Career success is much more than having a real job and earning a decent income. Real career success is truly enjoying what you do for a living and having the personal freedom to perform your work virtually any time you want.

This one-of-a-kind career guide challenges and inspires you to:

- Create your own dream job or operate an unconventional business.
- Find your own important mission, true calling, or passionate pursuit with which you can make a great living.
- Gain courage to escape the corporate world so that you don't have to spend the rest of your life trapped in a cubicle.
- Be creative and have fun in your work.
- Restructure your life so that it has meaning, direction, and joy.
- Take charge of your physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual well-being.
- Experience true personal freedom in all areas of your life.
- Above all, get the most out of your life — personally and professionally!

This revolutionary book is for those millions of organizationally averse people who would like to break free of corporate life so that they have complete control over their lives. Throughout the book you will read about several ordinary individuals who have attained extraordinary success without a real job. International best-selling author Ernie Zelinski, whose books have sold over 550,000 copies worldwide, also uses experiences from his own life to show how the powerful success principles on the pages within can help you joyfully avoid the shackles of the corporate world for the rest of your life.

This second edition (originally published as *Real Success Without a Real Job*) includes a new chapter with a work model for people who are too prosperous to do mornings and want to make money while they sleep. Positive, lively, and captivating, *Career Success Without a Real Job* is designed to help you live an extraordinary lifestyle that is the envy of the corporate world — it truly is the career book for people too smart to work in corporations!

"Ernie Zelinski helps others find the time to live."
- *Boston Herald*
Career Success Without a Real Job
OTHER NOTABLE BOOKS BY ERNIE J. ZELINSKI

How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free: Retirement Wisdom That You Won’t Get from Your Financial Advisor
The Joy of Not Working: A Book for the Retired, Unemployed, and Overworked
The Lazy Person’s Guide to Success: How to Get What You Want Without Killing Yourself for It
101 Really Important Things You Already Know, But Keep Forgetting
Career Success Without a Real Job

The Career Book for People Too Smart to Work in Corporations

Ernie J. Zelinski
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Preface

This is the second edition of this book, which was first called *Real Success Without a Real Job: There Is No Life Like It*. As you can see, I have changed the title somewhat and the subtitle a lot for this new edition. The biggest change, however, is in Chapter 7, which was originally devoted to friendship. Although friendship is an important element of success, I decided that a chapter on how to make money on the Internet would better serve people who would like to make a living without a real job.

The idea for this book came to me shortly after a friend announced that it was seven years since he started his government job. This surprised me — I didn’t realize it had been so long. We had met in a coffee shop more than a decade earlier when he was unemployed and I was just starting my publishing and writing career.

Moments after my friend mentioned how long he had worked for the government, I realized that in October of that year it would be twenty-five years since I was fired from my engineering job at a public utility for taking two months of unapproved vacation. Better still, I realized that it would be twenty-five years since I had a real job.

Talk about career success without a real job — for me anyway! That called for a grand celebration with my paying the entire bill. I even felt compelled to locate the manager who fired me so I could thank him and invite him to the celebration. I had not seen the man since he liberated me from corporate life.

Alas, although I did contact him through a former colleague, my ex-boss had already made other plans for the evening of my celebration. Ironically, a few years back I had run into his successor, who told me — with a mischievous smile on his face — that he had bought my ex-boss a copy of my book *The Joy of Not Working* for a retirement gift.

Let’s jump back to the fateful day that I was terminated from my engineering job. I was quite flabbergasted, indeed, close to being traumatized. I should have known at the time, however, that I was destined for much greater heights. A few years later I realized that, from a career perspective, my firing was the best thing that ever happened to me.

What’s more, getting fired was great for other aspects of my life, including my mental and physical health. As I tell my friends, “The
two best things I ever did for my well-being were to quit smoking and to get axed from my last real job, never to return to another."

The fact that I spent a princely sum to celebrate my not having worked as an engineer after having been fired twenty-five years earlier will surprise many people — particularly engineers. Not all engineers, however, given that there are many who would love to exit the field. Like a significant number of workers in all professions, a lot of engineers don’t like how they earn their living and despise corporate life. Their personal lives may appear just fine to onlookers, but they suffer their jobs badly and with silent indignity. Indeed, there are many so-called successful people — engineers, lawyers, executives, and even doctors — in this sad and bleak situation who would like a more joyful career.

Regardless of what profession you are in, you may also want to leave your line of work for something better. Particularly if you were intensely drawn to this book, a corporation is likely not the best place for you to hang out for the rest of your work life. The purpose of this book is to inspire people like you to reclaim their creativity, their freedom, and their lives.

In short, Career Success Without a Real Job is for individuals who:

- Are heavily committed to having “fun” in their work and want more freedom in their lives
- Want a more relaxed work environment
- Want no set hours and a lot of latitude in how their work gets done
- Want to avoid becoming just another cog who works for a faceless giant
- Want to find their own important mission, true calling, or passionate pursuit
- Know — without any doubt in their minds — that they are organizationally averse
- Want to work at a dream job or run an unconventional business
- Want to gain courage to leave the corporate world forever
- Want to live an extraordinary life that is the envy of the corporate world

Yet it is in our idleness, in our dreams, that the submerged truth sometimes comes to the top.

— Virginia Woolf
This is largely an inspirational book; it does not provide a specific road map for choosing your perfect unconventional career and making a million dollars at it in the next several years. Plain and simple, this book can’t because a massive amount of detail the equivalent of many encyclopedias would be required. I include many recommendations for further reading throughout, however, that will provide more valuable information on how you can attain career success without a real job in your own special way.

The success principles emphasized in this book are the ones I have followed to make a decent living as an author and self-publisher by working only four or five hours a day. What a great profession! Why work at a real job when I can get away with doing what I have been doing for so long? No doubt some people will say I am lucky. True, but I am lucky in the sense that I had the courage to do what had to be done to get where I am today.

Others will point out that everyone can’t do what I am doing. True again, but I didn’t allow my mind to make up this flimsy excuse for not doing it. Neither did Abraham Lincoln, Bill Clinton, or Barack Obama make up the excuse that not everyone can be president of the United States. Otherwise, they would never have become president themselves.

Besides, not everyone can work in a real job. If we use an excuse, we should use it in a positive way to better our position in life, and not in a negative way to justify an unpleasant situation. Since not everyone can have a conventional job, why not be one of the prosperous individuals with an unconventional job similar to mine? This way you will find success, prosperity, and happiness on your own terms.

Throughout the book I use the term “unreal job,” which is loosely defined as any work you joyfully perform for a living with a lot of flexibility in your working hours, rather than a traditional job, which requires that you work in a rigid corporate environment with fixed hours. I also talk about starting an “unconventional business,” which requires few or no employees, has low start-up costs, and does not demand that you work the long hours that a traditional business requires.
I can sing the praises of the success principles in this book because these principles have worked for me. These same principles can work for millions of other people. Indeed, you will read about several people in much different fields than mine who have left the corporate world for good. The great news is they are living lifestyles that are about as good as anyone can imagine.

No doubt the principles in this book will not work for everyone. One reason is that many people apparently don’t want freedom; they would rather be imprisoned by organizations that tell them what to do, when to do it, how to do it. As Lord Boyd-Orr once said, “If people have to choose between freedom and sandwiches, they will take sandwiches.”

If you are one of those mundane people who would select sandwiches over personal freedom, career success without a real job is definitely not for you. On the other hand, if you are trapped in the corporate world as the majority is, but would like to be liberated, then the success principles herein can inspire and help you to create a much more rewarding lifestyle for yourself.

You will have to change your thinking, however. Not only a bit — totally! Money, material possessions, and secure jobs don’t make the world go around for truly successful individuals. What does? Purpose! Family! Friends! Challenging projects! Creative satisfaction! Job gratification! Spiritual fulfillment! And, above all, personal freedom!

This leads us into a major premise of this book: You can’t be genuinely prosperous unless you have personal freedom. You will have attained true freedom in this world when you can get up in the morning when you want to get up; go to sleep when you want to go to sleep; and in the interval, work and play at the things you want to work and play at — all at your own pace. The great news is that not having a real job — and creating your own unreal job instead — allows you the opportunity to attain this freedom.

If you are still not in the least way dissuaded from reading further, you already have enough presence of mind to recognize that career success and happiness are possible without having a real job. Obviously your aim is much higher than simply working at a conventional job, and you believe in being paid for your creative results rather than actual time spent in a cubicle or office. Keep reading — this gets much better.
Imagine that you are at your high-school reunion where former classmates are bragging about how successful they are or are about to become. Brock, the science graduate, talks about the mining company he manages and how he got a $120,000 bonus last year in addition to the Porsche Boxster. Bella, who has been focusing her energy on international development projects with the government, is about to spend $58,000 on tuition for a two-year MBA program that she thinks will increase her income from $95,000 to over $200,000 a year.

After listening to several people boast about their careers and how much their mansions are worth, you realize that either only the jet-setting moneyed class goes to reunions, or there is a lot of lying going on. Eventually the group curiously looks at you, wearing your T-shirt that says “Organizationally Averse.” Someone asks, “What do you do now and where do you live?”

You smile and say, “Actually, to millions of us, corporate employment is so last year! I don’t like working for corporations and like to work only when I want. Although I dropped out of university, I live in Vancouver half the time and spend the six coldest months of the year in Costa Rica.”

“So, how can you do this?” someone else quips. “Did you inherit a couple million or win it in a lottery?”

With a wry look of amusement, you answer, “No, I have never had any rich relatives and I never buy lottery tickets. So I have to work for a living, but I am a

---

Men go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.
— Henry David Thoreau
one-person show specializing in the information business. This allows me to work on my own schedule — sometimes two hours a day and sometimes seven, other times on a whim taking three or four days off. I love a lifestyle without much pressure and with the freedom to do things on my own without the hassle of partners, colleagues, or employees.”

“Sounds like a dream job,” retorts Henry, a hugely successful dentist who lives in California and has just purchased a house worth three million dollars. “What about money? Can you make a decent living doing this? I read somewhere that many people who are self-employed live a pauper’s life.”

“Some do, many don’t,” you reply. “The fact that a person doesn’t have a university degree and is self-employed doesn’t mean that he or she can’t make a decent living. Although I don’t make as much as some of you do — not yet, anyway — I do make a much better income than the average person. More important, however, is the fact that I love what I do and I have my freedom. To me this is priceless, given that I am not the corporate type.”

Is this starting to sound like too much of an unattainable fantasy to you? It shouldn’t. If it is, you are likely too programmed with society’s meaning of traditional success and need to experience a paradigm shift to realize that you can escape the corporate world and still make a good living. Better still, life without a real job will set you free.

Perhaps you took the fast track to life. Since high school, heck, maybe since junior high, you had a plan. You visited colleges and applied for scholarships. You graduated with honors from high school, won more scholarships when you took your undergraduate program, and then attended graduate school, maybe even earned your doctorate.

When you entered the world of work, you couldn’t help thinking that the words “My future’s so bright, I gotta wear shades” from some obscure song applied to you. You began your career life exactly as planned. Everything went according to schedule and every year virtually every item on your career itinerary became a reality.

Today you have a decent-paying job, the bigger-than-normal cubicle — maybe even an expensively furnished office with a great view — and are
peacefully coexisting with others in your office. There is one major problem, however: You are not happy in your work environment. Put another way, the thrill is gone — if it was ever there to begin with!

Perhaps you’re questioning yourself and your place in this world more than ever before. Perhaps you are troubling yourself with intense self-interrogation. Perhaps you are filled with anxiety and fear. And maybe you believe you are the only one in your age group who feels so dissatisfied. Believe me, regardless of your age group, you are not.

A lot of evidence exists that many workers in North America are terribly dissatisfied. For instance, a recent survey by *The Globe and Mail* asked its readers “Are you suffering from career inertia?” The results:

- 33 percent answered, “Yes, I can barely drag myself into the office.”
- 23 percent chose, “Yes, but I can’t be bothered to look for another job.”
- 25 percent selected, “No, I find ways to stay engaged with my work.”
- 19 percent picked, “No, career inertia is just an excuse to be lazy.”

What makes these results particularly fascinating is that most of the readers of *The Globe and Mail* are highly educated, are well-paid, and work in prestigious jobs. Yet at least 56 percent of the readers are suffering from career inertia. No doubt the figure is much higher for employees as a whole in North America. Indeed, several career consultants claim that up to 70 percent of all Canadian and American employees would escape the confines of the corporation if they found something they loved to do and knew how to pursue it.

Perhaps the people suffering from career inertia are the most likely to show up at school or university class reunions, so they get to tell others how much “success” they have attained, at least in the traditional sense of the word. The question here is to what end are these people trying to achieve all those

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**What is it that you like doing? If you don’t like it, get out of it, because you’ll be lousy at it.**

— Lee Iacocca

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**Oh, you hate your job? Why didn’t you say so? There’s a support group for that. It’s called Everybody, and they meet at the bar.**

— Drew Carey
things that define success? Another question: How much are these people deluding others and, even more importantly, themselves?

Apparently not everyone deludes themselves. In a book called *The Great Divide* (Avon Books, 1989) by the legendary Studs Terkel, American worker Isabelle Kuprin talked about her job: “I’m a copywriter for an ad agency. It involves being a total asshole. I do it for the money, it’s easy and horrible. I do nothing good for society.” No doubt there are millions of people just as dejected about their jobs in today’s corporate world, particularly if they work just for the money.

Clearly, one of life’s biggest traps today is working hard for money, clinging to the illusion of job security, looking forward to retirement to make life a lot better. Sadly, fear — the fear of not paying bills, the fear of not being able to work for themselves, and the fear of not having enough money for retirement — keeps most people working at their corporate jobs. The darkest side of this fear is that it keeps employees in the vicious cycle of commute, work, commute, sleep, commute, work, commute, sleep, and so on.

Nine to five — what a way to make a living! We should pay heed to the song “Nine to Five” by Dolly Parton that was featured in the 1980s comedy film of the same name. In the film Parton and her two co-workers, played by Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, teach their jerk-of-a-boss a lesson. The song, however, reminds us that the daily grind of a regular job can suck big time.

Regular media reports indicate that many workers, including well-paid professionals and executives, are experiencing low morale, burnout, and a diminished quality of life. Indeed, every year brings another new study concluding that people are more stressed out and less satisfied than they were the year before.

In the midst of it all, good news awaits, however. Perhaps you have seen the movie *The Great Escape*. There is an even greater escape you can make — the escape from corporate life. The reasons to do so are many. The typical workplace is demeaning to the human soul, particularly to the creative and independent soul. So is looking for a job, everything from drafting up résumés, sending out résumés, not getting replies, the interview process itself, and the formalities that come with starting a new job.

Of course, after working at a job for a year or two things don’t
necessarily get any better. This comes from the Idler website: “With very few exceptions the world of jobs is characterized by stifling boredom, grinding tedium, poverty, petty jealousies, sexual harassment, loneliness, deranged co-workers, bullying bosses, seething resentment, illness, exploitation, stress, helplessness, hellish commutes, humiliation, depression, appalling ethics, physical fatigue and mental exhaustion.”

The typical work environment — a world without career satisfaction and personal fulfillment — is likely not a place you want to be for any length of time. Maybe you have a job and are looking for a better one. You will discover that when you apply for a job that appears better than yours, a thousand other people have already applied. When the thrill of their jobs is long gone, many people look for a new one. They think that a new work environment will actually make them happier. Most often it doesn’t.

Then there are those who think that freedom is achieved by being promoted to a management position. Wish them luck. The promotion-in-waiting more often than not is trouble-in-waiting. In this regard, it is worth pondering the words of Robert Frost: “By working faithfully eight hours a day you may eventually get to be a boss and work twelve hours a day.”

Perhaps the answer is to find some way to like the job that you presently have. Good luck to you as well. It will just take you a lot longer to realize that you and your job were not a match made in heaven. Even if you trick yourself into liking your job, you are likely to encounter situations such as your office mate bathes only whenever there is a full moon, your boss expects an immediate response to his weekend e-mails, and you don’t get a raise even after your creative breakthrough saves your company a million dollars or two.

In this day and age, if you want an office with a great view, I suggest that you make the great escape. Become self-employed like I am and perform most of your work on a laptop in various coffee hangouts. This way you can have many different interesting views and not just be confined to one. Of course, there are hundreds of other alternatives for escaping the corporate world other than what I have done to make my great escape.

Dear, never forget one little point. It’s my business. You just work here.
— Elizabeth Arden

I’ve been promoted to middle management. I never thought I’d sink so low.
— Tim Gould
Best of all, there are many fantastic reasons not to have a real job! Many reasons will be given throughout the book; for now here are the ones that initially made my top-ten list:

**Top Ten Reasons to Have an Unconventional Job**

1. Although they will never admit it, your ex-boss and former co-workers will be green with envy.
2. You can get up at the “crack of noon” every day instead of the “crack of dawn.”
3. After you get up, you can wear a T-shirt that says “Too Prosperous to Do Mornings.”
4. When you don’t have a real job, “multitasking” takes on a new meaning, such as working happily and leisurely on your laptop at Starbucks and watching attractive members of the opposite sex at the same time.
5. When someone new asks what your real job is, you can say, “I am too prosperous to have a real job; I have an unreal job instead.”
6. Not having a real job will really irk all your relatives (and, better still, your in-laws too).
7. *Late Night with David Letterman* can be the first TV program you watch in the evening instead of the last.
8. You don’t have to read Dilbert every day because you don’t relate to it anymore.
9. You no longer have to witness the turkeys escape the corporate ax while the eagles either leave or get fired.
10. On your death bed, regardless of your age, your last words will be: “Hey, I don’t want to go just yet. The thing I enjoy most about life is working at my unreal job!”

I have to admit that the typical workplace is not a total waste of time if you are willing to stoop to its level. After twenty-five years of happily and successfully being without a real job, I am not. An unreal job such as the one I have created for myself really rocks.

