's* Rebel Awards, The Design-Exchange, the Isabella Blow Foundation, Girls E-Mentorship, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Airports Council International, the Council for International Visitors, Best Buddies Canada, and The Founders Junior Council of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

My book *Upgrade—Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary* was a business bestseller for Tattered Cover, the largest independent book retailer in the U.S. and an editor's pick at *The Globe and Mail*.

There is so much advice out there about all the different skills and qualities folks need to develop in order to succeed in today's highly competitive environment and often it can feel overwhelming. So, if we had to break it down to just the three that matter most, which skills or qualities would you focus on?

It's okay to screw up! I often say that failure is just the beginning. The problem is that we are brought up to get good grades, make all the right teams, score the winning goal. If we fail a class, we won't get into a good school, we won't get a good job. But this is not how people learn. You have to take risks.

In his book *The Startup Playbook*, David Kidder interviewed Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx. She said she remembers her dad asking her every day, "What did you fail at today?" He made it clear to her that failure was a sign that she had tried something new, which was a good thing. Personally, I studied my whole life so I could get an MBA and land a corporate job. When I got one, I felt like my big dream had been a sham. I was stuck in traffic every day, I had crazy bosses, I had no control over my schedule. I left corporate America, which was sort of a failure, but it led me to where I am today.

How would you describe your ideal client?

The Creative Class works with a lot of highly knowledgeable people and companies. We love a team that is trying to make the world a better place, whether it's by building better places to live, developing new products or services, or enhancing existing ones. Clients that don't settle, that invest in continuous improvement, are the most inspiring to us.

Contact Info:

- **Website:** www.ranaflorida.com
- **Instagram:** ranaflorida
- **Linkedin:** ranaflorida
- **Twitter:** ranaflorida
- **Other:** www.creativeclass.com

















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