



Abbetuck

THE ARTS, COURAGE, AND CONSEQUENCE

Courage Needs a Checklist

A step-by-step toolkit to prepare for backlash and survive the costs of making bold art.

Risk Checklist & Toolkit for Creators

Courage is easier with preparation. Use this checklist before releasing politically charged or controversial work. It won't remove risk, but it will make it survivable.

Your Risk Assessment Checklist

- ☐ Document what you plan to say/create and why (for your clarity).
 - ☐ Review your employment contract and social media policies.
 - ☐ Secure at least 6 months of savings or a backup income plan.
 - ☐ Identify 3 people who will support you if backlash happens.
 - ☐ Decide whether to use your real name or remain anonymous.
 - ☐ Consult with a legal clinic or artist advocacy organization if needed.
 - ☐ Draft a communication plan for possible employer/family/community reactions.
 - ☐ Decide what you will and won't apologize for.
 - ☐ Secure your online accounts and review digital security basics.
 - ☐ Accept that some consequences may happen ... and choose to speak anyway.
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Resources

Free Expression and First Amendment Rights

When your creative work provokes strong reactions or censorship threats, these organizations help protect your right to create and share freely:

- **National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)** — A longtime defender of artistic freedom across schools, museums, and public spaces. Offers direct advocacy and public visibility for artists facing censorship or suppression. ncac.org →

- **Artists at Risk Connection (ARC)** — A global network connecting threatened artists with emergency assistance, legal aid, relocation support, and advocacy. Especially valuable for artists confronting political repression. artistsatriskconnection.org →
 - **Center for Art Law** — Provides accessible legal education, case updates, and practical guides on copyright, contracts, censorship, and free expression issues specific to artists. itsartlaw.org →
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Legal Risk Assessment

Understanding how your work intersects with the law—whether through contracts, copyright, or public controversy—can prevent costly surprises.

- **Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA)** — Offers pro bono or low-cost legal and financial consultation for artists, arts organizations, and creative entrepreneurs. Links to similar programs nationwide. vlaa.org/get-help/other-vlas/ →
 - **Copyright Alliance** — A hub for artists, writers, and performers to understand and protect their intellectual property rights, including guidance on fair use and registration. copyrightalliance.org →
 - **The Authors Guild** — Legal and contract support for writers, journalists, and literary artists. Members gain access to contract reviews, advocacy, and community forums. authorsguild.org →
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Financial Planning and Safety Nets

Artists working in risky or underfunded spaces often face financial precarity. These groups provide guidance, relief, or emergency funds.

- **Entertainment Community Fund** — Offers financial wellness programs, career counseling, and emergency assistance for performing artists, writers, and behind-the-scenes workers. entertainmentcommunity.org →
 - **Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)** — Emergency relief grants and resources for visual artists and craft workers facing career-threatening disasters or disruptions. cerfplus.org →
 - **Getting Your Sh*t Together (GYST)** — A practical, no-nonsense platform helping artists manage the business side of their careers—budgeting, documentation, taxes, and planning for sustainability. gyst-ink.com →
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Building a Personal Creator Network

Professional networks help sustain your courage and visibility. These organizations connect you with others in your field or across disciplines.

- **SAG-AFTRA Foundation** — Educational programs, career resources, and hardship funds for union actors, broadcasters, and recording artists. sagaftra.foundation →
 - **Rolling Stone Culture Council** — A vetted network of creative professionals, executives, and thought leaders sharing insights and strategies for impact in arts and culture. council.rollingstone.com →
 - **The Creative Independent** — Offers interviews, essays, and guides by working artists across disciplines—an open-source library of wisdom about sustaining a creative life. thecreativeindependent.com →
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Building or Connecting with a Community Coalition

Creative courage scales when it's collective. These resources help you organize, collaborate, and strengthen mutual support in your local or global arts ecosystem.

- **Artists at Risk Connection (ARC)** — (listed above) A vital link for artists forming solidarity networks or connecting with global advocacy coalitions.
 - **National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC)** — (listed above) Supports community defense campaigns against censorship or political intimidation.
 - **Entertainment Community Fund** — (listed above) Encourages artists to build collective safety nets and connect with peer support systems across disciplines.
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Final Word

The goal isn't to eliminate risk. It's to face it with eyes open, plans in place, and allies by your side.

Randall White

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