

# METALLICA LEARNS COLLABORATION

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Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's fascinating film "Some Kind of Monster" takes the ultimate behind the scenes look at the hard rock band Metallica as they reform and recreate themselves from the inside out.

Jason, their bassist has quit the band because James, their lead singer (who will soon walk out the door to enter rehab) wouldn't let him play in another band, yet was refusing his creative input to Metallica.

Meanwhile we see Lars, their drummer and co-founder, come to terms with his supportive yet opinionated father while wondering what will happen to the band that's been his life for 20 years.

Bob Rock, their long time producer, now sits in on bass as well as returning to the producer's chair. And Q-Prime, Metallica's management, has hired Phil Towle a "performance coach" to facilitate the band's reconciliation, renewal and regeneration.

While Phil's background is as a therapist, he does take a coach-like approach to working with the band. That is, while his emphasis is on the emotional underpinnings and history of the band member's relationship with each other, he is focused on the present, and the future of what the band will create together, while creating a foundation for how they'll work together in the future.

## **SO, WHAT ARE THE LESSONS HERE, FOR US AS POP CULTURE CREATORS, EXECUTIVES AND LEADERS?**

Most profoundly, the film shows a band of previously hard-rocking, hard-living, alcoholic, groupie-loving, dysfunctional young men who are facing the fact that they now want to work together, as mature men, as friends and as creative partners.

Each member of Metallica brought to the band his own passion, skills, strengths, vulnerabilities, demon's and defense mechanisms, which created an explosive fury transformed into sound.

All that anger, intensity and yes, childhood hurt combined with virtuosity, hard work, and inspiration combined to sell millions of albums and give a voice and sound to the unexpressed emotions to hard rock fans across the globe.

## **FROM STADIUM TO STUDIO**

Yet the future of these four men who tour and play before millions of fans and are now a multi-million dollar business depends on their ability to work and create collaboratively in a small rehearsal room or recording studio.

The intimacy of this creation process is shown in all the boring minutia and unbearable silences of the creative process. Some ideas are good, and some are not. And sometimes we choose to say we are open to something to be supportive and sometimes we must speak out and risk offending someone else's creative idea.

## **BACK FROM REHAB**

One of my favorite parts of the film is watching how James Hatfield, now back from rehab, as he deals with himself, his process and his band members.

Where he once wrote all the lyrics himself, he now allows the whole band to be involved in the lyric writing process. He may not be enjoying it, or always liking what is coming out of the process, but for the sake of the band he goes along with the plan. He relinquishes his total control of the creative process: the same issue that caused Jason, their bassist of 10 years, to leave the band in the beginning of the movie.

On the other hand, seeking now to find a better balance between his family life and his band life, he insists not only that the band only work four hours per day, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm, but that the band stop working when he leaves at 4:00 pm. No jamming, no listening to playback of takes recorded that day. Dead stop. Walk away. The band, reluctantly, agrees to go along.

Would you agree to do the same?

## **SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU:**

What sacrifices are you willing to make to your collaborative process?

What requests are you willing to make of your partners and collaborators that will allow you to heal and balance the parts of your life that are out of alignment with the life you want?

What are the emotional wounds or unresolved issues that are either a motivator for your success, or an impediment to your positive collaboration and creation?

What greater gains would be achieved in your business if you let up on your "total control?"

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