In my view, 95 percent of traditional jobs can’t even come close to providing the freedom I enjoy. The good news is that you can also create an unreal job that you love and that provides you with a good measure of freedom.
A miserable work environment is often discussed by co-workers in the same manner as bad weather: Nearly everybody complains but few people do anything about it. Of course, the best way to experience a better work environment is no different than the best way to experience better weather. Don’t try to change either — instead, find a funkier place to hang out!

Like me, many people do find a funkier place to hang out than the corporate world. Take, for example, Eartha Haines of Oceanside, California. Eartha wrote to me at the time I was writing this book. Receiving her letter was synchronistic because I was looking for a great example to start this topic. Here is the complete content of the letter that Eartha sent to me:

Dear Ernie:

I purchased your book *The Joy of Not Working* over a year ago. I used to have a full-time job as a web developer working in downtown San Diego. I was a commuter and caught the train to and from work, an hour each way, so I read your book fairly quickly on the train rides. Since then, I have read it two more times.

I worked at my previous job for five years and was completely burned out and frustrated. However, I was a good employee and I brought my frustrations to my employer. He agreed to let me work from home a couple times a week but it did not solve the stress and demands of my job. After reading *The Joy of Not Working* I would daydream about being free from the daily commute and boredom of my current job. All I knew is that I no longer wanted to commute and whatever job I’d take next would be less stressful.

In March I turned in my resignation letter and agreed to stay on for three weeks so that they could
find a replacement and so I could get them up to speed in my duties. I decided to start my own Web company but as I quickly discovered, it was difficult to get clients. As word got out that I quit my job, former co-workers who also quit to pursue their dreams, began to contact me for freelance projects. I no longer have a Web company, but I am a happy freelancer, which turned out to be even better because I do not have to deal with landing clients or with any of the office politics.

I now wake up when I feel like it and my commute has been shortened to my office located right next to my bedroom! I am making a decent income and I can come and go as I please. I am finally living my dream because I took your advice and dared to make the first move toward a less stressful and happier life. I will continue freelancing for as long as it supports my needs. Even if I end up acquiring another job, I will be wiser in my choice. It will be much closer to home and something part-time. With the free time I have, I've also become a partner of an online store and it is taking off. Thanks for writing a great book. It will remain one of my favorites.

Sincerely,
Eartha Haines

Obviously Eartha escaped corporate life because she was prepared to think differently and more creatively than the majority of people in North American society. She had a dream about how she could be successful in her own way. Then she did what she had to do to make her dream of personal success come true.

One of the keys to escaping a miserable work environment is to take a close look at what success really means to you. Although this is a success book, it is not a self-help manual on how to attain “success” in the traditional sense of word. It is an inspirational book on how you can attain a good measure of success, but you have to define success in a way that is different from any other person’s on earth.
The biggest mistake that people make is adopting the traditional paradigm of success instead of defining success differently. If all individuals had their own specific definition of success, they could achieve success a lot easier and experience a lot more of it. They could also escape corporate life. What an incredible liberation that can be!

More of us don’t escape corporate life because money seems to be the bottom line in our fast-paced, overly materialistic Western society. Advertisers, the media, career consultants, and society in general place a lot of value on money and the things that money can buy, which are in themselves associated with success. Humans strive for a high-paying job so that they can have power, status, expensive SUVs, big houses, exotic vacations, and trendy clothes. These elements of success are supposed to make all of us feel successful, fulfilled, and happy.

There is a problem, however, even if people eventually attain the traditional model of success. When they do, many find that they still don’t feel good about themselves. Now they are in serious trouble, because they cannot delude themselves anymore. On second thought, most people still can and actually do delude themselves, but it gets more and more difficult with time.

If you have adopted the traditional model of success, but want to attain success outside the corporation, it’s wise to create your own model. When defining success, we should go beyond the normal parameters and look at what real success is to us individually. I would imagine that if we asked a million individuals, we would get a million different answers. Every one of us would have our unique version of what we would like to achieve in our lives.

There would be some elements of success that the majority would have in common, however. All of us want health and happiness. Most, perhaps all, of us want at least a measure of financial independence so that we don’t have any money problems and the stress that accompanies these problems. Financial independence is often construed as enough money to do what we want, when we want to do it. For over 90 percent of us, having more money than we have today would be required before we achieve real success.

Of course, given that most of us would want to continue working even if we were financially independent, enjoying our work would be an

Success for some people depends on becoming well-known; for others it depends on never being found out.
— Ashleigh Brilliant
important ingredient in our recipe for success. The sad truth is the vast majority of people today, whether Americans, Canadians, or Europeans, don’t stand a chance of achieving this element of real success if they remain in their present jobs.

What else would we have in common in our definitions of real success? Particularly for independently minded individuals, freedom would be high on the list. Surveys of the new generation of employees entering the workforce, for instance, indicate its members value freedom highly. According to a recent survey by the international consultancy Watson Wyatt, new graduates entering the workforce tend to be less committed to their first jobs. Most seem to want flexible work arrangements, with some preferring a home-based office.

At this point it is worth asking, “What does success look like to you?” Besides the general elements of health, happiness, financial independence, job satisfaction, and freedom, what other specific ingredients would you add to your recipe for real success? These should be elements that have not been programmed into you by your parents, advertisers, the media, and society as a whole.

To help you get started on your model of success, I will share what success means to me. A good portion of my success paradigm was first introduced in The Lazy Person’s Guide to Success, but this definition has changed somewhat since I wrote the book, and no doubt will continue to change to some extent over time.

One of the most important elements of real life success to me is having the freedom and independence to make choices in what I do with my life. Success means doing what I want at the time I choose. Corporate life, of course, would interfere with the freedom I enjoy.

Here is a sample of the freedom I have: After I get up — sometimes at the crack of noon — my first priority is to exercise one to two hours to maintain my physical health. Then I have a shower, which I truly experience in a leisurely and meditative state, followed by putting on my official work attire — most often a pair of jeans, sandals, and a T-shirt with something such as “I Am Big in Europe” written on it.

Unlike the majority of people, I fit in my work whenever I can, usually writing on my laptop in one of my favorite coffee bars. I don’t know whether the owners of the coffee bars where I hang out consider me a coffee-house phenomenon or a coffee-house
nuisance — I consider myself the writer in residence, which adds to my experience of success.

Most days I start working about 3:30 in the afternoon and put in only four or five hours a day, sometimes a little less, sometimes a little more. The odd time I don’t start work until 4:30 in the afternoon, at which time I chuckle to myself because government workers are already going home after having put in eight hours of regimented work.

Although I don’t make as much money as I could by working more hours each day, I live comfortably and freely. I certainly wouldn’t trade my present lifestyle for a boring or stressful job that pays a million dollars a year, not even for one year. This was also the case several years ago when I was struggling financially, $30,000 in debt, and sometimes not knowing where my next month’s rent was going to come from. Real life success to me does not entail being worth a million dollars or two, although I would certainly get satisfaction from attaining this status through my creative efforts — particularly without a real job.

In financial terms, real success to me is handling money wisely so that I don’t have financial problems. Financial success means earning the money to buy the necessities of life and having a little extra to buy some luxuries, such as going out to a great restaurant two or three times a week. Financial success is also the sense of freedom that comes from having saved a nice little nest egg. This can come in handy in the event I want to do nothing but play for a year or if my income drops for some reason.

Success to me is having not only the time, but also the ability to enjoy a lot of leisure activities. It is also the wise use of leisure time. Maintaining optimum health at any age must be a priority. This can only be attained by allocating some leisure time for adequate exercise and meditation each and every day.

Given the important role friendship plays in our lives, success to me is also being able to spend plenty of my leisure time chatting, wining, and dining with friends at a small bistro instead of going to a big state dinner, which, of course, is fortunate because I am never invited to any. No doubt maintaining real friends should be a big part of any person’s plan to achieve real success in life.

Career success to me, above all, is having a worthwhile purpose to pursue. My purpose is to help people develop their potential,
make progress toward attaining some of their dreams, and have a
great work/life balance. Like many authors, I receive a great deal
of feedback from readers, such as the aforementioned letter from
Eartha Haines. There is no greater satisfaction than receiving a
handwritten letter, e-mail, or phone call from someone who has
benefited greatly from reading my books.

Another ingredient of career success is having my own
attainable dreams, regardless of how old I get. One of my goals is
to have one of my books appear on *The New York Times*
bestseller
list. Indeed, it would be nice if this one
did. Although achieving this goal is not
essential to my happiness, I would get
great satisfaction from doing so. This is
one of my career dreams that motivates
me and brings me smaller career
successes along the way.

That is more than enough about what success means to me.
Now you should take the time to think about and write down the
things that really matter to you in order that you can establish
your own paradigm of success. With no personal definition of
success, you will have no distinct personal goals and career
dreams to pursue. Your definition of success may be similar to
someone else’s, but surely it should not be identical.

**Sample Elements for Your Success Paradigm**

- Create and work at a job I love
- Own my own home business
- Maintain optimum mental, physical, and
  spiritual health
- Earn an income that is in top 10 percent of
  wage earners
- Have at least three real friends
- Have plenty of time for friends
- Attain financial independence with $500,000 in
  savings
- Be able to take a one-year sabbatical every five
  years
- Write three books in the next five years
- Create something artistic of lasting value
- Learn a subject thoroughly and expand its
  frontiers
- Help make other people’s lives better
Although the two are related, it may be worthwhile to create your own separate definitions for both career success and overall life success. To attain overall success in life it’s important to have attained success in one’s career simply because work takes up so much of our lives. Thus, your elements of career success may include job satisfaction, a healthy working environment, and some sense of control in your job.

But career success in itself does not mean that we have attained overall life success. As many of us already know, having a good job does not necessarily lead to our feeling successful, experiencing freedom, and enjoying prosperity and happiness. The way I see it, ordinary career success is a real good job; real career success is a real good life.

Once you have established your success paradigm, it’s important to determine which elements are most important for your happiness. Then you must set your priorities accordingly. You must be reasonable in which elements in your success paradigm you want to attain. How achievable the elements in your success paradigm are will eventually determine how successful you become and how successful you feel.

Here is a warning: For some of us the biggest obstacle to attaining and experiencing success is expecting too much. Avoid placing equal importance on driving a Ferrari, becoming a renowned entrepreneur, getting a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, learning twenty languages, becoming friends with both Donald Trump and Richard Branson, having a loving family, writing ten business books, and owning a twenty-four room mansion as well as a vacation home in Monte Carlo. Anyone who tries to attain this much or more will likely wind up being a total failure at everything.

Clearly, each and every one of us wants to win at the game called success. Above all, real success is being able to work and live in your own special way. Don’t be a pig about it, however. Refrain from going overboard and feeling that you have to achieve all that the most ambitious of megalomanics want to achieve. Excessive endeavor has been known to cause premature hair loss, nervous twitching, high blood pressure, and even insanity.

Summing up, if you can define what career success and overall life success mean to you in clear and compelling detail, you will have a much better idea if you, in fact, want to escape corporate
life. Career success in the corporate world is having a good job, one that either pays very well or has a lot of status. Career success for purposes of this book, however, is having gratifying work that is both personally and financially rewarding. If you can create a job that brings you freedom and creative satisfaction — a job that you feel good about and not just one that brings a good paycheck — career success can be yours in your own special way.

**Don’t Work Solely to Make a Lot of Money and You Will Likely End Up Making a Lot of Money**

If you don’t jump out of bed every work day when the alarm goes off eager to do some work, you are likely not all that enthusiastic about your job. Perhaps you complain, roll over, and contemplate whether you can get away with calling in sick for the third time this month. In this case, it is quite clear that you need to find something more challenging and satisfying.

Perhaps you work at a job that not only has good pay but also has a lot of status. Although your vocation is rated as highly desirable in career guides, you still feel that you made a terrible mistake and feel sick just thinking about most aspects of your work. Even if you are a lawyer, a dentist, or a chartered accountant, so what? You are not the only professional to regularly look out the window at work and ask, “Is this all there is to life?”

If you are presently grossly dissatisfied with your work, it doesn’t necessarily have to be this way. The key is to find out what you really want to do. Imagine how much better life would be if you liked your work as much as you like your most enjoyable leisure activities. Put another way, you would be willing to do your work even if you weren’t paid for it.

Truth be known, for most people, regardless of their occupation, work is a gross inconvenience or necessary evil they have to put up with in order to earn enough money to survive for the time they aren’t at work. Even people who occasionally get some satisfaction from completing a heavy workload or a
challenging project constantly wish they were someplace other than the workplace. This is why most people feel they would have chosen a different career if they had their work life to live all over again.

A lot of people work in jobs they don’t like simply because they don’t even know what they really want to do. One research study indicated that 40 percent of workers drifted into their jobs without giving much consideration to what they truly like and don’t like about work.

Believe it or not, 37 percent of Canadian employees can’t even give an accurate explanation of what their company does. I would venture to say that just as many employees throughout the corporate world, including Europe and the United States, can’t give an accurate account either. If employees don’t even know exactly what their company does, there is not much chance that they have a higher purpose or mission associated with their work.

Weirdly, both new employees entering the workplace for the first time and seasoned employees looking for a better job don’t give much thought to what type of work would really turn them on. This is the case even though the average person will spend at least forty-five years of his or her life working forty hours a week. This works out to 90,000 hours or the equivalent of 3,750 twenty-four-hour days that a lot of people will spend in misery, wishing they were somewhere else.

One of the biggest reasons people end up in jobs they hate is that they choose careers which offer the most opportunity for making the most money. Pick up the career section of a major newspaper and you are likely to find a feature story about the best careers to pursue this year. The article will list all the hot fields as well as the fields that have moderate and limited opportunity. How much money you can expect to earn in any of the occupations will likely be a highlight in a sidebar or within the article itself. Alas, there will be no mention of whether the people working in these fields actually enjoy the work they do.

Whether you choose to remain in corporate life or leave it altogether, above all, you want to make sure that you end up working at something that you love instead of working just for the money. Working at something just for the money is something fearful people do. It is a sign of their lack of self-confidence in their ability, talent, and creativity to earn money doing something they enjoy.

You are what you do. If you do boring, stupid, monotonous work, chances are you’ll end up boring, stupid, and monotonous.

— Bob Black
If you feel that work is just a job, a way to make money, you are wasting forty or more hours a week of your life. You are stealing life from yourself by spending time on routine and drudgery instead of spending time doing something that you really enjoy. Working strictly for the money usually leads to one or more of the following negative outcomes:

**Consequences of Working Solely for the Money**

- Feelings of disillusionment, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness
- Feeling continually stressed, which impacts one’s health as well as relationships with family and friends
- Feeling underpaid regardless of how much money one earns
- Feeling unprepared or unable to accept a job that pays less money
- Compromising one’s integrity by working for a company that is unethical
- Winding up in debt due to constantly buying oneself material goods as a reward for working at a lousy job
- A lack of creative fulfillment
- A feeling of imprisonment while at the workplace
- A lowered sense of overall self-worth
- A lack of self-confidence to pursue a much more enjoyable career

Clearly, money is important in the areas of life where it is important and useless in areas of life where it is not important. This will be discussed in a little more detail in chapter 6. For now, the main point is that, sadly, too many people believe that money is everything and end up with the above consequences.

There can be no doubt that getting trapped into believing that money is the most important thing in a job increases your chances of being trapped in a miserable job for the rest of your life. Generally speaking, the more money you make at your job, the more you become dependent on that job to take care of you. This is particularly true if you can’t handle money very well. Of course, most North Americans are not masters of money given that savings rates have been extremely low for the last few years.
Having a higher income allows you to buy more and more stuff on credit, putting you further and further into debt. Leaving corporate life becomes unimaginable when you have a mountain of debt that will take many years to pay off. Some desperate characters find a higher-paying job, which just locks them into corporate life even more because they buy more material goods on credit and the debt process repeats itself.

The truth is that most people have been living with debt for so long that they are truly used to it. They can’t imagine what their lives would be like without a high-ratio mortgaged house and a car that is 95 percent financed and furniture that won’t be paid for another five years, let alone a maxed-out Visa card. As columnist Leah McLaren recently wrote in *The Globe and Mail*: “No one wants to talk about debt, but it comes home and roosts on your doorstep like a big, fat, clucking hen from hell.”

The core of the matter is that common sense is in short supply when it comes to our accumulating more and more debt in order that we can buy more “things.” American humorist Will Rogers put it much more eloquently than I ever could: “Too many people spend money they haven’t earned, to buy things they don’t want, to impress people they don’t like.”

If something is missing in your life, it’s likely not more stuff. How many more things do you have to buy before you realize you have way too many? If you are like the average corporate worker, you are probably too afraid to admit that material possessions — regardless of how fancy and expensive — are not doing much for your fulfillment. More possessions just help dull the pain and emptiness inside you.

Fact is, addiction to material possessions can imprison us just as much as corporate life. I recently allowed an acquaintance named Denis to park his brand-new Harley Davidson in my rented garage while he went to work on the oil rigs for a three-week stint. While I was showing the motorcycle to my neighbor, he asked how much it cost. I replied, “Denis said he paid around $28,000 for it.”

Later as I was driving my 1974 MGB to one of my coffee hangouts, I laughed out loud when I realized that the total value of

If you make money your god, it will plague you like the devil.
— Henry Fielding

We can create the ultimate job security by becoming less dependent on the organization for which we work and more dependent on our own resources.
— Bo Bennett
all my stuff — my clothing, three older cars, four bicycles, a laptop, and a bit of furniture — is around $18,000. That’s right. Although I have money in the bank, the total value of all my material possessions is $10,000 less than what my friend Denis paid for a new Harley.

Do I feel deprived because I own so little in material goods? No, on the contrary — I feel extremely liberated! Unlike Denis, who feels compelled to work at a job that is not his dream job, just to make a lot of money to support his addiction to the latest commodities, I have been able to pursue something I enjoy and become a success at it. What’s more, I now earn a decent living and am in a financial position to buy all sorts of things — even two or three new Harleys — for cash if I really want them.

