



The Tuttle Times Exclusive Interview with Parker and Christian Jacobs

Question:

After careers as young actors, what were your first entrepreneurial ideas/projects? Did you ever have “real jobs”?

Parker:

After my acting days sort of tapered off, the first thing I got involved in was music and performing live. First with my own band and then helping my brother Christian with his band, The Aquabats! That also involved graphic design, creating merchandise and drawing album covers.

The idea with the Aquabats was turning it into a TV show (which we did) and later, making Yo Gabba Gabba!

“Real jobs” were always a part of starting out. I worked as a caterer and a bus-boy. I even worked at McDonald’s! Later as a graphic artist for Paul Frank Industries. I learned valuable things in every job. The difference was that I wasn’t satisfied with those jobs as my career and just stopped there. While staying employed, I kept working on other projects and nurturing ideas until the things I wanted to do could come to fruition.

Christian:

Growing up as a young actor in Hollywood... I didn’t realize it, but I learned a whole lot about making entertainment while working in entertainment. If that makes sense? Working on a lot of commercials and TV shows, etc. gave me a pretty good insight on how to make things. It also took some of the magic out of it, but made it more achievable in a sense. Like, ‘I can do this!’

As a teen, I loved art and I loved music and I loved skateboarding.

I worked at a surf shop, putting skateboards together for a few years and that kind of spiraled into making connections in the skateboarding industry.

Which led to me having a ‘I can do this moment’ by getting involved in the production of skate videos which was fun and very informative.

But yeah... I worked other “real jobs” many times! I think I just gravitated towards the jobs I wanted to work... Like things I was interested in!

Question:

What were your personal motivations (or expectations) for doing the things you've done? Just money or something bigger?

Parker:

Security that comes through money was always a motivation. Maybe if I had more money, I would have been less motivated. However, there were easier ways to get money if that's all I wanted. The goal was to be able to do what I wanted to do creatively. To share my light and ideas and still be able to provide for my family and future.

Christian:

I think for me I just like being part of making cool stuff. Whether it's me making cool stuff or a committee of my friends making cool stuff with me I just like being a part of the production process where everybody has a role and we all work together to make something really fun.

I think for me my main motivation in life has always been kind of having fun. And I really enjoy having fun with friends and family. Especially when we're all working together to make something fun and cool..

I always figured if you make something cool enough, the money will come.

And it does... Sometimes! Ha ha

Question:

When did you decide to try to make these into real businesses? Were you afraid?

Parker:

It evolved from a hobby to something popular enough to merit full time work. Fear could always be a factor, but we always had confidence that what we could share had value to people if we could just present it to them the way we wanted to. I'm glad no one told me I wasn't good enough to do something, I always felt I could. I had a very supportive family.

Christian:

Back in about 1999-2000 I was working for a clothing company, playing with the Aquabats and doing things on the side to try to make things happen in film.

When we came up with the idea of Yo Gabba Gabba, we actually pitched it around a little bit for a couple of years and realized That if we were gonna do it, we would just have to quit our jobs and do it. That was when it got real.

I was married and had two kids that it actually became a little scary to go out on a limb and make our Yo Gabba Gabba idea into a real business.

I think while you're young and don't have big commitments and responsibilities like having a family, you should take more risks, try things, and start businesses because...what have you got to lose?

Question:
Did you ever experience rejection?
Did you ever have doubts and think you might give up?

Parker:

I think my experience as a child actor helped me grow a tough skin when it came to rejection. I auditioned regularly for countless roles, knowing I more than likely wouldn't get hired for.

I learned not to attach my self-worth to getting hired. If I wasn't a right fit for the job, that was okay, and I used it as a learning experience. Sometimes it's worse to be hired for a job that you aren't a good fit for. And then when you get the job and do it well, it feels really good! Doubts can creep in, but confidence can help you to be brave.

Christian:

I agree with Parker. From the time I was four years old to age 19, I probably went on thousands of auditions and faced many rejections. But at the same time I also had some success, and I came to the realization that the only way to success was through failure, if that makes sense.

I spent two years in Japan on a church mission and again faced thousands of rejections to the message I was trying to share. But I learned early that if you just don't think about the rejections, but keep your eyes on the prize, eventually you'll find what you're supposed to. And you'll find success.

So, we are used to rejection and failure because it's part of the process.

Question:
What were some breakthrough moments, when you realized the real power in yourself and your ideas? How did that change you?

Parker:

First seeing my work in a record store was so thrilling! Years later seeing Yo Gabba Gabba Live at the Nokia theatre in LA was very satisfying too. It was fulfilling knowing that you could help create something that many people find value in.

Christian:

When I was a kid and I would draw weird pictures on the top of my skateboard with paint markers, which was kind of a fad in the 80s. I started noticing people complimenting me on the stuff I would draw.

When I was 15, the surf shop I worked at actually hired me to do custom paint jobs for customers. It was another moment where I thought 'hey, I can do this...'

Also seeing my work on an Aquabats album cover and a t-shirt in a record store was so thrilling!

Years later, seeing Yo Gabba Gabba Live with my kids at a sold out performance in the Nokia theatre in LA was also a pinnacle moment. It was fulfilling seeing I could help create something that people enjoyed and were willing to support monetarily.

Question:

What are 2-3 things young people who have big ideas should know?

Parker:

1. Big ideas are great! It really helps to have a goal to work for. And if you have the talent to make it happen, that's wonderful! But you have to WORK FOR IT.

2. Talking about your idea can help you think about it, improve it and help collaborators get involved, but WARNING! BIG DANGER: Sometimes talking about the idea can give you a false satisfaction that you've already accomplished it. When you talk about the idea, focus on what you need to do to accomplish the idea or it will never become real.

3. The difference between a dream and reality is being persistent enough to make it happen. President Calvin Coolidge said "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts." That means, don't get discouraged, and don't be satisfied by the dream itself. Be satisfied by the completion of the dream. Don't give up.

Christian:

If your ideas keep you up at night and you see your ideas in dreams... Then don't give up no matter what!

Also, in this day and age, you don't have to wait for a big company to pay you money to do your idea... You can save up your own money and relatively cheaply do your thing.

There's a guy in my neighborhood who just printed his third book... No publishing company, no money upfront. He just saved up his money and did it himself. Now he's gonna have to figure out how to pay himself back or make money off of his books, but he wanted to make a book and he just went out and did it.

Look at YouTube or look at comic books or music. If you're into it, you can do it. I mean, read the story of the guy that built the Statue of Liberty! He wanted to make it so he just went out and got it done!

**Watch Yo Gabba Gabba
& The Aquabats Supershow
on YouTube, Amazon, Apple TV, Roku,
and other video streaming services!**