

# Creating a Joyful Planet – How Andy Hopson is Helping



Patrice Tanaka  
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[Patrice Tanaka](#), Founder & Chief Joy Officer of Joyful Planet LLC, interviews people who are actively living their purpose and contributing to a more joyful planet. This interview spotlights [Andy Hopson](#), Executive Director, The Agency at the University of Florida.

**PT:** Andy, what I love and admire about you is how you're following your passion and living your purpose in what you're doing now. Can you share your life's purpose with us? I define a life's purpose as one that leverages your greatest talent and passion in service of people and planet.

**AH:** Thank you Patrice. I'm fortunate to have an opportunity at this point of my career to work in an academic environment with young people who will soon replace my generation. To be honest, my purpose has not always been so noble. Earlier in my career I was preoccupied with clawing my way up the ladder, making more money and occupying the biggest corner office. While that ambition motivated my professional successes, in hindsight it was self-centered and often unfulfilling.

At this stage of life, my focus has changed. My purpose is to *help others by building their confidence and teaching them skills that will set them apart in their professions and lives.*

**PT:** What is your current profession and how is it

different/similar to what you have been doing for most of your career?



Andy Hopson  
Executive Director  
The Agency at the  
University of  
Florida

**AH:** In 2014 I moved from Chicago to Gainesville, FL with my wife Lisa, to launch and lead The Agency™, a strategic communication firm that is an auxiliary of the University of Florida. I've worked in public relations and advertising agencies for most of my 35 year career, so this is familiar turf. What is different is the structure and focus. The Agency is led by professionals, staffed by a team of 85 students, and inspired by faculty. It is singularly focused on marketing to millennials.

The purpose of The Agency is threefold: 1) Provide students with immersive learning opportunities so they'll be better prepared for the job market. 2) Generate a revenue stream to sustain the growth of this initiative and also help fund other programs in the UF College of Journalism and Communications. 3) Create a famous agency, known for its thought leadership and unique offerings.

Last month we took a major step toward accomplishing these goals when we launched [MAVY™, a virtual community of millennials](#). Designed as a forum for millennials to engage

their peers, MAVY provides companies and marketers with a unique tool to test products, concepts and ideas. Through a partnership with Chicago-based, C+R Research and Elite Daily, MAVY will soon be populated with 10,000 members who will participate in research using methods and tools most appealing to this age group (discussion forums, BuzzFeed-type quizzes, games, mobile missions). Members are engaged through mobile apps and a [compelling website](#). They are rewarded with badges, Amazon points and the opportunity to join with other millennials to define their own generation. The Agency's young team members help manage the community and analyze the research, ensuring that no nuances are overlooked or misinterpreted. We call this "Millennials engaging Millennials™." Our business model is to work as partners with agencies seeking a secret sauce to help their clients better understand millennials. MAVY is a unique and important tool for this purpose.

**PT: Please share with us how it feels to be living your life's purpose through your current job? Specifically, how would you describe it in terms of the success, fulfillment and joy you experience?**



The Agency Retreat

**AH:** We work in an open environment, no offices and very few doors, creating a collaborative culture. I have dozens of exchanges daily with student team members hungry for knowledge and eager to learn as we work together, as entrepreneurs, to win business and serve our clients. It is a tremendously rewarding experience. I come to work every morning excited and eager to find out what awaits. I have to force myself to go home at night.

**PT: How do you live this purpose in your personal and professional life?**

**AH:** I'm acutely aware of the humanness of the people I interact with on a daily basis. I'm more humble because I know my own many imperfections. I try to be less judgmental and kinder. I realize an act of kindness or a positive acknowledgement to people I encounter can make a huge difference. I'd rather uplift people than drag them down.

**PT: What is the result of knowing and actively living your life's purpose?**

**AH:** The satisfaction that comes from helping others is incomparable to selfish pleasures. There is no guilt in doing the right thing.

**PT: What are your greatest hopes and dreams for the life purpose you have chosen?**

**AH:** To make a positive difference in the lives of the students I work with, and people I encounter, and to leave behind a legacy my children and grandchildren will be proud of.

**PT: What do you think you would be doing now if you hadn't determined and then actively begun to live your purpose?**

**AH:** I would have been doing what I'd always done, self-absorbed and impervious to the needs of the people around me –

a lonelier, less fulfilling lifestyle.

**PT: How important is it for people to discover their life's purpose? What advice would you give to the students you work with about discovering their life's purpose?**

**AH:** Living your life's purpose is the only path to fulfillment and personal happiness. Finding that purpose should be the highest priority. If I'd had that enlightenment earlier in my life, I would have done many things differently.

**About the Author:** [Patrice Tanaka](#) is a serial entrepreneur, having co-founded three award-winning, PR & marketing firms and, most recently, Joyful Planet, a Business & Life Strategy Consultancy. "Through Joyful Planet, I am doing what I love and what I do best, leveraging my creative, problem-solving talent to help individuals and organizations discover and live their purpose and move forward more successfully and joyfully in business and life," says Patrice. This is the subject of Patrice's new best-selling book, [Beat the Curve](#), co-authored with world renowned management consultant and coach, Brian Tracy, and other business leaders. Her chapter is entitled, "Live Your Life's Purpose and Unleash Your Joy." Connect with [Patrice@JoyfulPlanet.com](mailto:Patrice@JoyfulPlanet.com), via [LinkedIn/Patrice Tanaka](#) and [Twitter/Patrice Tanaka](#)