Clearly, people living in debt and from paycheck to paycheck don’t have freedom. What’s more, they will never save a nice nest egg that can help them pursue freedom away from the corporation. Having a financial reserve could tide them over for a year or two if they wanted to pursue an unreal job or start an unconventional business at which they may not make that much money initially.

Speaking of freedom, one of the great paradoxes of North American life is the emphasis that is placed on freedom and how little freedom most people, in fact, have. Most North Americans are imprisoned by their jobs, by their material possessions, and by their financial debt. They could experience a lot more freedom if they worked for themselves, cut their spending on material goods, and attained financial independence.

My opinion is that the best way to attain personal freedom is not to work just for the money. It is a mistake to make your major purpose the attainment of money, whether you work in a corporate job, create an unreal job, or operate an unconventional business. The danger is that you will get so caught up in making money that you will forget to take time to enjoy life.

Just as important, if your main focus is on earning a lot of money without having any major inner purpose to drive you, your chances of getting rich are not all that good. Trust me on this one: If you are not enough of an individual without a lot of money, you will not be much of an individual with it. Money can buy exotic vacations, fashionable clothing, expensive cars, and whatever else money can buy. Money can’t fill the emptiness of a human soul, however.
If you aren’t working at something you enjoy, you are settling for much less than you deserve. It is no secret that the happiest and most successful people at work have great affection for their selected vocation. Generally speaking, they are also the most successful in the long term, whether they work for corporations or for themselves.

What’s more, focusing your life solely on earning money will take your attention away from what makes people wealthy. Wealth is a result of creating a product or a service that people value. If you concentrate on creating something that people value highly, the money will follow automatically as people reward you handsomely for it. Put another way, don’t work solely to make a lot of money and you will likely end up making a lot of money.

In short, you will surprise yourself how intelligent you really are when you start doing work you enjoy. Working at something you love makes it so much easier to learn things you don’t know. Of course, the more you learn, the greater your expertise, and the more money you will end up earning.

### If You Recently Got Fired from Your Job, Your Good Luck Has Just Begun

Whenever friends or acquaintances tell me that they have either got fired or quit their conventional jobs, my response is, “Congratulations.” After I said this to a friend who quit his job during an economic recession not so long ago, his face lit up, before he started laughing and remarked, “You are the only one who has said this to me. Everyone else is asking me things like ‘How could you during a recession? Jobs are so hard to come by!’ or ‘How are you going to survive?’ ”

I congratulate people who have quit or lost their jobs because I know that for people who want real success in their lives, this is an opportunity for them to go on to something better. In fact, if you have been in the workforce for over twenty years and have never gotten fired, you are likely not a risk taker or all that creative.

Indeed, some of the most creative and famous people in the world have got fired. In 1978 Lee Iacocca was fired from his job as president of Ford Motor Company by Henry Ford II, who told Iacocca, “I just don’t like you.” Soon after, Iacocca became the chief of bankrupt Chrysler Corporation and made it profitable for years.
No doubt, getting fired can be distressing as it was for me when I got axed from my engineering position over two and a half decades ago. But it wouldn’t have been distressing at all if I had known at the time that I was destined for much greater things. Indeed, if I had known where I would be twenty-five years later — experiencing real success without a real job — I would have been profusely thanking my boss the second he fired me. What’s more, I would have had a celebration that day as expensive and as big as I had twenty-five years later.

As an author and occasional professional speaker specializing in helping people be happy away from the traditional workplace, I have had an interest in good quotations about work and the workplace. It naturally follows that interesting anonymous comments about the workplace in the form of graffiti also get my attention. Thus, I put together a collection called *Graffiti for the Employee’s Soul*. (It’s free — just like all the other best things in life! You can download the e-book in PDF format at www.real-success.ca.) The following twelve items come from the e-book:

**Workplace Graffiti to Remind You of the Typical Workplace**

- Working here is a nightmare. You want to wake up and leave but you need the sleep.
- I owe. I owe. And off to work I go.
- The thought of suicide has helped me get through many days at work.
- Teamwork magically inspires our group to come up with solutions that are consistently and considerably dumber than any one of us.
- My job is a big secret. Even I don’t know what I am doing.
- As long as we continue to work here, happiness is just an idea.
- Can I trade this job for what’s behind door Number 2?
- I’m just working here till a good fast-food job opens up.
- Like to meet new people? Like a change? Like excitement? Like a new job? Then screw up just one more time!
Around here, “progress” is everything getting worse at a slower rate than it used to.

I just took a self-improvement course and discovered I no longer need to punish, deceive, or compromise myself — unless I want to keep my job.

My work cubicle is just a padded cell without a door. I want my freedom and I want it now.

If you have just been fired from your job and are considering another job like it, the above comments may motivate you to consider something different that will lead to real career fulfillment. Whenever you catch yourself yearning for the benefits that your old job provided, it’s best to look at the other side of the coin. It’s like reminiscing about an old love affair. We tend to remember the good things much more so than the bad ones. So when you feel a little dejected because you miss the routine of your old job, consider all the things that you didn’t like about the job.

The reality is that many hugely successful people have been fired at one time or another — sometimes several times — and gone on to better things. Most of these people admit that getting the ax placed them on a fast track toward career fulfillment. Indeed, it was the best thing that ever happened to them. For some, losing a job was the incentive they needed to open their own shop so that they didn’t need to work at a job they hate ever again.

Years after working at an occupation that he hated, Leonard Lee, owner of Ottawa-based Lee Valley Tools and Algrove Publishing, told a reporter with The Globe and Mail, “No amount of money is worth doing a job you hate. It rots your soul. It destroys you.” So why do so many work at a job they hate if it destroys their souls? Who knows? Perhaps they don’t value their souls.

Many people do value their souls, however, and are not willing to sell out to the corporate world ever again once they get fired. Instead, they pass up even the most prestigious and high-paid positions, often for much less prestigious unreal jobs and lower pay, so that they can avoid working for a corporation.

Getting fired, as I found out, is the universe’s way of telling you that you were in the wrong job in the first place. It is also the universe’s way of testing you to see whether you can take advantage of adversity and create some opportunity out of it, such as starting your own business. Put another way,

There’s nothing wrong with being fired.
— Ted Turner
unemployment is an opportunity to develop real character and true wealth.

If you are up to the universe’s challenge, miracles will come your way. Money isn’t as important as you may think it is. Many multimillion dollar businesses were started on kitchen tables. Passion, purpose, and dedication will take you places where money won’t.

The reality is that great corporate jobs are hard to come by in today’s world anyway. “The traditional admonition of one generation to the next, ‘get a job,’ has been replaced with a more complex mandate: ‘Go out and create a job for yourself,’ ” George Gendron, editor of Inc. magazine, recently told Publisher’s Weekly. Being fired is an opportunity to create a job for yourself instead of finding another corporation that has a ready-made job for you, from which you can be just as easily fired some time in the future.

A corporation can take away your job and your job title but it can’t take away your talent and creativity. By firing you the corporation may be doing you a great favor inasmuch as you now have an opportunity to fully utilize your creativity and talent. Getting fired is a great opportunity to rethink where you are, what your priorities are, what’s important to you, and whether or not you are in the right career. Getting another corporate job may only result in treating the symptoms — damage control, in other words.

It has been my experience that the best way to fully utilize one’s creativity and talent is to shun a real job and create one’s own unreal job. If you can be successful at an unconventional job that involves self-employment, you won’t get fired ever again because you are the boss. Above all, getting fired is a great opportunity to pursue the dream job that you may have wanted to pursue for some time.

So again, don’t look at being fired as all that bad of a thing. Your good luck may have just begun, particularly if you decide to make the great escape from the corporate world to pursue something totally unrelated to the field that you were in. You may feel that you have touched bottom, when, in fact, you are already headed upward. In the words of motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, “See you at the top.”
Cool, Unusual Reasons to Quit Your Real Job

There is no point to working hard and spending time at things that are not important to us, yet this is exactly what many people are doing. Real passion for their work fled the scene long time ago, if it was ever there to begin with. The result is that it becomes a huge mental struggle for these workers to haul themselves through the work week to the weekend, and the only thing they are looking forward to is watching a lot of bad TV.

Clearly, there are many so-called successful people in this sad and bleak situation. If you are one of them, one day, no matter how hard you try, you won’t be able to accept the pretending that happens in the typical workplace. You will start wondering why so many workers blindly accept confinement to rigid work hours, waiting until they are in their sixties or seventies to be put out to pasture — either by layoff or poor health.

Joseph Conrad may have the answer. “It’s extraordinary how we go through life with eyes half shut, with dull ears, with dormant thoughts,” stated Conrad. “Perhaps it’s just as well; and it may be that it is this very dullness that makes life to the incalculable majority so supportable and so welcome.”

Given that you picked up this book, I would imagine dullness is not something you are searching for. After focusing on the negatives of the typical workplace long enough, you will start looking at alternatives. As is to be expected, the thought of life without a real job will appear highly promising. It will be easy to fantasize about the wonderful things that you can do by giving up traditional employment — take a real vacation at least two times a year, spend a lot more time with real friends, work at something that actually turns you on, or live and work at a dream job in Costa Rica for a year. If you have recently been having similar fantasies, perhaps it’s time to tell your boss, “I’m outta here.”

For the most part, it won’t be easy to walk away from a traditional job. The important question you have to ask yourself is, if you had your career life to live all over again, would you choose the

Never continue in a job you don’t enjoy. If you’re happy in what you’re doing, you’ll like yourself, you’ll have inner peace. And if you have that, along with physical health, you’ll have more success than you could possibly have imagined.

— Roger Caras
career you are in now? If not, you are not alone — indeed, you are not a small minority either. A Wall Street Journal/ABC News poll found that about half of all American workers would opt for a different career if they had a second chance.

Why? A lot of it comes down to one simple word — freedom! Most people know that they will never realize their full potential working for a corporation in a job that doesn’t test their creativity and doesn’t incite their passions. No doubt most employees just dream about working for themselves and have no real plans of pursuing an unreal job or starting their own business. Nonetheless, many people are prepared to make the difficult and uncomfortable sacrifices in order to create an easier and more comfortable world for themselves. For example, John Grisham certainly wouldn’t be an international best-selling author today if he hadn’t been prepared to quit his lucrative law practice so that he could pursue his dream of writing legal thrillers.

If you don’t like your job, particularly if you detest it, my advice to you is to quit while you are ahead — before they fire you! Luckily, there are many reasons to quit. If you can’t think of your own, there are many to draw on. A recent survey of 250 Canadian advertising and marketing executives revealed that employees quit their jobs for the most unusual reasons. Here are some of them:

**Cool and Unusual Reasons People Give for Chucking Their Jobs**

- I don’t like the smell of the office.
- I am making too much money and don’t feel that I am worth it.
- I don’t like to use a computer.
- The job isn’t as glamorous as I thought.
- I don’t like the lighting in the building.
- I am bored.
- I am over-employed.
- I can’t get up in the morning.
- I don’t want to work so hard.
- The location isn’t exciting enough.
- I want to sunbathe on the beach in Europe.
- I want to train for a triathlon.
- I don’t need the money; I am going to live on my trust fund.
- I am moving to Hollywood to be a movie star.
The most unusual quitter, according to one executive’s opinion, was the employee who used the silent exit strategy. “He just walked out without a peep,” sighed the executive. “Until this day we have no idea why he left, nor were we able to contact him.”

If other people can quit their jobs for the flimsy excuses given above, certainly you can quit yours in order to escape corporate life and do contract work or start some small business. Of course, you must ensure that what you intend to pursue has some merit. There is a no more fatal blunder than to get excited about nothing, and then pursue it for the rest of your life. It will take all you have got just to keep up with the misfits of the world.

Some people may chastise you for quitting a job, particularly if you don’t have another conventional job lined up for yourself. But so what? Quitting has always been cool according to American Evan Harris. “Our country was founded by quitters,” the author of The Art of Quitting (Barron’s Educational Series, 2004) recently told the Detroit News. “They left England and said, ‘Forget this. We are so out of here. We are not putting up with this any more.’”

Quitting is not only cool; you can start living again. Whatever your gripe with your corporate job, you don’t have to put up with it because there are so many other things you can be doing. You should have at least one passionate pursuit that you can make the cornerstone of a dream job and a new lifestyle. In chapter 2 you will find one hundred cool and unusual ways to make an exciting living without a real job.

**If You Love Your Work, Keep on Rocking**

Not so long ago Paul McCartney dismissed rumors he was planning to retire from music. He told www.billboard.com: “As far as retirement is concerned, I’d never consider it, although I’m getting up toward retirement age. I think someone falsified my birth certificate because I can’t feel it. I don’t want to retire. I love what I do. I always said if people don’t come to the shows, I’ll do this as a hobby.”

“I have a vision of me at age ninety,” continued McCartney, “being wheeled on stage very slowly, doing ‘Yesterday.’ At the moment, it’s not like that. It’s the opposite of that. We’re loving it, the audiences are loving it, so while that’s happening, I’m keeping on rocking.”

If you are like Paul McCartney and love your work,
congratulations. According to many studies you are in the minority. There is also the chance that your work situation may not be perfect, but you don’t realize how good it is. It’s all too easy in today’s world to compare ourselves to others apparently more successful than us and think that we are missing out on something important, when, in fact, we aren’t.

Take me, for example. Not so long ago I was feeling quite insecure about my financial position, given that many people my age were quickly approaching the time when they could retire with a full pension. This got me thinking about the possibility of getting a real job, one with a great pension plan. Of course, I had my doubts that any employers would want to hire a character whose biggest accomplishment in the last fifteen years was writing a book called *The Joy of Not Working*.

Desperate times called for desperate measures so I checked out the French Foreign Legion, a military formation of about 8,500 men serving as a branch of the regular Armed Forces of France, which accepts foreigners from any country in the world. The good news was that after only fifteen years of service, I could get a full pension. The bad news, however, was that the minimum physical prerequisites for joining are being able to do thirty push-ups and fifty sit-ups, climb a twenty-foot rope without using your feet, and run eight kilometers with a twelve-kilogram rucksack in less than one hour. The most sobering news was the recommendation that people planning to join should prepare a last will and testament.

Even though the French Foreign Legion was out of the question, my thoughts about getting a real job with a great retirement plan continued for some time until I happened to read a career-planning article in *The Globe and Mail*. The article cited California lawyer Patrick Kelly, who advises that you ask yourself:

**Three Important Questions to Help Recognize Your Career Strengths**

1. What three accomplishments am I proudest of in my life?

2. What three things have other people praised me for doing?

3. What specific abilities allowed me to do all these things?
Just for the fun of it I decided to do Kelly’s exercise. To the first question about the three accomplishments that I am proudest of in my life, I answered: (1) writing and self-publishing several books including my international best-selling *The Joy of Not Working*; (2) despite my fear of public speaking, having worked as a professional speaker and having taught courses part-time at two universities and two colleges; (3) making a living without a real job.

To the second question about what three things people have praised me for, I answered: (1) hundreds of readers have written to me to praise me for writing *The Joy of Not Working*; (2) my students in the university and college courses I taught always gave me great evaluations; (3) many people have acknowledged and envied me for making a decent living without a real job.

To the third question about what specific abilities allowed me to do all these things, I answered: (1) motivation to be creative and work on my own; (2) ability to take risks and handle rejection and failure; (3) willingness to be different than the masses.

After I completed this exercise, I immediately uttered, “Eureka!” I had experienced an incredible awakening. I realized I had reached the point of no return — I could no longer go back to the corporate world because my strongest abilities were not a good match with 99 percent of corporations. Besides, I have no desire to work for an organization — not even the French Foreign Legion with its great retirement plan. Most important, I realized that I love what I do and I would be crazy to give up writing and self-publishing, even for a traditional job that pays five times what I earn.

I suggest that you use the above checklist of three questions by Robert Kelly to determine your career strengths and abilities. The answers may help you determine whether you are in the right line of work. If you are using your strongest abilities, and particularly if you love your work, keep on rocking, just like Paul McCartney. On the other hand, if you are not using your strongest abilities, and particularly if you don’t love your work, it’s probably time for a big change.

Keep in mind that to some degree, enjoying your work is a state of mind. Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer, author of *Mindfulness* (Addison Wesley, 1990) once conducted a study in which two groups of subjects were asked to perform the same tasks. One group was told the tasks were work and the other was told the tasks were play. “The ‘work’ group found the tasks tedious,” claims

To love what you do and feel that it matters — how could anything be more fun?
— Katharine Graham
Langer, “but the ‘play’ group didn’t, which suggests that we make evaluations based on our frame of mind.”

The only problem with the tedious-work-is-fun approach is that it would be extremely difficult to convince oneself that digging ditches is play, particularly for more than a day or so. I don’t know about you, but I would be hard pressed to develop a love for digging ditches. Toughing it out in the French Foreign Legion for fifteen years would likely be more satisfying and fulfilling than being a ditchdigger for the same length of time.

The important point here is that if you love your work, there are always ways to make it better. In most cases once a career is fouled up, however, anything done to improve it only makes it worse. And any time things appear to be getting better, you will have overlooked something. The good news is that it is never too late to give up a career you hate and pursue a much different career that you have fantasized and talked about for some time.

In his 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, Stephen Jobs, co-founder of Apple Corporation, advised, “Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don’t lose faith. I’m convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You’ve got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work.”

Jobs continued, “And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle. As with all matters of the heart, you’ll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don’t settle.”

Remember, Stephen Jobs along with Steve Wozniak started what today is the Apple Corporation in the Jobs family’s garage. Obviously, both Jobs and Wozniak had to love building and marketing computers for them to become so successful.

