

A templative tale from  
**Mischief Marketing**


## **Mischievous Estee Lauder**

[ excerpted from Chapter 8 (print edition) ... ]

... Or take professional chefs. They know what can go wrong in the field of gourmet cooking. Real chefs know, for instance, that if you buy cheap utensils you won't get good results.

Now, that sounds simple enough, doesn't it?

Amateurs don't always know this simple rule, however, so they skimp on utensils. Then they end up taking two hours to cook a dish that should have taken thirty minutes — and again, they wonder what happened.

 **In any field, a critical difference between professionalism and amateurism is knowing — or not knowing — what can go wrong.**

That's why in this part of the book we're going to concentrate on some of the things that can go wrong when you embark on a mischief marketing campaign. And in this field, of all the things that can go wrong, *your internal psychological state* and *certain psychosocial factors* are the most important, and therefore potentially the most troublesome.

Put this another way.

You've heard a number of fascinating stories about how various brilliant and famous people have used mischief marketing. Right? So far, so good. In fact, here's another good one.

Take a break for a second and check this story out. It's about Estee Lauder.

## Clumsy Estee

Cosmetics queen Estee Lauder was one of the greatest entrepreneurs ever. Starting at the bottom, she built an empire that today is worth over three billion dollars.

Here's how she managed (mischievously of course) to land an important buyer for her first perfume, even though the buyer was a real Cerberus-type watchdog who tried to block Lauder's efforts.

*By 1960, the ever-aggressive Lauder had launched an international program and personally broke the prestigious Harrod's account in London. She was forced to resort to some sales creativity to break the prestigious Galleries Lafayette account in Paris. When she could not get the manager to agree to stock her products, Lauder "accidentally" spilled her Youth Dew [her first fragrance] on the floor during a demonstration in the middle of a crowd. The appealing scent was pervasive and aroused customer interest and comments. The manager capitulated and gave her an initial order.*

— Landrum, Gene N. *Profiles of Female Genius: Thirteen Creative Women Who Changed the World*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1994, page 252.

### ~ Idea Joggers ~

What can *you* do to demonstrate your offering “accidentally?”

Can you enlist your friends to play the role of “strangers” interested in your offering, so that your prospect will take a second look?

If your offering is a powerful chemical corrosive, for example, can you “accidentally” spill it so that it bores through your prospect's floor a cavity so gigantic that, within seconds, all the furniture and everyone in the office slides into it screaming?


That's a pretty decent story, right?

And yet, the “secrets” that contribute most heavily to the design of a successful mischief marketing campaign have nothing to do with how this particular person snuck onto a movie lot; or how this one spilled some perfume on the floor; or how this one posed as a man, or as a woman, or as a bum.

Evocative or even inspiring though such stories may be, they tell us little about how to do something authentically fresh, creative, and original. They are, in a way, a bunch of “been there; done that” stories.

No, the factors in mischief marketing that really matter are not technical or logistical. They're not “tricks.” Tricks are easy compared to what we're about to talk about — the *creative, dynamic* factors. They are the hidden factors that lie *behind* the tales.

Let's first state this flatly, then explain what we mean:

 **Mischief Marketing Tip (“It’s the Soul that Counts”): The most important factors that determine the success of any mischief marketing campaign are psychological, psychosocial —even spiritual.**

Why are these things so important? Why are they so much more important than learning a bunch of mischievous tricks? **Because what drives a good mischief marketing campaign is almost identical to what drives your creativity.** And your creativity is heavily influenced by psychological, psychosocial, and spiritual phenomena.

In other words, to do mischief marketing, you need to be creative. But to be creative, you need to take good care of yourself psychologically (and physically, too, of course).

Now, there are many good books on developing your creativity, and you will find some of the best of them described in the Resources section of MischiefMarketing.com. There's no point in duplicating here the material you can find in those books, so we won't do that.

What we will do instead is discuss some factors that are rarely, or never, discussed in any of those books. These are the factors that affect or impinge upon your ability to be creative — but that very few authors like to talk about.

These factors, incidentally, are *things we have in common with many other people — but that, for some reason, we tend to think are peculiar to us.* In other words, they're public matters that we sadly mistake for private matters.

It's like the way people used to deal with cancer. At one time, believe it or not, people thought cancer was something private, even something to be ashamed of. If you got cancer back in the 1950s, or even in the 1960s, you tried not to talk about it. You did your best to hide it from everyone. It was considered a personal matter.

Why was it considered personal? Who knows? People are nuts.

So it is that — for whatever nutso reason — people didn't talk about cancer for a long time. They thought it was a personal thing.

Same with alcoholism — that disease, too, was a personal matter (or so people thought) for many years. Same with mental illness. Same with pregnancy, for heaven's sake. "Big secret. Private. Don't tell anybody. Poor me. I'm the only person on earth who ever got pregnant."

That's basically what people thought — and still *do* think about many things, although not the same things, of course (they move the nutso target around).

### **Mischievous Pop Quiz:**

Name three things in your life that you secretly believe are "personal" problems unique to you, or to your family, but that you know are really common to millions of people and their families.

Write these "personal" problems in the spaces below, so that you'll see for yourself in black and white that they're not such big deals.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Now rip this page out of the book and burn it! Jeez, *hide* that stuff, will ya?

No no. Just kidding.

The point is this: We human beings tend to take a lot of things personally that are not personal at all. So those are the types of things we're going to discuss now. We're going to talk about factors that affect your ability to be creative, and that you probably happen to mistakenly believe are personal factors — somehow specific to you — but that are actually generic factors that affect *anyone* who tries to do *anything* creative (including, of course, mischief marketing).

And of these psychological factors, the most important one you need to be aware of is *The Gethsemane Effect*.

### **Confronting the Gethsemane Effect**

In the following story about Home Depot, notice how the founders of that hugely successful chain suffered through an early period in which they felt betrayed and snubbed.

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*[... Chapter 8 (print edition) continues at this point ...]*

Know anybody struggling to get started on a shoestring budget?

Why not help them get started?

Tell them about *Mischief Marketing!*