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Meet School of Life Design: Self-Love & Mindfulness Made Simple

Posted on [August 9, 2016](#) by [Nirvana](#)

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Have you ever heard people gushing about the Law of Attraction and just thought to yourself, “Get a grip. Jeez.”? Well, you’re not alone, but you should reconsider shutting them out and instead hearing what those weirdos have to say. If it comes on too strong by being called a “law”, well I have some things to show you that will make manifesting a less scary and more approachable concept.

Introducing Kelly and Jessica, a couple of girls from the Midwest that have formed this wonderful idea into a sort of take-home workshop for the mind. Interactive zines and journals get you into the groove of positive energy and self-love without being too “preachy” about the abundance you may encounter from these practices. They’re easy-to-read and easy-to-digest. Learn a little more about School of Life Design, then do yourself a huge favor and [visit their website](#) or in person in Austin, TX at one of their many markets and events!

First, please tell us a little bit about your team and your artistic background. Where are y’all from? Where are you

now?

Co-founded by Kelly Cree and Jessica Mullen in 2010, School of Life Design is still essentially a two-woman show, although we do get a lot of help from our friends.

Both of us are from Illinois—Kelly a small, west-central train town called Galesburg, and Jessica the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. We both earned BFAs in Graphic Design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Jessica in 2005, Kelly in 2007). Coincidentally, both of us began undergrad majoring in Computer Science before switching to Graphic Design.

We didn't meet until 2007, just a few days after Kelly graduated. Jessica, after working for a couple of design firms in Chicago, returned to U of I to teach a summer session web design course. Our mutual mentor introduced us at a bar,

and we immediately felt like we'd known each other for years.

We moved to Austin, Texas in 2008 for Jessica to pursue her Masters in Design from University of Texas. Her intention was to teach at the university level, but upon graduating, she decided teaching in an institution was too limiting. That's when we started our own school: School of Life Design! We've been living and loving life in Austin ever since.







Describe School of Life Design for us.

School of Life Design (SoLD) is a curriculum for conscious creation.

It began as eight lessons on [Jessica's blog](#) that intertwined the principles of the law of attraction with the focus of Jessica's graduate studies, "life-streaming as a life design methodology." In essence, these introductory lessons taught that if one's thoughts create one's reality, a fun way to wield this power is by sharing one's thoughts online. If graphic design is using visual elements to communicate a message, life design is choosing actions, thoughts, feelings, and states of being to create and communicate oneself. With life-streaming as the methodology, life designers could attain a heightened sense of self-awareness, and through this

awareness comes iteration and positive change. We still advocate for life-streaming as a life design methodology, but because sharing online is such a prevalent aspect of modern life, we no longer feel the need to specifically teach about it or encourage it. Most people already do it!

Simply put: we teach you how to design your life with your thoughts. And ultimately what that boils down to is learning to let go of your thoughts until you see life already is the way you want it to be!

School of Life Design is not a physical place, but we have an online store, in-person workshops, a speaker series, a pop-up market called the Mystic Market, and we sell our books across the country in book stores and through zine distros.





When did the ball start rolling on making this idea a business?

In 2009 we read *The Four Hour Workweek* by Tim Ferriss, and we knew right then that we would start a business that

focused on digital information products and passive income. We definitely picked our business model before we knew what to sell, and we dabbled in fetish videos, affiliate advertising and membership sites.

It was only after watching The Secret, listening to a TON of Abraham-Hicks, walking around the city in the middle of the night for months trying to explain this new philosophy to each other, and releasing the first eight School of Life Design lessons, that we began focusing on selling positive thinking resources like self-love worksheet PDFs and philosophical audio lessons. Over time we amassed a little bit of a following and a lot of manifestation exercises, so we took all of the conscious creation tools we made and re-imagined them as the Monthly Manifestation Manual. This monthly planner became our flagship product and we started setting up a booth at pop-ups in Austin to market test and present our product to people in real life.





What's the process like when you initiate a new workbook or project?