Again, if you aren’t working at something you enjoy, you are settling for much less than you deserve. It is no secret that the happiest and most successful people at work have great affection for their selected vocation. Generally speaking, they are also the most successful in the long term.
The Best Time to Pursue Your
Dream Career Is Twenty
Years Ago and Today

Business Week magazine recently surveyed 500 American business executives about their job satisfaction. Surprisingly, almost three-quarters (72 percent) were not in their dream jobs. The first question that arises is: What would executives rather be doing? Many, in fact, named creative professions when asked about their fantasy careers. Here are the executives’ top ten career choices with the first being highest on their list:

- Entertainment manager or events producer
- Winemaker or brewmaster
- Chef
- Restaurateur
- Pilot
- Golf pro
- Professional athlete
- Rock star
- Neurosurgeon
- Bed-and-breakfast-inn owner/operator

Of course, dream careers will depend on a number of factors, including the age of the people surveyed. For interest’s sake, following are the top ten dream jobs chosen by Canadian youths:

Blessed is he who has found his work. Let him ask no other blessedness.
— Thomas Carlyle
an engineer. What made engineering even more unbearable was that I had to work in a corporate setting. Not so long ago a friend of mine, who was also in engineering at one time, found a course assignment that some engineering student had lost. Both of us couldn’t believe that we had at one time actually done many variations of this type of assignment and allowed ourselves to be subjected to such severe punishment.

John Fletcher from Boston is another good example of someone who went into a profession that he hated right from the start. Fletcher shared his experience in a review he did of a career book on Amazon.com: “I was, until two years ago, a very successful lawyer,” claimed Fletcher. “But, from the first day of law school, to the day I walked out the door for the last time, I hated every minute of it. What could be worse than spending every day dealing with lawyers? I spent years wrestling with the big question: What to do with my life? I knew I wanted to wake up with excitement rather than dread. I had no idea what that might be.”

Despite not knowing what dream career to pursue, John Fletcher was able to eventually design a new career and leave law for good. In his words, “Now I wake up feeling like it is Christmas every day. What could be better?” Fletcher didn’t say what new field he entered, but this is irrelevant. The point is that most lawyers end up hating their career choice, and a few manage to leave law behind for a much better life. John Grisham, for example, chucked his law career to write best-selling fiction.

Incidentally, John Fletcher attributed his success in designing an enjoyable career to his willingness and commitment to follow the advice of Nicholas Lore in his best-selling The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success (Fireside, 1998). Several career counselors have indicated that Lore’s career book is by far the best one available anywhere. Just as telling, many of the best career advisors, coaches, and counselors use Lore’s methods when working with their clients.

Another reason people wind up in wrong careers is that they do virtually no planning or soul-searching. Indeed, they just fall into their jobs. One person may find out from his friend about a job opening at the company the friend works for, seize on the so-called opportunity, and work there for years, hating every minute of it. Another person may look through the career opportunities of a newspaper, apply for a few jobs, be offered one, and

The best augury of a man’s success in his profession is that he thinks it the finest in the world.

— George Eliot
however. Besides enjoying his job more than most people enjoy theirs, Andy treasures the freedom of working at the time of day he chooses and not having a supervisor tell him what to do and what not to do.

As the executive director of an international film festival, Andy may have to work fairly hard for one to two months. Once the festival is over, he gets to work fewer hours a day than I work. The other day Andy told me that he regularly sleeps in until noon. Lucky guy! Andy, like me, also gets to take several days off anytime he wants without having to ask permission. In short, Andy would never trade the freedom he enjoys for an executive position that pays two to three times as much but imprisons him for eight to twelve hours a day.

Self-employment or having an unreal job, however, does not mean that your income has to have a limit on it. There are many people who leave the corporate world and actually earn much better money than they did in it. This can even happen to professionals who already are in the top 5 percent of wage earners.

Take, for example, Robin Sharma, who does not have a real job. Sharma was once an overworked and highly paid litigation lawyer tired of living without a central purpose or meaning to his life. His sense of emptiness and longing influenced him to search out the inspiration and wisdom of Og Mandino, Norman Vincent Peale, Gandhi, Albert Einstein, Nelson Mandela, and others. Within months of applying what he learned from his mentors, Sharma experienced profound positive changes in the quality of his thoughts, his energy level, and the overall quality of his life.

Sharma chucked his career as a well-paid lawyer to become a writer and professional speaker instead. Today he has a lifestyle that’s about as good as it gets. Sharma makes a great living, traveling around the world making motivational speeches in such places as Hawaii, Israel, and Europe. He has a great purpose to his life, he has his freedom, and he makes more money than he did as a high-paid lawyer.

Perhaps you presently feel like Robin Sharma felt at one time; you realize that you can lead a more meaningful, more fulfilling, and happier existence only if you make important changes in your life. All along, however, you have put off making a change because you are waiting for the perfect moment, with the right conditions. Clearly, there will never be a perfect moment. Waiting for things to get better will ensure that they don’t
teach only sixteen hours a week, and particularly enjoy the freedom that such a job offers.

After spending two-and-a-half years and substantial money to get an MBA, I found a part-time position at a private vocational institution teaching four courses each term. Later I taught only one course per term at two universities. When it became clear that I couldn’t get a full-time position at a community college, I decided to become a professional speaker. To have at least some credibility as a speaker, it helps to have written at least one book. Thus, I self-published my first book, which helped me get speaking engagements for a while.

After I wrote and self-published my second book, I realized that I really liked writing and publishing books. Just as important, I could continue to pursue my purpose in life, which is to help people develop their potential and make progress toward attaining some of their dreams. I also felt at this point that I could make a living from the royalties from my books and didn’t have to actively generate income through more speaking engagements.

Weirdly, by pursuing my goal to become a college instructor, which at one time seemed impossible to me, I actually attained this goal for a while, before winding up working at something much better. If I had made my goal merely to earn a living at some corporate job, I would likely have reached my goal, and remained miserable for a long time.

Clearly, a corporate job is a goal much too small for many more people other than me. If you are not just a dreamer, but also a doer, a dream career does not have to be an unattainable fantasy. Michelangelo said it best: “The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

If you are unhappy in your current job situation, isn’t it time to take steps to change it? I believe that there is an old wise saying something like “If you always do what you have always done, you will always be what you have always been.” It’s seldom too late to discover and pursue an unreal job or unique vocation that will turn you on and contribute to a much better future. But it is better to do it sooner than later.

Chicago advertising executive Robert Cochrane warned Carl Laemmle with these words: “Don’t be a salary slave! If you are going to do anything in this world, you must start before you are forty, before your period of initiative has ended. Do it now!”

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*Man’s task is simple. He should cease letting his existence be a thoughtless accident.*

— Friedrich Nietzsche
you have. If you are not good at making decisions, you may have to enroll in a course to help you get better. Making a good decision depends on three factors: 1) knowing yourself well including what you truly want, 2) acquiring the right information about the work you would like to do, and 3) using an effective decision-making model (one model is given later in this chapter). Your choice should be the option that best matches your abilities, interests, and needs with an unreal job or unconventional business that allows you to make a contribution to others.

Step 4: Implementation — Once you make a decision, it’s time to take action. This means having a plan to find or create the unreal job you want. Alternatively, you have to develop a plan and take the necessary steps for becoming self-employed or operating an unconventional business.

Stop Dreaming; Start Choosing

The late Buckminster Fuller, best known as the inventor of the geodesic dome, seriously contemplated suicide at the age of thirty-two as he stood on the edge of Lake Michigan. Fuller’s first child had died; he was bankrupt, discredited, and jobless; and he had a wife and newborn daughter. Fortunately, Fuller stopped to ask himself whether he might be of value to the universe.

The spiritual answer that Fuller received — his existence was proof enough of his purpose for being — convinced him that he should continue living and make important contributions to humanity. He chose at that moment to embark on what he called “an experiment to discover what the little, penniless, unknown individual might be able to do effectively on behalf of all humanity.”

To put it succinctly, Buckminster Fuller did not disappoint himself — or the world! He contributed to humanity not only as an inventor, but also as a writer, educator, philosopher, and poet, until he died at the age of eighty-eight. What’s really cool is Fuller lived most of his adult life without a real job. Perhaps this amazing man would have indeed committed suicide if he had confined himself to a corporate job. The key to Fuller’s

At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing steadily ever since.

— Salvador Dali
Purpose involves pursuing activities that express our true selves. Clearly, it’s not easy for everyone to discover a purpose that is their own. Ingrid Bacci, in her book *The Art of Effortless Living* (Perigee Trade, 2002), states, “For all our culture’s so-called individualism, most people have very little true sense of themselves, or of a purpose to their lives that they can eagerly espouse. It is no wonder that, if we focus on externals and find our validation primarily in what we do and in what we get for what we do, we will never find ourselves.”

Pursuing a dream career with a major purpose means traveling alone on your own path; this requires a great deal of courage because it is terrifying. A job with a purpose also requires more work and commitment initially than it takes to enter a corporate job where practically everything is laid out for us. The problem with following the most practical path for making a living is that it is not the most rewarding and fulfilling.

Many individuals — I use the term loosely in this case — don’t have an important purpose because their focus has been on superficial pursuits, such as material possessions, status, competition, and wasteful consumption. They have been so programmed to work hard and earn a lot of money that they totally forgot who they are in the process. They don’t recall what they deeply care about or what really turns them on. Ironically, some people have more than enough money to leave corporate life, but they are not quite sure what it is that they want to pursue.

You, too, may have allowed yourself to become so engrossed in the corporate world and in amassing material possessions that you have forgotten what makes you feel fulfilled and truly alive. Indeed, work and the pursuit of material things may have estranged you from who you really are. As is to be expected, discovering who you really are is essential because purpose is created from within.

It doesn’t matter so much where you have been. The question is: Where would you like to go? The amount of time, money, and energy you have spent getting to where you are today is totally irrelevant if you are miserable doing the work you are presently doing.

Why not give it your best shot to pursue a higher avocation that is more

If you don’t like driving cab, what would you rather be doing? In other words, what is your dream job?

There is only one thing that I can come up with — I want to rule the world!
Generating revealing answers to these fifteen questions will take time. Write these questions down in a notebook, leaving sufficient room for several answers for each question. Then take a few minutes to spontaneously record your answers to the questions without stopping to think about them. Keep going no matter what you write down. You don’t want your rational mind to interfere with your answers. Remember, your rational mind has a habit of disguising the real you.

Carry this notebook of questions around for the next two to four weeks and add to your answers. Every day take fifteen minutes or so to contemplate the questions further without interruption from outside forces. Given enough time, you should eventually have sufficient information about your needs and wants to help you discover at least one important mission, true calling, or passionate pursuit. Some people will discover more than one.

If you are unable to find your true calling by utilizing the above fifteen questions, keep trying by utilizing other means. I won’t walk you every step of the way until you create your dream career or unreal job. Quite frankly, I can’t. Indeed, nobody can. Everyone’s combination of experience, talent, and knowledge is unique.

There are a number of great books, however, that can help you rediscover who you are and the work you were born to do if you need more direction. One of the best career books is *Do What You Are* (Little Brown & Company, 2001) by Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger. Two others that come highly recommended are *The Career Guide for Creative and Unconventional People* (Ten Speed Press, 1999) by Carol Eikeberry and *Making a Living Without a Job: Winning Ways for Creating Work That You Love* (Bantam, 1993) by Barbara Winter.

A course or seminar on how to successfully change careers may also help you find your true calling. Check out the colleges and universities in your area to see whether they offer programs for people who want to ponder new careers, explore the changing world, and decide how they are going make a great living in it.

In addition to books and courses, individuals in a wide range of jobs, career stages, and income levels are utilizing the services of career coaches to help them change careers or leave corporate life altogether. “We’re doing the same as an athletic coach would: helping talented, capable people problem-solve and reach their goals,” says renowned career coach Nicholas Lore. Incidentally,
more relevant skills than you think you have. The key is to identify important transferable skills — honed in your present job, previous jobs, educational institutions, and life in general — that you can use in your dream job or business.

Many skills are highly usable in many careers. These include decision-making, problem-solving, time management, communication, organization, negotiation, creativity, and promotion skills. Following are four recommended steps for identifying the important skills that you already have and can apply to your dream job or business venture:

Step 1: Identify Your Key Skills — List all the jobs you have had and jot down all the important skills you used in these jobs. Think about every important task you did. Don’t undervalue any skill that you used.

Step 2: Research Your Dream Job — Thoroughly research the field you intend to pursue. Read trade publications and association literature. Buy dinner for a practicing professional in the field you intend to pursue so that you gain a greater understanding of the field.

Step 3: Look for Relationships — How do your background skills relate to your dream job or business venture? Think of each skill in terms of how transferable it is to what you want to do.

Step 4: Emphasize the Most Important Skills — Summarize the most important transferable skills that you can use in your new venture. Your list should look quite impressive. What’s more, you can always learn a lot of the important skills that you don’t presently have.

Again, a true calling in an unreal job can fulfill your inner needs more than money or status can in a traditional job. You have to find a purpose that is bigger than you and bigger than money. Otherwise, you won’t follow through with the action that is necessary for you to succeed.

You may have to think outside of the box to come up with some new job or business venture that matches your interests and deepest desires. Your new career may not appear as a logical one to others, but it will be

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I would have made a good Pope.
— Richard M. Nixon
they are doing in their lives.

It has been a lot of work, has taken a lot of courage, and has been anything but predictable. To do something like this you really have to learn to roll with the punches. But I have no regrets. It’s been one year today since I landed here and I thought I should let you know how your book touched my life. It was really the tipping point to “just do it!”

If you or any of your readers want to know what that has been like, they can check out my blog at www.colinsito.blogs.com.

Cheers,

Colin Brownlee

When the idea for his dream job appeared, Colin Brownlee was ready for it. Although he did not act on it immediately, he recognized it as something that he definitely wanted to pursue sooner or later. Your purpose or passionate pursuit will also surface when you are ready for it. Paradoxically, some people find their true life’s calling just when life appears to be going rapidly downhill — for instance, when they have been fired from their prestigious job. They then take a neglected hobby and turn it into full-time passion, which eventually becomes a profitable business.

You may notice that Colin Brownlee made no mention of what sort of money he expected to earn in his new career. This leads to the ultimate test of the work for which you are most suited. If you can think of some unreal job that someone is paid to do, but you yourself would pay to be allowed to do if you were filthy rich, chances are that this is the dream job you should be pursuing.

Don’t ever underestimate the power of having an overriding purpose, or several of them, if you want to enjoy life outside the corporation. A life without purpose can lead to dissociation from life whereas a life with an interesting purpose can lead to an incredible love of life. As the following example indicates, people can ensure themselves a fulfilling life when they identify their passions and devote a good part of their waking hours to pursuing these passions.

George Bernard Shaw ended up enjoying his later years because he retained a great sense of purpose until he died at the age of ninety-six. Indeed,

Hollywood held this double lure for me, tremendous sums of money for work that required no more effort than a game of pinochle.

— Ben Hecht
enjoy freedom and are prepared to earn it. You can end up working for yourself using the strategy that best suits you:

**Three Basic Paths to Self-Employment**

1. Get fired and be awakened to the fact that you don’t ever want to return to the corporate world.
2. Plan to create an unreal job or start a business while you are in a real job in the corporate world and then take the plunge.
3. Accumulate enough funds so that you can semi-retire and then work or not work, as you please.

Following is an example of someone who took the path of being pushed into self-employment, the one that involves being fired. Adrian Chong from Melbourne, Australia, sent me an e-mail indicating that *The Joy of Not Working* and *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free* had helped him adapt to his new lifestyle. Here is a portion of the e-mail:

Hi Ernie;

Two years ago I got fired for being labeled “slow” and spending too much time chatting to my co-workers. This was in a job at an insurance company where I had worked for five years. But now I am doing contracting work. There’s no office politics and life is great! I get to experience much more freedom being a contractor than in my former job. Like you, I am focusing more on life and less on work. Sometimes I go to coffee bars to have coffee or hot chocolate, walk in the park, visit friends, and engage in travel occasionally.

It’s very unlikely I will go back to permanent work as I am trying to live life to the fullest. Being a contractor is enough for me to live on even though the income is not stable at times. At 32 years old, I am one happy man!

Regards,

Adrian
Disadvantages of Working for Yourself

- Capital usually needed to start a business
- Uncertain income makes it hard to plan financially
- Lack of paid-for benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, and a retirement plan
- Uncertain work hours
- Pressure of having sole responsibility for your livelihood
- Possibility of business failure and loss of capital
- Perceptions of family and friends who think negatively that you don’t have a real job
- Having to chase clients to get paid

No doubt there will be trade-offs if you decide to leave corporate life. Again, the major issue for many people is money. The money issue works both ways, however. You may wind up making less money or more money. For people like Adrian Chong, a lower income is an acceptable sacrifice for the freedom and flexibility that comes with self-employment.

One study conducted by the University of Zurich on workers in twenty-three countries found that the self-employed are substantially more satisfied than people who labor for someone else, even if the self-employed work more and earn less. One response by a self-employed person given to a researcher was, “I used to do this work as a hobby. I’m making half what I used to make in my previous job, but I’m one hundred times happier.”

You don’t necessarily have to earn less money as a self-employed person, however. Contrary to what a lot of people believe, self-employment does not mean that you have to live in poverty. In fact, there is opportunity to end up being better off financially than 99 percent of corporate workers. According to an AARP Policy Institute report, the self-employed in the United States constitute 10.2 percent of workers — but 66 percent of the millionaires.

