

Longevity Strength Duty



The pill artists need to swallow

Written by Alfred Msale



ABOUT

I've always loved drawing. Back in primary school, I made comic books with pointy-haired characters — I was obsessed with Naruto, and explaining that to my classmates never quite landed. Still, the passion stuck.

Before I ever had a proper setup for making music or visuals, I saved up and bought myself a sketchbook — something I could afford while working long 11-hour shifts washing cars in Chicago. That sketchbook wasn't much, but it was mine. And it came before the mic, before the DAW. It was my first real creative investment.

Eventually, I saved up enough to buy an iPad. It felt like the answer — the thing I had been waiting for. But even then, I didn't fully understand the tools. I had the hardware, but not the system. I'd watch hours of Procreate tutorials and dig through Instagram for artists who could execute what I had in my head. But most were either out of reach — fully booked, expensive — or didn't quite get the vibe. As an artist with dozens of ideas, I realized something had to change. If I wanted to keep creating and stay consistent, this model wouldn't scale. I couldn't afford to wait weeks for one visual or drop thousands for one animation that might not even connect.

Longevity

Hype fades. But catalogs grow.

Short-term hype fades. But catalogs grow.

The artists who built real careers — like Russ — didn't rely on one viral visual. They built seasons. They stacked songs and showed up regularly. One great video doesn't change your life. A system does.

I've seen this firsthand.

I re-launched a series of animated lyric videos for Russ — songs that are over six years old — without running ads. No marketing budget. Just the content and consistency. To date, Russ' songs alone have brought in over 25,000 views on my channel.

The most viewed?

A song called "Old Days", which Russ originally released on October 4th, 2019, as a simple audio with static cover art.

Five years later, that same song — reimagined visually — is still pulling new listeners.

This isn't just nostalgia.

It's what happens when you play the long game.

Since launch, my YouTube channel has crossed 500,000 views in under three months, starting with 2D looping visuals before evolving into more advanced 3D work. And much of that momentum has come from catalog content — music that still resonates, years later.

Let that sink in:

Half a decade later, a song like “Old Days” is gaining fresh attention — not from Russ' own platform, but from someone else's creative rework.

Now imagine if it were your song.

Your channel.

Your legacy.

Russ once said:

“Withholding music can make you late to your own party.”

And he's right. By the time you finally release that song, you've emotionally outgrown it — or worse, the market already has.

Momentum is fragile.

Longevity is built.

So ask yourself:

Are you chasing a moment... or building something that lasts?

Strength

Greatness Will Cost You More

As an artist, it's tempting to think:

"If I spend big, I'll look big."
Been there.

My first animator used Blender — his results were stunning. I believed in it so much, I gave him the last dollar I had, hoping it would finally unlock the aesthetic I'd been chasing. But his process was slow, his pricing steep, and on the day we were set to shoot... he ghosted me. No call. No warning. Nothing.

So I pivoted. I opted for what I could afford: real-life camera-based visualizers. They weren't what I envisioned. I cut songs from my EP. I settled. I compromised.

All because I didn't yet know how to create visuals that matched my budget, my pace, and my creative capacity. I thought spending more meant I was doing more. But the truth? Strength isn't in what you spend — it's in how wisely you move.

Being strong is about being intentional.

It means showing up for yourself and your audience, consistently — not just when things look perfect or expensive. And often, that strength starts outside the studio. The time it takes to figure that out? That's what forges you.

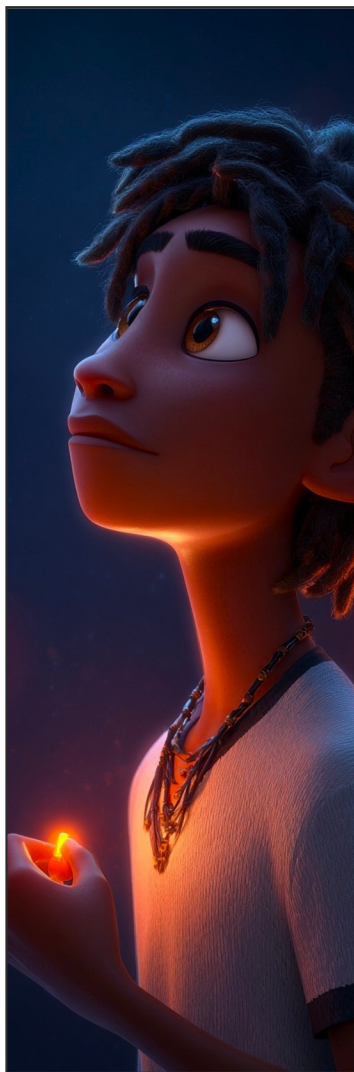
The reason you rush into bad deals or settle for low-impact visuals isn't just poor planning — it's because you haven't learned how to enjoy the process yet.

Think of your favorite shows, games, or anime. Remember how special it felt to finally binge them after a long week or exam season? That's delayed gratification. That's earned joy.

Now that everything's on demand, most things feel disposable.

The same goes for your music. If you're rushing to post a visual just to "have something out," you might be sacrificing long-term trust and consistency for a short-term dopamine hit. If you're tired of settling, don't just aim for more — aim for alignment. Your budget, your style, your story — when those move together, you stop wasting time and money on things that look good but leave you drained.

In the world of music and visuals, reliability beats rush. Clarity beats chaos. Strength isn't flashy. It's strategic. Move like someone who knows where they're going — and isn't afraid to take the road that gets them there smarter, not just faster.



Duty

Once you've seen what doesn't work, settling isn't an option anymore. I had to unlearn the "all-or-nothing" mindset — thinking visuals had to be perfect, expensive, or not done at all. That thinking paralyzes progress. Artists deserve better. And now that I've found a way to deliver that — consistently, creatively, and affordably — I believe it's my responsibility to share it.

The truth is, the best artists — the ones who changed the game — didn't just succeed, they left the industry better than they found it. Michael Jackson made the "woo!" and the moonwalk a universal language. When X and Juice WRLD left us unexpectedly, emo-rap became a global wave, something people finally embraced.

Unless you don't want to be great, you should probably ask yourself this:

What state did you find the industry in — and how are you going to leave it?

Doing better isn't just an option. It's a duty.

Conclusion

If you're building momentum and your vision deserves better than a static thumbnail, I'd love to hear what you're working on.

Check Us Out

www.youtube.com/@TenkiCCTV

Questions?

tenkitv@gmail.com

www.tenkitv.com