We tend to start with, “Let’s make a book/blog/newsletter/audio/video about□” The next step is deciding the form and how we will produce it in a low-cost, scalable fashion. Since we print a lot of our materials

ourselves, it is important for us to begin by considering how much ink we will use, how many cuts we will need to make for trimming, how many pages (must be a multiple of 4) and how the piece will be folded/bound. If we intend to publish through our digital press, Lulu.com, we have to choose a format based on one of their offerings. Typically, when designing for print, we always design in black and white to save on ink costs.

Then we bust out the pens and do a lot of drawing to determine the aesthetic and composition. You may notice that most of our work demonstrates a similar illustration style, and this is a result of the flower of life grid we use for our drawings. While not limited to this grid, we tend to use this as a starting point for all of our visuals. This lends a sense of cohesiveness to all of our work. We have a huge pile of pre-printed grid paper that we turn to every time we start a new project.

The copyrighting always comes last, after we know what the whole thing looks and feels like.



What are your favorite art supplies? Are there any mediums that intimidate you?

Jessica's favorite is a pen and sketchbook because it's portable and scan-able. She also works in Photoshop a lot. She's intimidated by projects that require precise measuring or impeccable craftsmanship, but her craft is improving every day!

Kelly's favorite is also pen and paper, because she loves the way it feels. 3-D work intimidates her, since nearly failing her 3-D design class in undergrad. For a wire sculpture project, she chose to re-create a tube of toothpaste. It didn't even occur to her that that was one of the flattest things she could try to imitate. Now, she sticks to designs she can print on paper. She would love to get into 3-D printing though.



How has reaching out with School of Life Design changed your life?

When we started selling our books at pop up markets, we were uncertain about our message and shy about

salesmanship. Now we know exactly what we make and how to talk about it. The clarity we have found by putting ourselves on the spot is invaluable! We are now pretty fearless and confident about what we make.

We have also met so many like-minded creators and learned how rewarding it is to “shop local” and support our fellow entrepreneurs. Slowly but surely, we are learning to thrive outside The System. Finding ways to teach and work outside of traditional institutions is thrilling. Following through with the School of Life Design, even through the tough times when we thought we should give up and get jobs, has taught us to believe in ourselves and see we truly have the power to help ourselves and others without having to be under The Man’s thumb.

The most powerful aspect, though, has been getting to meet so many fellow conscious creators who believe their thoughts create their reality too! The reward of getting to

talk to someone whose life we have truly touched with our work is beyond comparison. Moreover, every time we get to have a conversation with someone about the magick of life, it enhances our magickal abilities as well!



Please tell us about the things your company offers, like journals and printable templates, and the things you do in your community that pertain to your magnificent work.

The [Monthly Manifestation Manual](#) is our top-selling, most comprehensive tool we offer. It is a 31-day planner that has 31 “Have a Great Day” templates to help you organize your thoughts with prompts like “Today’s Mantra,” “Best Parts of My Day,” “How I Want to Feel,” and a “To Do Not Give a Fuck About” list. In between each daily page is a different mindfulness, manifestation, gratitude or appreciation exercise that helps one focus on what she wants and what’s already going well.

When we started doing workshops, we took subsections of the Monthly Manifestation Manual and designed them into zine workbooks for attendees. In addition to the five MMM-

based workshops, we created two more workshops with accompanying workbook zines with all-new material. One is a meditation companion called How to Quantum Leap and the other is Thinky Thoughty Creations, which is our first all-ages resource created with kids in mind. We used this workbook for our very first kids' workshop this summer at Camp GEN, which is a summer camp for 4th-8th grade girls put on by the Girls Empowerment Network in Austin.

In addition to the journals and workshop zines, we offer guided video meditations, books of poetry and love potions, and free printable PDF downloads like “[The Less Fucks You Give, The Happier You'll Live](#)” list, and our “[Daily Practice](#)” exercise.