Providing a service or product in which you truly believe is the key to making it on your own. Studies have shown time and time again that individuals who go into business because they want to perform a service they love performing or selling a product they love selling make more money in the long term than individuals...
you have got what it takes to make it on your own:

Test of Whether You Can Become Joyfully Self-Employed

1. Are you willing to make personal sacrifices today in exchange for undetermined rewards in the future?
2. Are you willing to trust your decisions when others aren’t?
3. Are you willing to take risks?
4. Are you willing to accept rejection?
5. Are you willing to use your creativity and be more innovative than the average person?
6. Are you willing to experience a lot of failure, and learn from it, before experiencing a lot of success?
7. Are you willing to do a lot of research?
8. Are you willing to admire successful people, learn from them, and adopt their success principles?
9. Are you willing to get paid for the actual results you produce instead of for the time you spend at a job?
10. Are you willing to forego a regular paycheck and get paid sporadically, sometimes a little, sometimes a lot?

If you answered no to all the questions, then undoubtedly you are best suited for government work and the comfort and perks that it provides. If you get such a job, hang onto it dearly even though it will confine you to a cubicle every work day for the rest of your career life. Note that you will have to give up a lot in exchange for the comfort of a government job. As will be discussed in greater detail later in the book, living in physical comfort doesn’t necessarily mean personal fulfillment nor does it mean personal joy nor does it mean experiencing a feeling of true success.

Obviously the more times that you answered yes to the above test, the more likely that you will succeed in working for yourself. If you had one to four negative responses, you don’t have to disqualify yourself entirely. You do, however, have to work on whatever it takes to make a genuine commitment to achieving success in your own personal way.

— Martha Stewart
desirable business; you have nothing more than a lousy job.

Many new businesses fail due to fierce competition, a lack of capital, or changing trends. Other businesses fail because the owner is not able to deal with the many unpleasant tasks necessary to make the business a success. Just as important, business owners often do not recognize necessary skills that should be learned at some point.

To increase your chances of success, you may want to avoid certain types of businesses. Buying a franchise such as McDonald’s, for instance, can only lead to much harder work and more work than you will have to do in most corporate jobs. Besides having to put up several hundred thousands of dollars for start-up and franchise costs, you will end up working long hours seven days a week and having to deal with frustrating activities such as hiring and firing employees.

The good news is that there are many alternatives to running a franchise or starting any other business that requires a lot of capital and a lot of employees. A home-based business supplying professional services is an option for people with expertise in areas such as law, engineering, accounting, editing, translation, and human resources.

For example, people with human-resources experience have set up shop as executive recruiters and professional résumé writers. The great advantage is that most of these small businesses don’t require a large initial capital investment, yet offer the opportunity to earn a decent living.

All things considered, there’s no better business than an unconventional business that differs from most traditional businesses. Your chances for success are much greater when your unconventional business has these great things going for it:

**Characteristics of the Ideal Business**

- You have no employees.
- You can contract out work you don’t want to do yourself through services such as www.elance.com.
- The capital required for start-up is minimal.
- Your overhead is low.
- You can start making money from the outset
job where you can utilize your creativity doing something you enjoy and that enhances the lives of others.

Once you know what you want to do, you want to get it right the first time if you can. We have all read the statistics about new businesses — some 80 percent of them don’t make it. So how do you give yourself the best chance? Don’t fall for the first money-making scheme that someone tells you about. People who chase the dollar and the “get-rich-quick” schemes fail miserably more often than not.

Another key ingredient for business success is keeping your overhead low. Employees, for instance, can cost you a lot of money, not to mention time and energy. Instead of hiring someone full- or even part-time, hire a virtual assistant. By virtual assistant, I mean someone whom you hire on the Internet.

For example, I used the website Elance (www.elance.com) to hire a freelance professional to design my seventeen-page website. After putting out my project for bid, I received nineteen offers to design the website, with prices ranging from $240 to $650. I ended up paying $400 to a Web designer in Allentown, Pennsylvania, instead of the $1,000 to $2,000 that Web designers in my hometown wanted.

If you want to go into business for yourself, you may need a nest egg to get you started. In many cases, however, having a lot of money can be detrimental to achieving success. With a lot of capital you are liable to throw money at any problem instead of using your creativity to come up with innovative solutions that pulverize your competition.

Many businesses were started on kitchen tables with virtually no capital and went on to become hugely successful multimillion dollar businesses. On the other hand, many businesses supported with millions of dollars of venture capital have taken only a year or two to bite the dust.

Although many people have opted for unconventional work when they were broke or heavily in debt, it probably helps to have some financial resources. Of course, if you have substantial financial resources, the best investment is to start a business that is so much fun you don’t care if it fails.

The main thing is, will you be doing something that you enjoy? If you don’t answer yes to this question, then why the heck are you thinking of doing it? If you want to start your own business mainly

Well, you know, I was a human being before I became a businessman.
— George Soros
Take your time. The key is to use a rational decision-making process that gives consideration to your health, your finances, your dreams, your family situation, and your present-day well-being. You may want to use the following process:

**Decision-Making Model for Whether to Start an Unconventional Business**

Step 1: Write down all the pros and cons of running your own business. Look for hidden disadvantages. It’s all too easy to focus only on the advantages.

Step 2: Decide whether the pros outweigh the cons. What net benefits do you receive by leaving corporate life? What benefits do you lose that may turn out to be far more important than meets the eye?

Step 3: Find objective assistance from your spouse as well as friends and professionals. These people will be able to support you in your decision to go on your own; alternatively, they can ask insightful questions to ensure you aren’t making the biggest mistake in your life.

Step 4: Make the decision. If the pros win out over the cons, it’s time to go. As the Nike ad says, “Just do it.” If things don’t work out, it’s not the end of the world. You can find another traditional job, possibly better than the one you have now.

This book won’t go into much more depth about how to start your own business simply because this is not its intent. But there are hundreds of books that provide a lot of valuable information. Try one such as *Working Solo: The Real Guide to Freedom & Financial Success with Your Own Business* (Wiley, 1998) by Terri Lonier. Getting started in a new field may not be easy, but plenty of help is available to accomplish anything you want. Books alone provide a vast reserve of knowledge that can be exploited by practically anyone.

Every answer to any problem you can ever imagine is in print somewhere; you just need to find it. When I first started in my business, for instance, I didn’t have the faintest idea about how to write a book, get

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*Nearly every glamorous, wealthy, successful career woman you might envy now started out as some kind of schlep.*

— Helen Gurley Brown
corporate restructuring — arising from mergers, acquisitions, and reorganizations — remains the main reason for job loss among American workers. When you are an entrepreneur, the only person who can downsize you is you. But why would you want to? A career without a real job can be the most adventurous career that anyone can have.

The World’s Coolest Unreal Jobs

To be sure, it’s never easy to leave a career in which you have spent a good portion of your life. What makes it even harder is having reached a high level of traditional success where you have a large salary, great benefits, a generous expense account, and a good measure of prestige. But you must leave if you are unhappy and see no way to make yourself happy.

If you agree with even 80 percent of what I have said in this book so far, corporations need you more than you need corporations. A creative person like you wanting a corporate job is like a dolphin wanting a gun. Why bother? Indeed, if having to work at Starbucks would make you think that you have been denied your rightful place in the world’s vocational order, the rest of this book will help, provided you commit yourself to the principles advocated herein.

The most successful creative people make the great escape from corporate life and don’t work in real jobs; they choose self-employment or unconventional jobs such as those in the entertainment field. These people don’t talk excessively about their dreams — they just make their dreams happen through action and commitment. They also don’t listen to their negative friends and relatives who doubt that anyone can make a great living outside of a corporation. Indeed, millions of people in this world earn a decent living without a real job.

Take Miki in Toronto, Ontario, for instance, who is a clairvoyant. According to an interview she did with Report on Business magazine, in the average week Miki sees thirty to thirty-five people with about 75 percent being women. Her clients vary from people in the entertainment business, police officers, and stockbrokers, to bank presidents. She charges $120 for a one-hour reading. Run through the numbers and you can see that Miki makes a decent living. She says her job isn’t always a bowl of

Get happiness out of your work or you may never know what happiness is.
— Elbert Hubbard
Freelance product designer  Furniture designer
Game designer  Ghostwriter
Graphics artist  Home tutor
Humorist  Illustrator
Image consultant  Importer
Information broker  Infomarketing coach
Infomercial producer  Instructional designer
Interior designer  Internet expert
Landlord/leasing specialist  Landscape expert
Licenser of products  Literary agent
Lyricist  Mail order entrepreneur
Makeup artist  Management consultant
Marriage counselor  Massage therapist
Media expert  Mime artist
Model  Movie critic
Multimedia designer  Multilevel marketer
Negotiator  Networking franchiser
Newsletter editor  Online content developer
Orchestrator  Painter
Personal coach  Photographer
Printmaker  Professional speaker
Psychic reader  Public-relations consultant
Publicist  Relocation specialist
Screenwriter  Sculptor
Self-publisher  Seminar producer
Speech coach  Street performer
Stunt performer  Syndicated columnist
Tattoo artist  Telecommunicator
Travel writer  TV-program producer
Video-game consultant  Web consultant
Website designer  Web master
Writing planner  Wine expert
Writer  Yoga teacher

These unconventional jobs are just a few of many that lend themselves to making a living outside the corporation. Tomorrow, there will even be more new dream jobs that you didn’t even know existed. A decade or so ago, who would have imagined a job as a Web designer?

Whether it’s an unreal job or an unconventional business venture, don’t

Never be afraid to tread the path alone. Know which is your path and follow it wherever it may lead you; do not feel you have to follow in someone else’s footsteps.

— Eileen Caddy
rush into a new career without considering many alternatives. Today’s large selection of cool careers gives you a great chance to select one that matches your skills, talents, and experience. Career success without a real job can be yours if you really want it.

**Today’s Most Exciting Unconventional Business That Allows You to Make Money While You Sleep**

To some people the best way to make a living without a real job is being a landlord. Of course, being a landlord is not easy, particularly if you have no capital to invest in rental property. Sure, you may be able to acquire property without any capital using Robert Allen’s book *Nothing Down for the 2000s* (Free Press, 2004). Even so, once you acquire property, being a landlord is not easy; I found this out during my short-lived stint as a landlord when I wound up with lousy tenants. What’s more, there are high risks involved and you must know your market.

A much better career than owning real estate and being a landlord is an unconventional job associated with the information business. Some people call the information business “the real estate of the twenty-first century.” For many decades, the best way to become wealthy was through real estate. Today it is information. The person who creates timely information, and markets it effectively, can prosper and generate more wealth than most people can with real estate.

In fact, real estate guru Robert Allen (mentioned above) claims, “There’s a lot more money in the information business than there ever will be in the real estate business.” What I like about the information business is that it is an exciting business, in fact, one of the most exciting in the world. It can also be a difficult business if you don’t have a decent product or don’t know what you are doing. If you develop a good service or product, and pay your dues to learn the ropes, however, this exciting business can be highly lucrative financially and very rewarding personally.

The information business has been experiencing unparalleled growth for several years and will continue to do so for decades. Why not get into this business? You can be the source of ideas, data, and entertainment that people and businesses want.

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*My son is now an “entrepreneur.” That’s what you’re called when you don’t have a job.*  
— Ted Turner
Here are some of the benefits of being in the information business:

- Easy to create
- A large global market
- Easy to research, particularly on the Internet
- Inexpensive to produce
- Can sell information from practically anywhere in the world
- Fun to sell
- Prestigious career compared to most jobs

Since there is no lack of information in the world, the opportunity is not so much in coming up with new information as it is in packaging it properly. You want to make the information user-friendly. User-friendly means time-friendly — information that is easy to read and takes as little time as possible to read.

The great thing is that you don’t have to come up with anything new. Better still, you can sell the same information that other people are selling and make a lot more money than they do. To accomplish this, your information should be simpler, cheaper, easier to understand, shorter, and/or more timely. It can also have more value because it has more features.

Another benefit to being in the information business is that you can develop multiple layers of products and programs by leveraging your information into residual streams of income. You don’t want to specialize in too narrow of a field; the more specialized you become, the more dependent you are on that specialty. Broadening your opportunities allows you to make much more money in good times and still be able to do well when one of your information-making programs falls on bad times.

Ways to Sell Information

- Books
- E-books
- Audio books
- Audio programs
- Video training
- Multimedia programs
- Workbooks or manuals
- Coaching programs

Welfare is not a career opportunity.
— Unknown wise person
royalties. To bug my friends working in real jobs, I say, “Why do you think I often sleep in until noon? I do this to earn an extra fifty bucks or so from my intellectual property. I also often take a nap late in the afternoon and make myself another twenty-five bucks.”

One of my favorite examples of the staying power of intellectual property is the album *Bat out of Hell* by Meat Loaf, the legendary rock-opera singer, born Marvin Lee Aday. Aday was given the nickname Meat Loaf by his abusive and alcoholic father. At the age of eighteen, after the death of his mother to cancer, Meat Loaf left his Dallas home to make it on his own, and in 1977 he released his first album *Bat out of Hell*. The amazing thing is that almost thirty years later the album still sells over 500,000 copies a year and has now sold thirty million copies. As you can well imagine, Aday and members of his band still get a handsome royalty check every year.

Of course, I don’t expect you to become a singer to capitalize on the power of intellectual property — although you would probably have a better chance of doing this than I, given what a terrible singer I am. The point is that rock stars aren’t the only individuals eligible for royalties. You can create an audiotape, syndicate a cartoon, invent a product, or sell an idea to a major corporation.

Keep in mind that not only am I a terrible singer, but I am also a lousy writer — according to some people, anyway. But I still make a decent living. You can also earn a decent living from intellectual property, particularly if you agree by now that I am a lousy writer and are sure that you can write better than I can. What more proof do you need?

Many obscure individuals are starting out today in the information business about whom you will be reading in two or three years. You can be one of these people. You don’t have to be a genius and you don’t have to own a big company. Best of all, you can do it from your kitchen table, in a home office, or in a coffee bar on your laptop. It’s within your grasp. Get started today.

You may object that we are already bombarded with way too much information; so who needs more? A lot of people, in fact, want the information. Corporations want it also, simply because a lot of corporations, particularly large
contact there had an offer for me. It so happened that a Japanese publisher was coming to the agency an hour after I sent the agent the PDF file. The publisher ended up offering $8,000 as an advance, which I gladly accepted.

Clearly, the payoff from packaging and marketing information does not always come that quickly. Opportunities abound, however, to make a great deal of money from a modest amount of effort. With a few winning ideas on how to repackage existing information, and proper marketing, you can spend the rest of your lifetime experiencing career success without a real job.

**Write Yourself out of Poverty into Satisfaction and Riches**

Assume that you are placed in a prison cell against your will and your jailers tell you that you have to write a publishable book in order for you to gain your freedom. You are given access to the Internet as well as a writing coach and any book on writing and publishing that has ever been written. Do you think that you could write a decent book? Clearly, many people — likely you included — under these conditions would knock off a book within two or three months that is better than thousands of books that have been published by major publishers.

So why not write a book? Perhaps, like many people, you have always wanted to be a writer. Deep down, there has always been something about the Starbucks cappuccino-and-laptop crowd that appealed to you. If you have thought intuitively for a long time that you should have been a writer, you should give it some serious consideration. Indeed, if deep down you have always wanted to write a book, not writing one can be more difficult than actually writing it.

Apparently 81 percent of Americans think they should write a book, but only 2 percent have completed a manuscript. Alas, the large majority of people are not prepared to pay their dues. Most people don’t start or finish their books because of a lack of commitment. How about you?

I have decided to devote a bit of space to what it takes to be a writer simply because there are so many people who want to write. Fact is, being a writer is one of the best ways to earn a living without a real job. There aren’t a large

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**Why do writers write?**

Because it isn’t there.

— Thomas Berger
be masterpieces. Sometimes, they contain some pretty pathetic writing, but at least I have four pages to work with. Even if I break my agreement to write three hours a day, and write for only fifteen minutes, I am still closer to completing a book than the lazy characters who talk for ten hours about writing one, but never spend a minute on it.

Most people cop out by saying that they can’t write. Others say that they don’t have enough time. Still others think that no one would be interested in what they have to say. These are excuses, far from being good reasons. If people are too lazy to write, at least they should admit it, and take responsibility for their own laziness.

Write a novel, write a poem, write a movie script, write a play, write a short story, write a newspaper article, or write an opera. Whatever you have wanted to write, start today. Even write an unauthorized autobiography, but make sure you write. All told, you can write yourself out of poverty into satisfaction and a livelihood simply because others have.

Frank Kaiser is an example of someone who wrote himself to satisfaction and a livelihood. In 2000 Kaiser entered retirement age with a $616 Social Security check and nothing else — no corporate pension and no savings. After having gone broke starting StreetSmarts Coalition, a non-profit organization whose mission was to help south Florida’s homeless men and women attain self-sufficiency, Kaiser needed an income-producing venture so that he and his wife wouldn’t lose their house.

Kaiser thought about how seniors are the most avid readers of newspapers and, yet, how dull most newspapers are. That’s when he came up with the idea for a regular column where he could provide more interesting topics for these seniors. “In school, I was taught to write what I know,” Kaiser remarked. “I decided to write the truth about what it’s like to be a geezer.”

The regular column was tagged “Suddenly Senior” and his first article was called “Have Sex the Way You Did 40 Years Ago.” An editor at Florida’s *Key Largo Independent* liked the first article so much that he decided to carry the writer’s regular column. Soon
book? If the answer is yes, then you have a responsibility, not only to yourself, but to the world to write.

Writing, plain and simple, is putting your knowledge and ideas into words on paper and then trying to arrange them in publishable form, whether it’s for a book, newspaper, magazine, or a website. Above all, writing is one of the best ways to express yourself to the world, and make some money at it at the same time.

Sit down at your computer and write 500 to 1,000 words today. To date *The Joy of Not Working* has made me about seven dollars per word since it was first published. If you can put together a book that goes on to be just as successful, writing 500 words (about one page) today will end up making you $3,500 over the next several years. Whenever I have a choice whether to watch TV or head down to a coffee bar and write a new book on my laptop, the coffee bar and laptop win out every time. To the best of my knowledge, few success-seekers have become finders while watching TV.

