

MATTHEW SHAFFER DISCUSSES A PROFESSIONAL DANCE CAREER & SOCIAL MEDIA

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Author of "So You Want to Be a Dancer" Matthew Shaffer weighs in with some advice for our readers on why your social media should be more than just a naked #Selfie!

Matt Shaffer is a professional choreographer, director and dancer, best known for his work on Broadway. He's extended his career across multiple media platforms including television, film, musical theater, and dance companies in both NYC and Los Angeles. Shaffer recently released his book "So You Want to Be A Dancer" offering advice to current dance performers on their career and on how to branch out into other areas of the industry, something he's been successful in doing. You can catch Matt next on Netflix's *Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp* starring Paul Rudd and Amy Poehler.

But first, he offers his advice exclusively to our Press Pass LA readers on the new world of the insta-celebrity and how to approach social media as a working professional....

Close your eyes and try to recall what life was like before we became a fame-obsessed society trying to *Keep Up With The Kardashians*. Go ahead, I'll update my Facebook profile while you focus on arousing the memory of life in America before social media, TMZ, and sex tapes.

Before the endless hours of reality TV programming, talent-based competition shows and overnight YouTube celebrities, I was focused on following my passion. I loved performing, and after finding inspiration from movies like *Grease*, *Dirty Dancing* and *Singing In The Rain*, I decided that I NEEDED to be an entertainer. I spent every waking hour watching movies, writing stories, acting out sketches and training. By the time I reached middle school, I was in dance classes every day after school and on most weekends. I was dedicated to becoming an expert in my field, and thankfully I had supportive parents and plenty of ambition.

After years of hard work, sacrifice and luck, I found my way into the entertainment industry. Ten years into my journey as a performer, dotcoms and social media sites were establishing the new frontier for our culture. You were no longer just an artist creating art, you were a brand with a name! This idea was not necessarily revolutionary—Andy Warhol, Marilyn Monroe and many others had figured this out years before. But now, we have a platform from which anyone, ANYONE, in the world can be an overnight star!

What fascinates me is that we've become a society filled with endless opportunities for fame and fortune and we've lost the motivation to create meaningful work. There's less incentive for aspiring artists to study music, dance, theater, or creative writing, because if they can captivate a large enough audience on Instagram, they'll make money without having to build on a craft.

This doesn't necessarily guarantee a sustained career path, but if you're willing to occasionally expose a nipple or leak a rant online, you can find a few more minutes in the spotlight. I'm aware I may sound jealous and bitter about the fact that I don't have fifteen billion followers on Twitter yet (please follow: [@funnyshaffer](#)), but the truth is I'm making a call to all of the young dancers, actors, storytellers, artists and innovators out there to harness their creativity and elevate the social media world into more than just another half-naked #Selfie.

For more tips for Matt, pick up his book or visit [Matthewshaffer.com](#)

You can also check out his recent Q & A in [Backstage!](#)

