

## God, Life and Everything "Our Reality TV Show"

My son loves some of the current reality TV shows, especially "Survivor" and "The Amazing Race."

I don't.

I don't watch any reality TV because I think it's dumb.

But why should that stop me from creating my own reality TV show? After all, how much thought does something like that take? Besides, my sons and I came up with a show that I might actually watch.

One of the things I hate about reality TV is that it pits people against each other - voting participants off the island or having them kicked out of the race or booted from the house or, well you get the idea.

But what if there were a show that brought strangers together not to beat each other but to cooperate together? That's the idea behind our show which we have dubbed "Out of Your Element." This is the statement of belief we came up with for the show:

Life is not a competition. It's a cooperation. We believe that a group of strangers can express incredible creativity and resourcefulness even when there is nothing to win, nobody to beat - just a project to complete that takes them out of their element.

So how does our show work?

There is a panel of experts in a wide range of creative fields including mechanics and carpentry. They are the "regulars" who provide continuity each week. The host (or a volunteer from the audience) spins a giant wheel with each of the fields listed on it. Whatever area of expertise it lands on, the participants will have to create a project in that field. The expert for that field will be their mentor over the course of a week.

The participants (I'll talk about how they're selected later) will to design and execute a project. If the field is book publishing, they will have to come up with a book idea and write it together in one week. If it's carpentry, they will have to design and build, say, a piece of furniture. Movies? They have to make a movie. Mechanics? Build a car. Visual arts? Create a painting. Music? Write and perform a song (or album).

Impossible? Well, yes, if you're looking for professional quality.

But that's exactly the point of this show. This show features people who are not experts. Only their mentor will have professional expertise in any particular area. Everyone in the audience who wants to be considered for participation has to fill out a questionnaire listing their background expertise. When the wheel is spun and lands on a field, anyone who has listed that field as their area will be ineligible to participate.

The team of eligible participants are then picked by drawing lots (or some other entertaining means of randomly selecting people). Team size doesn't matter - maybe eight's a good number.

That's it: The team has one week to create their project. They get one or two hours a day to meet with their mentor, but everything else is their own. At the end, they present their project. The likelihood of it being great is pretty slim because all of the team members are out of their element.

So why do this? For two big reasons:

1) to highlight how people can still create even when they aren't professionals. We have become disabled as a society from doing things because we think of ourselves

as not good enough. For example, fewer people today sing or play music just for the fun of it. Instead, we listen to the pros. Fewer people create art today than in the past - they watch shows or look at pictures. I would like to encourage people to see the joy of creating without worrying about having to be great.

2) to show that working together can be as entertaining as competing against each other. As our mission statement says, life is not a competition, it's a cooperation. Too often, we see life as a zero sum game - if you do well, I will do poorly; I have to beat others in order to make it in life. In reality, life is best when you and I do well together.

So that's the show. Any TV producers out there can reach me through this paper. I'll be waiting.