**Retire to a Job You Love Instead of One You Love to Hate**

As indicated in my book *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*, planning for retirement, if and when it is pursued, generally focuses on financial issues. Particularly if you are a baby boomer quickly approaching retirement, you may be concerned whether you are saving enough for retirement. The good news is that many people may be overestimating how much money they need once they leave the workforce. Several research studies show that people generally spend a lot less as they age.

If you have the money issue handled, you may be wondering whether there is life after retirement. There is good news here as well. With a retirement pension, you can retire early from your present boring job and find another job that is more interesting, even if it does not pay as much. This will make your retirement life more exciting and satisfying than your work life.

In fact, many soon-to-be retirees intend to find some sort of new job in order that they may enjoy retirement life. A survey by Metropolitan Life Insurance

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**Writing is turning one’s worst moments into money.**
— J. P. Donleavy

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**Most people perform essentially meaningless work. When they retire that truth is borne upon them.**
— Brendan Francis
Leaving a traditional job for self-employment or an unreal job can offer a smooth financial and lifestyle transition into retirement or semi-retirement. For retirees who find their true calling, retirement actually becomes semi-retirement because they work part-time at an unreal job that allows them to work according to their own schedule. Semi-retirement is a time to work for the love of work rather than for the love of money. Going to work when one knows one doesn’t have to work in itself can be satisfying. More important, working at a job one loves instead of a job that one loves to hate is highly rewarding.

Take, for example, Ron Sadownick of Nanaimo, B.C., who retired at the age of fifty-six. While he was a schoolteacher, Sadownick’s passion was making fused-glass art. Taking early retirement allowed him to devote much more time to his creative pursuit. Because twenty-five galleries in B.C. sell his work, his hobby earns him $1,000 a month, a nice supplement to his $28,000-a-year pension.

As for Ron Sadownick, working for many baby boomers will be out of interest rather than necessity, with most of those who plan to work during retirement planning to move into a completely new career. If you are one of these baby boomers contemplating early retirement, it’s easy to dream about how you’ll spend your retirement days. It’s entirely another matter to make those dreams come true, particularly if you don’t have a major purpose. Several research studies show that retirees who have no real purpose to their lives are prone to feel unneeded and fit for nothing, even severely depressed.

One research study was conducted by Jungmeem Kim and Phyllis Moen of Cornell University on retired men and women based on the definition of “retired” as eligible for or receiving Social Security, an employee pension, or both. Kim and Moen concluded that regardless of their income, health, or age, retired males have high morale and little depression if they adopt second careers. Much higher levels of depression and lower morale are experienced by men who make retirement permanent. Retired women have the most difficulty with morale and depression if they are retired and their husbands aren’t at home.

Many individuals are lucky enough to have had their career work and some passionate pursuit be one and the same. Thus, they can continue happily working part-time in their field well past retirement, without having to discover their true calling.
All things considered, if you are going to work in retirement, the nature of the work should be much more important than the money you can make at it. Should it be the case that you need a reasonable income from your retirement career, careful thought and preparation will be needed to find part-time work that is both enjoyable and profitable. On the other hand, if you have a good retirement income without a job, even one that pays the minimum wage should be taken in the event that it provides you with satisfaction and enjoyment.

While pursuing a fun job, we should do the right thing for ourselves, regardless of what others may think of the job. It’s okay to take a job that has less status than the one we had in our primary careers. A good example of a person who did just this is Dick Remy, a can-company supervisor before he retired at the age of fifty. For the first five years Remy worked part-time as a consultant. Regardless of the fact that being a consultant gave him a measure of status, Remy didn’t find his retirement job much fun. Eventually he did something about it. “I decided to see what was out there,” stated Remy.

As it turned out, Remy’s fun job ended up being a truck driver, a job some retirees may have dreamed of doing as a kid, but never got around to pursuing due to the job’s perceived lower status in society. This didn’t stop Remy. He was first trained as a truck driver by Kreilkamp Trucking Inc. of Allenton, Wisconsin, before the company hired him. Now he spends up to forty hours a week behind the wheel of an eighteen-wheeler that he has nicknamed “Sweet Pea.” Remy declares, “This is a great job for me because it keeps me moving — I’m happiest when I’m on the go.”

Particularly if you have a nice retirement nest egg, you, too, can easily make the transition from “I have to work” to “I want to work for the fun of it.” Getting the right fun job will allow you to work at something you like, at your own time, at your own pace. The beauty is that you don’t have to get a job for the whole year and you can work as much, or as little, as you want. You can experiment with various short-term (a week or a month) or part-time positions (one or two days a week).

Following are several other fun retirement jobs that will appeal to certain individuals and that you may want to consider for your retirement years:
As already emphasized, the best way to experience a funky work environment in which to hang out is to free yourself from the normal shackles of the corporate world and create a fun or dream job that really turns you on. No doubt this is much easier said than done. In many respects, however, you are probably limiting yourself in what you can accomplish in this world.

Perhaps you are like the majority of humans on this planet who believe that it takes extraordinary character traits for a person to successfully pursue a dream career and actually make a living without a real job. I like the way Mark Twain put it: “The trouble with most of us is that we know too much that ain’t so.”

Popular belief has it that the highly successful have achieved extraordinary accomplishments due to their extraordinary traits. This may be true to a large degree in sports, for instance, but most individuals who have escaped the dreadful enslavement of corporate life have not been born with exceptional talent.

What’s more, being blessed with exceptional qualities does not guarantee career success without a real job. On the contrary, even traditional career success is not guaranteed by virtue of superior intelligence, a sky-high level of formal
By now you know that the main purpose of this chapter is to convince you that you can be a lot more successful in your life than you think you can. Thus far, career success without a real job is likely sounding great, but nevertheless, too good to be true. Perhaps you need some good excuses — besides the ones you already have — to convince yourself that you can’t make it outside the corporate world. Luckily for you, I can help. Here are a few that even David Letterman may like:

**Top Ten Excuses You Can Use to Convince Yourself to Stay in the Corporate World**

1. I don’t believe that people can work at an unreal job and make a good living at it unless they are offspring of Edison or Einstein.
2. I once had a nosebleed and I am afraid of getting more if I don’t work at a real job.
3. Barack Obama may get mad at me if I am not part of corporate America.
4. Finding an unreal job that I like may be too relaxing — I think I feel more comfortable tense.
5. I am three-times divorced and I estimate that I have at least twelve kids.
6. I prefer to live in the past because most of my life has been spent there.
7. I have arthritis, and although I know people with much more serious disabilities have been extraordinarily successful, I don’t think they know what it is like to have arthritis.
8. Although my present job is boring, I kind of like it — I may even be addicted to boredom.
9. My dog died and I need to get another one real fast.
10. I am much too afraid of becoming a member of a better class of people.

All right, this is more than enough. You may find some of the above excuses useful for explaining some of your other shortcomings in life, particularly when you don’t want to take
you, be as smart as you, or be as attractive as you. You may have even asked yourself, “If this person can do it, why can’t I?”

To the extent you have abilities that at least come close to those of the average person in society, you are likely right about the accomplished individual not having had something over you. This shouldn’t come as a big surprise because many successful people admit they don’t have an advantage, particularly genetic, over the mass of humanity. David Ogilvy, the advertising genius of Ogilvy & Mather, claimed in his book, Blood, Brains and Beer (Atheneum Publishers, 1978), that he had an IQ of ninety-six, which in his opinion is “the norm for ditchdiggers.”

Whether you have an IQ that is the norm for ditchdiggers, or one that is the norm for brain surgeons, the basic equation for escaping corporate life is plain and simple: What are you willing to give up now in order that you can live the life you want to live later? The success of your get-out-of-corporate-life venture depends on a personal list of trade-offs. If you want to exchange a high-pressure job for life without a real job, your unwillingness to make sacrifices can wreck your dream.

Perhaps you are envious of successful artists, actors, and entrepreneurs because they appear to truly enjoy what they do. You are well aware that the majority of workers in society are not so “fortunate” or “lucky” to love their work.

What you must keep in mind, however, is that not all artists, actors, and entrepreneurs are successful enough to earn a great income. In fact, some don’t even earn a modest living; all the same, they are happy because they are astute enough to know that money is not everything. The ones who make a lower-than-average living adjust financially and do whatever they must in order that they can continue working at something they love.

One thing is certain: You always have to give up something you want for something you want more, particularly something that will make you happier in the long term. The biggest thing you may have to give up is your belief that you don’t have what it takes to get something that you dearly want.

Granted, there are some valid concerns about pursuing dream careers. If you are American, for instance, the biggest reason you may give for not leaving corporate life is that you don’t want to give up your healthcare plan provided by your employer. In fact, two or three reviewers of The Joy of Not Working on Amazon.com trashed
According to the United Nations, work injuries and illnesses kill more people in the world than alcohol and drugs together.

The above studies seem to indicate that corporate life, at the extreme, can be dangerous to your health. It follows that remaining in the regular workforce and having a healthcare plan may be more detrimental to your health than leaving corporate life and not having a healthcare plan. You may be surprised to know that many creative individuals who escape corporate life are not willing to trade their great health that comes with an unreal job for a traditional corporate job that has a great healthcare plan.

Of course, a fact of life is that many American corporations don’t even have an employee healthcare plan. Just as serious, employees who work for corporations with a healthcare plan often have a difficult time collecting compensation when they become ill.

The old adage that prevention is much better than the cure applies here. I truly believe that had I not left corporate life, I would either be dead today, or suffering from some serious stress-induced illness. It may appear farfetched for me to say this, but many workers actually wind up with serious illnesses due to the stress that comes with corporate life. Even worse, some people wind up dead long before their time.

No one agrees with this more than Ingrid Bacci. A graduate of Harvard, Bacci became a college philosophy professor at twenty-seven, married a successful and wealthy man, and seemed to have it all. Bacci was a success in the traditional sense of the word until an unknown disease emerged and left her bedridden and in constant pain for almost three years. Although she consulted many doctors, there was no answer forthcoming from the medical community about the nature of her illness. It wasn’t until Bacci gave up her marriage and academic career for good that she started healing herself.

In her book The Art of Effortless Living (Perigee Trade, 2002), Bacci states, “My illness was an inevitable and natural product of the cultural values I grew up with. I followed the rules to the letter and they made me sick. All around me I see other people who, like me, are seriously sick as a result of living lives enslaved to the
most Americans, but some people say that disability insurance is just as important as healthcare insurance for self-employed people. Even so, to this day I have never purchased any. Fact is, there would be a hundred times as much chance of my dying in a car accident while commuting to a corporate job as my requiring disability insurance to give me an income because I couldn’t make a living without a real job anymore.

The overriding point is, if every creative American wishing to accomplish something extraordinary used the lack of adequate healthcare and/or disability insurance as a reason not to pursue an unreal job or start an unconventional business, no one would leave corporate America for a better life. Yet millions do. Many of these individuals, such as Buckminster Fuller and Steven Jobs, are the ones who have made major contributions to humanity and whom you read about in books, magazines, and newspapers.

If you want to achieve career success without a real job, take a cool, appraising look at what truly successful people are up to, not what your typical wage earner is doing. Successful people are usually not engaged in traditional jobs because they want to accomplish something different and significant. They also do what has to be done, including not having a healthcare plan for a few months or even years, during which time they establish themselves financially so that they can afford healthcare insurance.

If earning a good income and having healthcare insurance are important to you, it is worth repeating the importance of finding an unreal job or creating an unconventional business that is your passion. By creating a sense of meaning and purpose in your work, by linking your dreams and your motivation, you increase your chances dramatically of earning a lot of money. The higher income can be used to purchase healthcare and disability insurance along with anything else that you deem important.

Unfortunately, taking responsibility for our potential and following our passions in search of a dream career means standing alone. As is to be expected, this is terrifying to most of us. It’s much easier to do something similar to what the masses are doing, which is relying on the corporate world to provide them with a decent wage, healthcare insurance, and a rewarding lifestyle.
success. Indeed, one does not end up achieving career success without a real job by accident. This is not all that difficult; it’s just that people don’t want to escape corporate life badly enough. If they did, they would do whatever it takes to attain it.

For the record, what Gardner does to make a great living outside the corporate world is promote other people’s products on her websites. This is known as affiliate marketing, which is an arrangement between an online merchant and the affiliate marketer whereby the affiliate marketer earns a fee or commission for generating sales or sales leads for the merchant’s website.

Of course, when you are successful in one line of work, other areas open up, adding to your multiple streams of income. Due to her success, Gardner wrote the *Super Affiliate Handbook* (Webvista Inc., 2005), a book that is sold both on Amazon.com and through one of her websites (www.superaffiliatehandbook.com). She also writes a column for *Revenue* magazine. Still more, because Gardner has taken up public speaking, she is invited to talk about affiliate marketing at conferences all over North America.

I realize that I make this sound all too easy. No doubt Gardner had her share of obstacles and frustrations in setting up her business and making it work. To be sure, all corporate refugees who eventually become successful in their own right do. Obstacles and frustration are good, however. You won’t discover your capabilities by undertaking something easy.

Incidentally, as I was revising this chapter, I decided to e-mail Rosalind Gardner to ask her about any obstacles she had to face. She was about to leave for a month-long winter vacation in Mexico, when she sent me the following reply:

Obstacles . . . Hmm . . . it’s a learning process, but I’ve never had a problem with that. I love a challenge. And lots of people laughed at how I was every spare moment at the computer when I was first starting out, but I’ve always been very good at ignoring the snoring masses, and doing my own thing.

My motto from a very early age has been “dare to be different.” Those who laughed, by the way, are all still working at the same place — and guess who’s laughing her way to a month in Mexico?
Commit Yourself to Being Successful and You Won’t Have to Be a Victim — Ever Again!

A great mystery to any ordinary individual who attains extraordinary success is why so many people choose to be victims, instead of empowering themselves to do something positive with their lives. In this day and age, in fact, being a victim is even trendy. Weird, but true. Reporters with the various media are always looking for victims to feature in their stories. In any society that promotes the victim mentality as acceptable and, in some cases, desirable, it takes a strong personality to resist the temptation to be a sufferer.

Sadly, it’s all too easy and irresistible for most humans to play the victim game. They attribute their dissatisfaction with their lives to society, their parents, their country’s economic state, or the world in general. They see themselves as victims when, on the contrary, they aren’t. The thing that is impressive about self-proclaimed victims is how tenacious they are in directing their energy into shunning responsibility and complicating their lives.

I hope that you won’t fall into the trap of experiencing victimhood too often, given that people who do are seldom successful. Being a victim is the ultimate expression of selfishness because you are basically saying that “everything is about me.” If you play the victim game, you should get yourself one of those T-shirts that says, “Yes, it is all about me.”

The truth is, it’s not all about you. It never has been and never will be. With one trivial exception, this world is made of 6.5 billion other human beings, a good portion of them with minds thinking in one form or another, “It’s all about me.” If it’s all about you, then do something — everything possible — for yourself. Don’t expect any of the 6.5 billion others to do something for you. You will be waiting a long, long time.

Victims are known for their incredible ability to complain, which is probably the worst possible thing you can do if you want to succeed at anything, including being a career success without a real job. Complaining about your job keeps you a sufferer and does nothing to liberate you. When you are constantly a victim, you
get an important extra you hadn’t anticipated. The extra is the lesson that from now on you should read the small print carefully.

The day you start blaming yourself in a positive way is the day you are well on your way to a life that works. Winners blame themselves; losers blame others. Are you overextended financially like most people in Western society today? If you want to be in a better financial position than the masses, blame yourself; you are a victim of your own scheming. It’s time to take control of your life and find ways to either significantly reduce your spending or earn a lot more money.

The choice is yours. You can be a victim or you can be a career success without a real job — you can’t be both, however. With the negative attitude that invariably accompanies a victim mentality, you are three-quarters of the way to defeat without even having started. Blaming others will keep you on the road to perpetual failure. Still don’t believe me? I have yet to go to an awards celebration where the person with the most blame of others and personal excuses for not accomplishing anything significant was featured as the main attraction.

Fortunately, getting what we want out of life is not about circumstances. It’s about taking responsibility and overcoming, or changing, our circumstances. If we are willing to suspend our beliefs about our limitations, all of us can be more successful.

Keep in mind that J. K. Rowling was on welfare when she decided to write her first *Harry Potter* book. She is now a billionaire. Needless to say, Rowling did not get to where she is today by thinking the thoughts that negative people think, and proclaiming herself a victim. She also did not get to where she is today by thinking that getting a real job was the way to free herself from her dependence on welfare.

Lest you fear that things won’t work out if you pursue something different, allow me to add that, as for most people, your limitations are in your mind. Sadly, your false doubts about yourself often become real. Negative expectations bring about
You won’t achieve anything big by playing small. Working for a corporation, particularly if you hate your job, is playing small. You should be able to tell how big you are playing by the results you have been getting in your life. Playing big brings big results. Once you truly commit yourself to something bigger and better — as Chuck Norris did — you will be on the right path to achieving something bigger and better.

Another reason why people lack commitment to their dreams is that they allow themselves to be easily distracted. To be more committed, you have to make your internal dialogue about what you want to accomplish clearer, louder, and stronger. Tune out the other voices in your world, including those of your colleagues, friends, and family. Make the strongest voice in your life your own. This way you will be less influenced by the psychological obstacles that invariably appear when you listen to others.

You don’t necessarily have to know how you are going to achieve your dream or your goal. Commitment and perseverance — not watching TV and complaining about the world — will create the magic of how you get to where you want to go. When you decide to do something, the “how you get there” will materialize once you take bold action to get there.

I can make this point much better if once again you will allow me to use myself as an example. When I decided to self-publish my first book, I knew nothing about desk-top publishing, typesetting, cover design, printing, and editing, not to mention the all-important art of marketing. As naive as I was at the time, I rightfully suspected that a good way to get these things done was to plunge into them headfirst and see how far I could get. I did not have to know in advance all the things that I eventually learned to make things work.

