

Royal Young Explains Why Fame Isn't Everything In His Memoir 'Fame Shark'



By Marisa Spano

There is something special about Royal Young, and it's not just his name. Perhaps it's his hefty quantity of charisma and understanding of the world around him. The 28-year-old writer was born Hazak Brozgold to a Jewish family on New York's lower east side. He spent much of his young life looking for a spotlight, and now that he's finally got one, he's urging people to understand the downsides of fame.

To the American culture, fame means money, mansions and adoring fans. Most people think of the perks instead of the downfalls. But is fame a good thing? That's the very question that this author and [Interview Magazine](#) writer answers in his recently-released memoir, *Fame Shark*. Young's memoir outlines his past obsession with being famous and uses his history to illustrate to young people why a fixation with celebrity can be damaging. When CupidsPulse.com chatted with Young, he opened up about initial resistance to his memoir, the story behind his name and his new perspective on fame.

At what moment did you realize that you wanted to write a memoir?

When I was 18 years old, I was kind of crazy. I was drinking a lot and chasing all of these different means of getting attention instead of looking for love from my parents and relationships in general. One of the ways I was doing that was modeling. I met some shady people in that industry, but I also

got to meet someone amazing at Wilhelmina. I sent him some of my writings and photos of myself. He sat me down and was like, "Dude, I read your writing, and you have a real talent here. You can keep being a crazy downtown New York City kid and messing up your life, or you can write a book. I think you have that in you." That was the first time I had heard that from anyone. I was so excited by it that I actually started a very tiny piece of *Fame Shark* right then and there.

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What was the initial reaction to your book?

Honestly, it was hard. So many people were very skeptical, and I dealt with a lot of rejection and resistance. But for me, being so young is kind of the point of writing the memoir. I think we live in a culture that is very obsessed with celebrities and very obsessed with youth, and I think that can be taken to a dangerous extreme. Writing a book like *Fame Shark* at a young age is kind of a comment on that culture.

Are you still obsessed with fame? If not, what changed for you?

It has definitely changed. When I started writing the book, I was still under the kind of weird, narcissistic delusion that the book itself would be my final catapult to celebrity. However, writing a book doesn't really work that way because it's such hard work and there's so much rejection. I have worked incredibly hard for seven years as a journalist – that delayed gratification was so helpful to me in terms of these disillusionments. Do I still want to be famous? No. Do I still want to be successful and visible? Do I want my work to get to the largest audience possible? Absolutely.

In your book, you have an infatuation with Winky, a 14-year-old girl you meet on MySpace. She's the one who gave you your name, Royal Young. Tell us about that!

Winky had nicknames for all of her *Gossip Girl*-type, upper Westside friends. She would call us “The Lost Boys.” It felt awesome – she was like this weird Wendy figure, and I was like a drunk Peter Pan. It felt great to be a part of that and be saved from my horrible Hebrew name, which always set me apart and made me feel like an outsider. I legally changed my name eight years ago, and it changed who I am. Even my old friends call me Royal now. It’s a persona and a personality that I have grown into and that I feel so comfortable with.

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You say that you went to art school to live out your father’s dreams of becoming a famous artist. Do you feel like you were living your father’s life instead of your own?

I certainly felt that way. I think the peril of trying to fulfill someone else’s fantasies is that you really end up resenting them. That’s something that my dad and I had to work through, but what’s so cool now is I feel like I am in a position to help him. My dad’s images are in the hard copies of the book. So in that sense, I am still connected to my dad’s dreams. I still want to help him live them out, but I’m not the one who is doing the living – he is.

What advice do you have for young people looking to be famous?

Don’t do it! Get rid of your grand ideas; get paparazzi, flashbulbs, money and all of that out of your mind. Just enjoy your life and work hard at your passion. I think it’s so important to stay grounded and really keep those connections to friends and family. Work on those key relationships in your life because that’ll help you; pursuing a path of solitary success is very dangerous and scary too. Focus on knowing yourself before you go out into the world.

And finally, what’s next for you?

I want to go silver screen. I want *Fame Shark* to have a red

carpet premiere. I'm negating everything I just told you! I really do see *Fame Shark* as an evolving brand though. When it started off for me, the definition of fame shark was someone who is so lonely that they mistake success or being a celebrity for love, and now, I feel like that's changing. Now, it's about tenacity; it's about hard work and hustle. So I would love to see where that goes next. I'm also working on a novel.

Fame Shark is available now on Amazon. You can follow the author on Twitter @RoyalYoung