

One Red Paperclip – a Social Fairy Tale

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Kyle Mac Donald – Social Adventurer, Author

Reading Time: 2 minutes

Kyle MacDonald started with a red paperclip which he wanted to trade for something bigger and better. Within a year and after 14 trades he ended up with a house, founded his own company, wrote a book and will be speaking at tedxvienna 2015 on oct. 31st.

How did you come up with the idea of trading a paperclip for a house?

Kyle MacDonald: I stole the idea from a game called bigger and better I heard about as a teenager. The idea of bigger and better is to start with a small object and knock on people's doors, asking them if they had something bigger and better to trade for the object. After a series of successful up trades, kids would wind up with something way bigger than they initially started with. Equal parts freestyle scavenger hunt and trick or treat. As the suburban legend has it, a guy in Vancouver started with an old shoe and came home with a car from a single night of playing the game. I never really played the game as a kid, but the idea revisited me when I was 25 years old, and I decided I wanted to get in on some of that action. I looked down on my desk and the first thing I saw was a red paperclip. I picked it up, posted about it in the barter section of craigslist and the fun began.

What apart from the house did you want to achieve?

Kyle MacDonald: I wanted to travel and meet people and write about the adventures and hopefully have unpredictable fun

things happen!

What was the most important lesson from the story of the red paperclip?

Kyle MacDonald: That ideas are great, but more important than coming up with ideas is to actually do things. I never would have traded up from a red paperclip to a house if I hadn't made that first trade, where I traded the red paperclip for a pen shaped like a fish. It was the more important trade of all – just to get started.

What advise can you give to others after the fun and success you had with the red paper clip?

Kyle MacDonald: Start small, think big, and have fun.

What are your current projects?

Kyle MacDonald: I'm currently searching for these guys: (www.whoaretheseguys.com) and making lots of paintings: <https://instagram.com/kylemacmac/>

What is your vision?

Kyle MacDonald: My vision is to make the world more interesting and encourage others to do so as well.