In short, commit yourself to being successful in your own personal way and you won’t have to be a victim — ever again! The “how you get there” will materialize soon after your genuine commitment to succeed materializes. In time, other people will be wondering how you could have succeeded in something quite remarkable, even though you aren’t as talented, intelligent, attractive, or hard-working as they are.

Ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who have a habit of making excuses.
— George Washington Carver

One of the strongest characteristics of genius is the power of lighting its own fire.
— John Foster
Receiving a Lot of Criticism Is a Good Sign That You Are Well on Your Way to Success

Having escaped the corporate world for such a long time, I must warn you about the occupational hazards of being a success without a real job. These include having to deal with freedom, responsibility, and joy in your life. You must also deal with envy and criticism from the complainers, critics, and misfits of the world, all of whom you must avoid becoming if you want to become successful yourself.

Let me give you an example of one type of critic you may encounter. Not so long ago my computer indicated that it was receiving an e-mail with an attached virus. After I had quarantined the attachment, I looked in the body of the e-mail. The message simply said, “You are a bad writer.” Over the next two weeks I received ten or so more similar messages, all with viruses attached. Luckily for me, I am good at spotting e-mails sent by misfits.

I suspect that the messages with the viral attachments were sent by someone who resented my success as a writer and thought that he could get even by trying to belittle me and mess up my computer at the same time. A person operating in this state of mind does not realize how much he is contributing to his own lack of success and misery in life. Truth be known, criticizing the works of others does not contribute to success. Even worse, trying to keep others from being successful is at best a self-destructive act.

In regards to my writing, I will be the first one to admit that I am not a great writer. As I have indicated previously, by the time I realized how bad of a writer I was, I was too successful to quit. In spite of my bad writing, it still has made me almost one million pretax dollars. This means that as bad as my writing is, it has already been worth almost a million dollars to me. What’s more, I know that it has been worth at least the same amount to others, given the hundreds of positive letters and phone calls I have received from readers.

What I would like to say to the person who sent me the viral e-mails and other critics like him is: “Whether your own writing is good, bad, or ugly, how much money and how many compliments has it earned for you? From the nature and tone of...
your e-mail, I would venture to say that the financial and personal results of your writing must be pretty much on the ugly side. I can assure you that the results of your own writing or other creative efforts — if you have ever come up with even one creative idea in your whole life — will pretty much remain on the ugly side as long as you put your energy into criticizing others and trying to sabotage their efforts.”

It’s interesting and somewhat dismaying how the pathological critics of this world will look up to anyone who wins a multimillion-dollar lottery, but will attempt to belittle anyone who has worked either hard or smart to attain prosperity and real success. Jules Renard put this in proper perspective, however: “Failure is not the only punishment for laziness: there is also the success of others.”

It has been my experience that with any type of pathological critic nothing is so small or insignificant that they can’t blow it out of incredible proportion with sustained criticism. They will deride practically anything and anyone. Of course, if all you have going for you is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. The biggest problem with critics is they spend so much energy and time trying to ridicule the extraordinary accomplishments of others that they never accomplish anything significant themselves.

The lesson here is not only to avoid becoming a pathological critic yourself, but also to refrain from casually belittling anyone or anything successful. American composer Irving Berlin, who led the evolution of the popular song from the early ragtime and jazz eras through the golden age of musicals, wrote more than 800 pop songs. One day Berlin gave a young composer named Cole Porter counseling on how to become more successful in the music business. “Listen kid, take my advice,” Berlin told Porter. “Never hate a song that has sold half-a-million copies.”

No doubt Cole Porter took Irving Berlin’s advice seriously, given the huge success that Porter himself achieved as a composer. Berlin’s advice to Porter, in fact, is great advice for all of us. Instead of hating and criticizing something that has been successful — whether it’s a song, a painting, or the latest computer model — we should be admiring and blessing it. Moreover, we should be learning why it is so successful so that we can adapt its positive features into whatever product or
it is their essence and their reason for being. Criticizing others and
telling them they can’t accomplish something gives the world’s
critics some feeling of importance, as perverse as it is. Perhaps
criticizing anything they can is their way of achieving success as
they define it. If you want a feeling of true enlightenment and
satisfaction, however, don’t become like them.

As much as possible, disregard the comments made about you
by the negative people of this world. A critic’s most cherished
beliefs are often in inverse proportion to their actual worth and
relation to reality. Truly successful people get bashed a lot, mainly
by the lazy, jealous, and broke, who apparently have nothing better
to do with their time, aside from watching a lot of bad TV. Successful
people, however, are used to — and spiritually above — the misconceptions,
criticism, and untrue statements that negative people utter about anybody and
everybody who is successful.

Today when critics tell me that what I am
attempting is unreasonable or won’t work, I
sarcastically thank them for their valuable
advice. I also ask them how I ever could
repay them for showing me how much I got
carried away with my dreams of being a successful writer. Then I
go about my business and do the unreasonable. Sure, to do
something difficult and different is outrageous — but this is
probably why it will eventually succeed and prove all of the
naysayers wrong.

Critics can be a good thing, as it turns out. I can be motivated
after reading or listening to the negative remarks thrown my way
by the faultfinders of this world. I tend to be more inspired to attain
even greater success with more books so that I can give the critics
a lot more material to belittle. After all, my success — along with
living well — is the best revenge. I have this strong suspicion that
most people who deride my books and accomplishments would
gladly trade places with me financially
and occupationally.

Putting things in the best possible
way, these negative, faultfinding people
are just ignorant and don’t know any
better. What’s more, they are not
complete failures — we get to use them
as great examples of the type of people
we don’t want to become ourselves.
Action Has Magic, Power, and Grace in It

Let’s say that you have explored your dreams and selected the field in which you would like to succeed. You may want to own a fancy restaurant. You may want to make a big difference in the environmental movement. You may want to make a name for yourself in the field of public speaking. Whatever area you have chosen, however, you can’t turn ideas into reality overnight.

We each have our own strengths, weaknesses, and particular challenges in life. This is one of the great things about being alive. We get a particular hand dealt to us, and it’s one of the great joys in life to figure out how to best play it.

Keep in mind that trying to attain career success without a real job is like trying to climb a great mountain. They both involve great risk, a chance for major disappointment, and a sense of adventure. On your journey to success you will encounter many new problems — but you will encounter many new opportunities and wonderful experiences as well. Let me warn you, however, that attaining your goals will likely take a lot longer than you may think.

Not only does the mountain always look closer than it is, the mountain gets steeper as you get closer. One reason is that Murphy’s Law has a habit of throwing a wrench into the best of plans. In case you haven’t been introduced to Murphy’s Law, allow me to do so. Murphy’s Law says, “Nothing is as easy as it looks. Everything takes longer than you expect. And if anything can go wrong — it will at the worst possible moment.”

Over the years several astute individuals have added hundreds of bylaws to Murphy’s Law that are variations of the main law. Here are some of them:

Bylaws Associated with Murphy’s Law

- Nothing is ever as simple as it first seems.
- Even if something cannot go wrong, it will.
- Things go right so that they can go wrong.
- Given a bad start, trouble will increase at an increasing rate.
- A shortcut often turns out to be the longest distance between two points.
- Things always take longer than you think they will — even when you compensate for this fact.
The most expensive component is the one that breaks, and which is not in stock at the parts store.

There is no job so simple that it can’t be done wrong.

A surprise source of revenue will be accompanied by an unexpected expense of a larger amount.

Beware the rest of the day in which you yet haven’t had something to complain about.

Regardless of what you are trying to achieve, likelihoods are 90 percent against you.

Nothing ever comes out as planned.

Just when you think that victory is yours, something goes wrong.

All great discoveries are made by mistake.

Brilliant opportunities are cleverly disguised as insurmountable obstacles — the reverse is also true.

The above bylaws are just a few variations of Murphy’s Law in action in the real world. Perhaps you feel that I am being negative when, in fact, the opposite is true. Some people who have become successful in their own ways go so far as to say Murphy was an optimist. The bad news is that there are many factors that are beyond your control. The good news, however, is that you have the ability to overcome these factors.

The point is, without exception, there is no such thing as success without failure. Moreover, whatever you attempt, you aren’t going to do it perfectly, even if you do succeed to a large extent. Strangely enough, planning for lots of obstacles and failure can add to your chances of success.

Ultimately, however, those perplexing roadblocks to real success can be overcome only with action. Getting off the couch can magically start making things work out to your advantage, and with time, turn your dream career into reality. The moral is to be found in what could be the most elegant and powerful words Johann Wolfgang von Goethe ever spoke: “Whatever you think you can do or believe you can do, begin it. Action has magic, grace, and power in it.”

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.
— Beverly Sills

Even a thief takes ten years to learn his trade.
— Japanese proverb
Nonetheless, like a lot of first-time writers I have met, I thought that I had the next blockbuster that would put both *War and Peace* and *Moby-Dick* to shame. In retrospect, I was suffering from a case of megalomaniac delusion. Given that I wanted to prove that all the publishers who looked at the manuscript were a bunch of morons who should be in another line of business, I did not have too difficult of a time convincing myself to self-publish the book.

The initial 2,000 copies of the book cost me $7,500 to have printed. Because I was having one of those weird out-of-money experiences, as I had been for many years, I had to borrow half of the money from my mother. At some point she thought I would lose my shirt and not be able to pay her back. Regardless of my mother’s lack of confidence in my entrepreneurial abilities, I figured that I was in a privileged position because I had the opportunity to prove her wrong and, even more importantly, the moronic publishers.

With one book to my name on how to be more creative, I speculated that I was destined for greatness in the exciting field of professional speaking. In no time, I could be like Tom Peters or Antony Robbins, making $20,000 or more per speech. The place to head to was Vancouver, B.C. (B.C. stands for bring cash), which had more progressive and innovative organizations than Edmonton, Alberta — or so I thought. I had no doubt that corporations would be lining up for my blockbuster speeches and mind-blowing seminars on how to be more creative.

My move to Vancouver in September of that year turned out to be the best of times and the worst of times. Finally, I could experience a winter away from the frozen, barren tundra known as Edmonton — my hometown. Upon my arrival in Vancouver, however, my financial position was so precarious that I couldn’t even afford a nervous breakdown. My apartment was only half-furnished, with stuff the Salvation Army wouldn’t accept. My car was over ten years old — a beater that doubled in value every time I filled it up with gas. A cheap umbrella to deal with the Vancouver rain was my only status symbol.

With a meager income of about $500 a month for teaching a course at Simon Fraser University, $1,000 in savings, $30,000 in
I was “lucky” to get one, it would be on a temporary basis. Needless to say, having to work in the corporate world until I was sixty-five would have ended up making a mockery of my life.

Put in metaphorical terms, my life at that point was a sea of troubles. I had one seminar booked for May; that was it. My car was on its last legs. Beans and rice were gourmet to me. I was riding my bicycle, hoping that it wouldn’t break down, because I couldn’t afford to fix it. Even worse, I was putting up with two obnoxious housemates to help pay the costs for the half-duplex I was renting. One housemate was a pathological critic coming from the far left. The other was a pathological critic coming from the far right. Each one thought the other was crazy — all things considered, both were right.

One particular day, after listening to the two housemates complain about everything imaginable, I wasn’t sure whether I should kill myself or go play some tennis instead. Because I had no money to buy a gun, I headed to the tennis courts, where I lost the match. I attributed the loss to a broken string in my racquet, which I couldn’t afford to have repaired until I got a job or won a lottery. Winning a lottery was out of the question, however, since I didn’t have any spare cash to buy a ticket.

But again, I tried to keep things in proper and positive perspective. I was busted, cleaned out, flat broke, stony broke, bankrupt, insolvent, and without a bean. I was not reduced to poverty, however, nor was I on skid row, nor was I impoverished, nor was I pauperized, nor was I broken, nor was I beggared, nor was I with nothing to hope for, nor was I without prospects. Remarkably, I was still working at what I most wanted to do — write books and present seminars.

Soon after, something magical happened. Call it Divine Intervention, blind luck, synchronicity, or God on your side; sometimes when you need things to go your way, they do. This is particularly true when you indulge in sustained action and refuse to give up. By May, I had managed to get $15,000 worth of seminar bookings for September and October.

By September, I also managed to sell enough copies of my first book to pay my mother back and justify another print run. Was I happy? Happy does not cover it; I was elated. There were no seminar bookings after that until January of the following year — then another $4,500 worth. Things really improved from then on. In the fall of 1991, almost two years after venturing to Vancouver,
In my view, Mark Twain expressed a great deal of wisdom with these words: “Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered — either by themselves or by others.” The fact that so many people haven’t discovered they are geniuses is a major reason why they toil away at jobs they hate. As is to be expected, most corporations aren’t about to help their employees realize they are geniuses for fear of losing them.

By geniuses, I refer to individuals with the potential to make a difference in this world if they ever get around to developing and using their creativity. Unfortunately, most people have allowed organizations, educational institutions, and society to suppress their creativity for so long that they don’t realize how creative they can be. Truth be told, most people can be more creative and, in turn, more successful.

In this regard, there are two principles for creative success — one general and one definitive. The general principle is that virtually everyone has the ability to be more creative and accomplish extraordinary things in this world. The definitive principle is that almost everyone has volunteered to be exempt

The guy who invented the first wheel was an idiot. The guy who invented the other three, he was a genius.

— Sid Caesar
I know that my creative mind is my most valuable asset. What’s more, I know it is worth over a million dollars because it has already made me at least that amount in pretax earnings and will make me much more in the future. Interestingly, if I worked for a corporation, I would not be listed as an asset anywhere on their balance sheets. Strictly from an accounting point of view, the company would have the wages already paid to me listed as an expense on its income statement. Moreover, any unpaid wages and vacation time would be listed as a liability on its balance sheet.

Go figure: My creativity is worth over a million dollars. Yet my name would appear only in the expense and liability columns if I worked for a corporation. Just on general principles alone, this is a good reason for me to be self-employed. Another reason that I choose to be self-employed is that I get rewarded fully for my imaginative projects. In contrast, as a regular employee, I would likely wind up as the finalist in the wishful-thinker-of-the-year award if I expected to get properly rewarded for any valuable idea that I generated or any product that I invented.

Perhaps you have heard about how the NBC TV network spent $750,000 to have a graphic design firm develop a brilliant new logo, which it unveiled on New Year’s Day in 1976. The trouble, however, was that the Nebraska Educational Network, a small TV station in Lincoln, Nebraska, had been using an almost identical logo for quite some time, and was not about to give up its right to it without a legal battle.

At this point, NBC paid the small Nebraska station an out-of-court settlement of $55,000 in cash and $500,000 in used television equipment for the right to use the “new” logo. The most interesting aspect of this case is the Nebraska TV station actually paid only about $100 in wages to one of its employees to develop its logo.

The $64,000 question is: What monetary reward was given to the Nebraska station’s employee who designed the original version of the logo, which ended up netting the station a total of $550,000 in assets? My educated guess is not that much, if anything, besides his wages. Keep in mind that the graphic design firm that NBC used to develop virtually the same logo pocketed $750,000.

Clearly, rare is the highly creative corporate employee who actually gets rewarded fairly for his or her own brilliant ideas that make the company piles of money. In most cases the whole company, or a group within the company under the guise of

Real wealth equals ideas plus energy.
— Buckminster Fuller
product or service that will change the world in some measure. We don’t want to own up to our latent genius within, however. After all, it’s easier to settle for mediocrity in our lives than to take responsibility for all of that potential.

But you must take responsibility for your creative potential if you want to escape corporate life. In many regards, creative thinking is unorthodox thinking. To achieve career success without a real job you will have to think outside the “nine-to-five box.” Clearly, it is a box — prison is probably a better word — if you hate being there.

Luckily, there are many resources on how to utilize strategies and techniques to discover our latent genius within and to become more creative in our business and personal lives. Michael Michalko’s two books, *Thinkertoys* (Ten Speed Press, 1991) and *Cracking Creativity* (Ten Speed Press, 2001), are highly recommended. *Thinkertoys*, particularly, is an invaluable resource that presents creative thinking techniques with breadth, depth, coherence, humor, and originality. If you are serious about learning how to be more creative and haven’t read this book, you will be glad when you do.

Another one of my favorites is Julia Cameron’s *The Artist’s Way* (Tarcher, 2002). If you are an engineer, an accountant, or even a ditchdigger, don’t be misled by this book’s title. This classic is not just for painters and sculptors. The book will benefit you even if you don’t want to pursue an occupation involving the arts. Perhaps you are doubtful that any book can actually help you develop creative spirit. Here is one Amazon.com reviewer’s testimonial for *The Artist’s Way*:

This book has completely changed my perspective about my creative ability. At first my practical side felt very silly doing some of the exercises. But after a while I began to realize how much better I felt about myself and my ability to be creative . . . not do everything by the book. I began oil painting, which I’ve even entered into contests. I went to Professional Culinary School, in
by her husband’s compliments, she continued to take many more pictures after she retired, which brought her tons of additional compliments from friends and neighbors. To polish her talents, she did a lot of research, such as studying impressionist painters and their use of light.

Eventually Tell started selling her photographs and named her photography business Apple Pics. Although Apple Pics is a profitable business, Tell doesn’t give this much significance. “It’s not about the money; it’s about enjoying what I’m doing.”

Surprisingly, at one time Tell was actually reluctant to hang her photos in her own living room. This has changed due to the self-confidence that she gained from her success. Not so long after, the Asheville hospital commissioned a set of her photos for a new wing. Today, her work is sold in about twenty-five galleries. The fascinating aspect of this example is that because Tell was willing to develop her creative side, a fun and profitable vocation was born. “I would have to say,” she concludes, “that right now is the best time of my life.”