Our curated pop-up, the Mystic Market, brings together mystical vendors, healers and psychic practitioners to create an uplifting and energizing space for conscious creators to convene, heal, and of course, shop. We recently got our feet

wet collaborating with intuitive educator Betsy LeFae on her Intuition 101 workshop and we intend to parlay that amazing experience into a full-blown speaker series. The next installment, scheduled for August, will discuss the metaphysical connections between quantum computing and conscious creation and will be presented by Texas A&M Nuclear Engineering graduate student, Ryan Brito. Finally, we are ecstatic to announce our very first Consciousness Carnival– an all-ages extravaganza featuring conscious crafts, tarot readings, a raffle, and book signing.



When were you first aware of the Law of Attraction?

In April 2010, Jessica posted something on Facebook about deciding to smile on her bike ride home from a hard day at school, which resulted in her feeling better. A friend of hers

messed her saying, “I think you’re ready to watch The Secret.” We watched The Secret and were blown away by the premise that our thoughts create reality. But of course! How obvious! We became obsessed with this new knowledge and another friend introduced us to Abraham-Hicks, who are the people who channeled much of the philosophy behind The Secret. We listened to hours upon hours of Abraham workshops until we felt we really understood the philosophy enough to practice it.



What makes y'all happiest in life?

Being interviewed! Haha. But really, our happiest is when we go on long walks together and talk about this crazy thing we're doing called life. For us, any problem can be solved and

any mood can be lifted with a long walk and good conversation.

Other sources of happy for Jessica are working on her websites, playing with flow toys like hula hoops, Astrojax and slack lining, and being at the lake. For Kelly, what makes her happiest is organizing events, finishing an impeccable design, having good ideas, and being right!

School of Life Design Presents: Happy Place Market in Austin, TX on Friday, August 12, 2016.

***Update: Kelly & Jessica are moving back to the Midwest. Their last event is THIS FRIDAY AUGUST 12TH IN AUSTIN. You're an inspiration, girls! We wish you the best, best, best of luck and hope that you keep up with this wonderful thing you've created together!**

School of Life Design Links:

[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Facebook Group](#) | [Twitter](#)

Read More at Pop!



[Kristen M. Liu Forever](#)

This week, I chatted up Kristen Liu! It took all I had not to go□



[Best Witch Movies - Top 5](#)

Stardust: This film has an amazing ensemble cast of Claire Danes, Michelle Pfeiffer, Robert DeNiro, Claire□



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Here are looks to make this season magical, dreamy, and beautiful. Photos



are by Marisa

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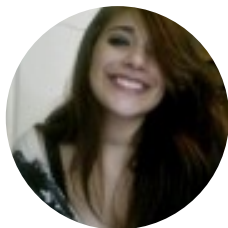


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NIRVANA

I am a painter and have organized art exhibitions as

well. I have been collaborating with Pop Shop since 2013 – helping build festival art and displays and running VIP & the info desk. I love puppies, contemporary art, and can probably outdrink your boyfriend.

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A photograph showing two people from the chest up, holding up white pillows. Each pillow has a simple line drawing of a face with a large, pointed beak, resembling a penguin or a stylized bird. The people are wearing dark clothing. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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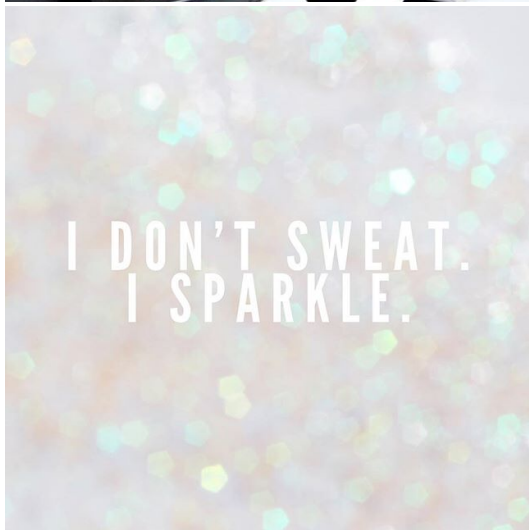
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