Charlotte Tell should be an inspiration to those of us who want more creative fulfillment in our lives. You, too, can joyfully earn a living without a real job if you develop your creative side and in doing so provide an imaginative product or service that people want. In fact, it’s harder to suppress your creativity than to use it. The core of the matter is that everyone has the deep-seated desire to produce something innovative. In everyone there is a creative person wanting to break out and make a difference in this world.

To be more creative, you don’t necessarily have to take unique photographs, write a novel, or create a painting. You can be innovative in your own way, in your own chosen field. This could involve developing a new service or advertising a product in a new way for your unconventional business. You could also use your genius to develop new ways of presenting and marketing information in books and DVDs on how people can minimize their energy costs, for instance.

All things considered, if and when you choose to leave corporate life, your creativity becomes your biggest asset — bar none! Trust me on this one: You must recognize the latent genius within and stay in the habit of being innovative if you want to attain career success without a real job. To maximize the use of your creative mind is to maximize the career and financial aspects of your life.
Bold, Creative Effort Will Dispel Your Fears and Bring You Good Fortune

What is somewhat strange to virtually any individual who has attained career success without a real job is the number of talented people who pursue jobs and careers that do not bring them creative fulfillment or job satisfaction. The obvious reason why so many people do this is that, due to societal influences, most people place traditional success and money ahead of enjoyment, fulfillment, and satisfaction. Just as telling, however, is the all-too-common issue of fear.

Fear, above all else, prevents most of us from living our dreams. Unfortunately, there is a lot of support in our society for fearful thinking. When you have a promising idea for a new product, new service, or unconventional business, you won’t have any trouble at all in locating people who find fault with your idea and get great pleasure in criticizing it. The more attention you pay to these people, the more fear you will experience.

The only way to conquer any fear is to confront it head-on. Clearly, our main fear is that we will fail. It may come as a surprise to fearful people who never attempt anything daring that most individuals who have had a great measure of success in their lives still experience the fear of failure. Take, for example, Bruce McCall, who, above all, considers himself a humorist.

McCall, also an illustrator and author, has attained a good measure of career success without a real job, given that he has had over 200 pieces published in The New Yorker. Even so, McCall still submits all his work on spec and admitted to a reporter with The Globe and Mail that he is surprised when a project is accepted. McCall, it would seem, is one of those able individuals, like millions of us, who underestimates his own creative ability. The point is, we all have our doubts and our fears about our projects and career aspirations, even if we already have had great success in our field of endeavor.

The most successful of us don’t use these fears and doubts to stop us, however. Instead, we keep on going in spite of our doubts and fears. If you would like to be as successful in your personal way as Bruce McCall has been in his personal way, your willingness to confront fear is crucial. If you want to move to
another level in your life, you have to learn how to be terribly uncomfortable while you experience your fear. The only way to conquer fear is to experience it while actually doing whatever you fear.

Lest you think that you can totally eliminate the fear of failure forever by being a major success in your field, perish the thought. You will always experience some fear when there is risk involved. Even though I have spent many years reprogramming myself and learning as much as I can about what it takes to be successful in my own way, I know this old programming based on fear still exists. No doubt it doesn’t affect my behavior as much as it used to, but it still does, and can become intense at times.

A recent experience comes to mind. Shortly after I completed my book *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*, I sent the manuscript to twenty-five American publishers and ten British publishers. I thought that I would have no problem getting a publisher, but the opposite happened. Here are excerpts from four of the rejection letters that I received from American publishers:

1. From St. Martin’s Press: “After reading your proposal, I am impressed with your obvious zest for life. Unfortunately, the retirement shelf is tough at the moment and I just don’t think there is room for another title.”

2. From Warner Books: “Even though I’m well aware of your successful track record as an author, there was a strong sense from my editorial colleagues here that most people really wouldn’t have much of a problem in trying to plot out their retirement years.”

3. From Harmony Books: “Especially in light of the current economy, my sense is that there’s not a large audience at present for retirement books.”

4. From Broadway Books: “Thank you for the opportunity to consider *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*. This is a quirky, informative, and often motivational look at retirement. We discussed this at our editorial meeting this week, but I’m afraid our consensus was that a book-length work on the subject just wouldn’t have enough widespread potential for us to publish it.”
Much to my surprise, all twenty-five American and ten British publishers that received my manuscript felt there was no market for retirement books, or if there was, the market was too saturated with too many similar books. I estimated at the time that there were anywhere from one to two hundred retirement books published in English, with the likelihood of many more to come.

At this point it is worth asking: What would you have done if you were in my situation? I believe that most people would have been too fearful to take matters into their own hands as I did. Notwithstanding the major publishers’ negativism about the potential market for retirement books, I decided to self-publish after Ten Speed Press agreed to distribute the book for me in the United States. I felt that I had likely written the best book in the world on the personal aspects of retirement and that it should eventually prove itself in the marketplace.

Even so, after I had arranged for the editing, cover design, page layout, and printing, I was still fearful that the project would fail and that I would end up losing money. I started doubting myself largely due to the fact that so many major American publishers — the so-called experts in the field — didn’t think there was a market for the book.

It even got to a point where I was trying to figure out some way to convince Ten Speed Press to take over the project and assume the financial risk. I finally talked myself into pressing forward when I concluded that even if I lost $10,000 on the venture, it wouldn’t be the end of the world. Because I had made hundreds of thousands of dollars from my books over the years, I could certainly take a hit of ten grand for once. Besides, as they say, “it’s only money.”

It’s a good thing, as things turned out, that I confronted my fear head-on. Taking the financial risk paid off big time. How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free has now sold over 100,000 copies and has seven foreign publishers. Today when I typed “retirement book” into the major search engine Google, the top listing overall was a link to Amazon.com’s webpage for How to Retire Happy, Wild and Free — out of over 16 million webpages! It won’t be long before I have realized a tidy pretax profit of at least $400,000 on the book. Just as important, given that I am Canadian, I have experienced an incredible amount of satisfaction from seeing the book do so well in the United States market when so many major American publishers felt there was no market. No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit.

— Helen Keller
publishers felt it had no potential.

Clearly, had I not confronted my fear of self-publishing *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free*, I would be poorer both financially and psychologically. Fear of failure and fear of losing money are things that we all have to face and conquer if we want to work outside the corporate world. But it is not fear that is the problem. It’s how we handle fear. We must get over the fear and realize that even if we fail, we can handle failure. This is what makes all the difference.

There is another moral associated with my aforementioned experience — so much for listening to the experts! Since most “experts” don’t even come remotely close to knowing whether something innovative will work in their line of business, why not take some chances and disregard what they have to say? In fact, it is wise not to listen to the experts even if they have been in the business for thirty-five years and you are a recent newcomer. Find out for yourself what you can accomplish.

The core of the matter is that individuals who achieve creative success are willing to confront their fears and take risks that others — even the experts — won’t. How many times have you read about a person who took a chance with an idea, encountered some real obstacles, and made it to the top? How many times have you thought: “Wow, look at what she accomplished! I wish I had the courage and commitment to have done that, given that I have come up with many promising ideas.”

No doubt you have generated at least a few creative ideas that had great potential in the marketplace. I believe it was Will Durant who stated that in every work of genius we recognize our own discarded ideas. No matter how gifted you are, you will have to experiment with different ideas if you want one to click. Most important, you will have to confront your fear of failure, and test the ideas. Bold, creative effort will dispel your fears and eventually bring you good fortune.

**A Bit of Craziness Is Good for Business**

This may be a little difficult for some readers to believe: While I was writing my first book, there were many times when I thought that I was at least a little crazy. “Who am I to write a book?” gripped my mind more than once. To add to my feeling of insanity, several of...
“Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded,” observed John Stuart Mill, “and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage which it contained.”

Unfortunately, most people are trying to fit in with colleagues at work, or be the same as practically everyone else in society, instead of being different and deviating from the normal, established, or expected. Yet anything of major consequence in this world was initiated by characters who were different than the rest of society. In fact, they were out of step with society in large measure. Think Nelson Mandela! Think Oprah Winfrey! Think Steven Jobs! Think Anita Roddick! Plain and simple: These individuals all made a big difference in this world because they were willing to be different.

Investigate characters such as Virgin Group founder Richard Branson and you will discover that being a creative achiever and making a major difference in this world require being different and feeling good about it. After he attained a good measure of success with a mail-order company selling music records, even Branson’s own associates doubted that he could succeed in a new venture. “Almost all my colleagues at Virgin said I was completely mad to go into the airline business,” revealed Branson. “The newspapers said calling an airline Virgin was mad. The company is now worth over one billion pounds.” Notwithstanding Branson’s incredible success, to this day there are members of the British business establishment who claim that he is “a flake.”

The important lesson here is that you should be prepared to be different than the masses if you want to be successful in your own right. Some people may be uncomfortable with you and others may dislike you for it. No doubt you will be criticized a lot. The more success you have at being different, the more you may be disliked, including by people in your own industry. But people will respect you for it, particularly when you start making that big difference. You will also have your own respect.

The degree to which you learn how to be different and feel good about it will determine how many “crazy” ideas you generate. Spending time generating unorthodox ideas is important because...
Just One Great Idea Can Change Your Life Dramatically — It’s There Somewhere!

As already emphasized, creativity is your best resource for generating a great product or service to offer to the world. Even if you don’t want to be a millionaire, but just want to earn a decent living without a real job, you must spot and capitalize on the many opportunities that the world has to offer. Paying attention to the world around you — looking at commonplace things and seeing the miraculous — will lead you to opportunities that others don’t see.

Keep in mind that you don’t have to go halfway around the world and spend a ton of money to spot an opportunity and take advantage of it. Opportunities for creating new sources of income are all around us, including our backyards. Robert G. Allen and Mark Victor Hansen, co-authors of *The One Minute Millionaire* (Harmony, 2002), claim that they will be able to spot at least fifteen money-making opportunities in your living room alone.

Clearly, there are always opportunities in human needs around which we can build a new business. Things that fulfill our needs and that we take for granted were once just creative thoughts. Everything you encounter during the day — the Internet, your computer, this book, your car, and your TV — began as an idea in someone’s mind. Sadly, many people have had a great idea and discounted it, later to find that some ambitious character became successful, rich, and famous with the same idea.

To take advantage of opportunities you must develop the habit of recording all your ideas, regardless of how crazy they may seem when you generate them. “A man would do well to carry a pencil in his pocket, and write down the thoughts of the moment,” advised Francis Bacon. “Those that come unsought for are commonly the most valuable, and should be secured, because they seldom return.”

Carry a small notebook or a small computer at all times to record all your creative revenue-generating ideas. Keep notebooks and writing implements in your coat, bicycle saddle bag, automobile, briefcase, purse, and even near computers and phones. Research indicates that most ideas are forgotten forever if
Hartunian’s home, which the foreman gladly agreed to do. Hartunian then paid someone else to cut the wood into small pieces.

That same day Hartunian used fifteen minutes of his time to prepare a press release with the headline “New Jersey Man Sells Brooklyn Bridge . . . for $14.95!” He also drafted a certificate on which he placed a little history and current information about the Brooklyn landmark. On the certificate he added “Attached to this certificate is a genuine piece of the original wooden pedestrian walkway of the world famous Brooklyn Bridge. You now own the Brooklyn Bridge.”

After he had made arrangements to print copies of the certificate, Hartunian sent the press release to about one hundred key media people. Mailing the press release cost him about $100. Within two or three days Hartunian’s phone was ringing off the hook with media people from across the United States wanting to interview him. The publicity went on for well over six months and eventually even famous TV talk-show host Johnny Carson did a ten-minute spiel on Hartunian’s sale of the Brooklyn Bridge.

With all the publicity he received, Paul Hartunian ended up making a nice fortune selling his certificates with a small piece of wood attached to each one. Several thousand other people were likely watching the TV morning news the day Hartunian saw great opportunity in some rotten wood. Everyone else watching the TV show could have just as easily tried to capitalize on this opportunity. No one else did, however, simply because they failed to spot the opportunity, or if they did, they didn’t do anything about it.

This “crazy” idea led to others and today Hartunian is rich and famous. The biggest thing that he attained was the freedom that comes from career success without a real job. Hartunian claims that the Brooklyn Bridge idea changed his life dramatically and his life has never been the same. He has used publicity in the media ever since to promote a number of other products and has now been interviewed on over 1,000 radio and TV stations in the United States and several other countries.

Of course, as Paul Hartunian demonstrated, it is not a simple case of coming up with a winning idea and then watching the big bucks roll in. What you need just as much as a great idea is that

*Make visible what, without you, might perhaps never have been seen.*
— Robert Bresson

*I will take beers with dreamers over cocktails with the realists any day.*
— Unknown wise person
miracle trait that we discussed earlier. It is called action. In other words, you must do something with the idea.

If you fail to take action — preferably courageous and substantial action — you may as well have come up with the world’s worst idea ever. Unless you commit yourself to doing everything you can to get your idea to work, it’s destined to remain forever in the file called The Universe’s Wastebasket of Great Ideas. Based on my extensive research, at last count this file held approximately 1,453 trillion ideas that various people have let slip through their minds.

My idea that led to my best-selling book could just as easily have been part of The Universe’s Wastebasket of Great Ideas. A few months after I got fired from my engineering job over twenty-five years ago, I realized that many people have difficulty handling leisure time and I should write a book to help them deal with it.

It took me over a decade to start writing *The Joy of Not Working*, however. But at least I eventually took advantage of the opportunity that was staring me in the face for such a long time. Occasionally someone claims, “I could have written that book.” My reply is, “So, why didn’t you? I gave you lots of time. I played with the idea for over ten years before I actually did anything with it.”

Although my writing *The Joy of Not Working* was not anywhere near as heroic an accomplishment as Paul Hartunian’s selling of the Brooklyn Bridge, it did change my life remarkably. My success with that book proved that my creativity will do more for my financial and personal well-being than anything else in this world. Your creativity can do the same for you. Just one great idea can change your life dramatically! Look for it. It’s there somewhere! Combine the idea with that magic called action and career success will find you in remarkable ways.

### Hard Work and Real Success — Oil and Water!

Although I have stressed the importance of imagination, perseverance, dedication, commitment, and action so far, it may come as a surprise — to a few people at least — that I am not a proponent of hard work. By hard work I mean working strenuously, for long hours, and on as many tasks and projects as possible, without spending a lot of time resting and having fun.
Here is a Zen story to make my point:

A student, most eager for enlightenment, went to the Master and expressed his desire to be his student and become enlightened. The Master welcomed his enthusiasm and told him he would be honored to help him. “How long will it take?” asked the student.

“Usually about two to three years,” the Master responded, “but it depends on how hard you work at it.”

“Oh,” the student declared, “I will work extremely hard — I will try to work at it both day and night.”

“Well, in that case,” the Master advised, “it will take you at least seven years.”

Plain and simple, the moral of this story is: hard work and real success — oil and water! Put another way, hard work and real success don’t mix all that well. Real success, in fact, is about working smart and not hard.

Personally, the only time I am a big fan of hard work is when someone else is doing it and I am paying for it. This is not to say that I won’t work hard at times, particularly on projects that excite me immensely, or ones that I must complete within a certain time frame. But for all intents and purposes, I find most hard work detrimental to my well-being.

Contrary to popular belief, the work ethic is a terrible mistake, a cute term gone haywire. It is promoted most vehemently either by employers who want to exploit pathetic workaholics or by pathetic workaholics themselves who are trying to justify why they work so many hours and have no real life.

As is to be expected, everything has a price attached to it. There is a price for not working hard enough; there can be an even larger price for working too hard. Not so long ago I received a letter from Jeffrey Carson (his name has been changed due to the personal nature of the letter) from the eastern United States. Incidentally,
report. This means that work kills more people than war (650,000 deaths per year).

The core of the matter is that hard work can kill you. Another dark side of the work ethic is how many rainbow-chasers end up working hard all their lives, expecting success, but with nothing to show for it. The key to success, in fact, is to work on the few things that are truly important and make a difference in this world, and to disregard the rest.

In this regard, Peter Drucker advised, “Do the right things instead of trying to do everything right.” To ensure that you don’t spend time on projects that don’t produce meaningful results, and instead have time for creative thinking and leisure activities, get in the habit of asking yourself the following questions:

- What is the best use of my time right now?
- What is the best book I could read right now to learn more about running my unconventional business?
- What is the best way to market my product or service right now?
- Is what I am doing today going to enhance my life today and in the future?
- What project will make me the most money at the least risk?
- Who are the best people to spend time with so that I can learn more about my career or business?

Clearly, if you are channeling your hard work into areas that offer little chance for big payoffs, your hard work will likely be in vain. On the other hand, if you work only four or five hours a day at creative endeavors that offer the likelihood of immense payoffs, four or five hours a day may be all that you need to hit it big so that you can live a comfortable life. Even two or three hours a day can do the trick in Britain, Canada, the United States, and Australia, given the opportunity that exists in these countries.

In the same vein, perhaps you have been told by the career experts to gain broad experience. In my view, it is better to focus one’s energy in one key area, certainly not more than two or three. Too many projects will divide your focus at the expense of all your important ones. The ideal is to specialize in a very small niche, a
It’s Not Just an Unreal Job — It’s a Real Business!

It’s Not Creative Unless It Sells!

Over the last few years I have been approached by many individuals who want to learn how to write a book and get it published. Because providing free advice was taking up way too much of my time, I prepared a two-page letter to send to aspiring authors. Here are two of the most important paragraphs from the letter:

Once you have written a book and had it published, you are about 5 percent of the way to making it a success. Whether the book is self-published or published by a major publisher, you must promote it. The best promotion for a book is not done by publishers, publicists, distributors, or bookstores; the best promotion is done by the author. In the academic world, it’s publish or perish. In the real world, it’s PROMOTE or perish.

Writing a good book takes creativity; effective promotion takes ten times as much creativity. Five years after I wrote The Joy of Not Working, I was still promoting the book with the same intensity as when the book was first released. Without this sustained promotion, it would never have eventually become an international bestseller.

I made particular mention of promotion in my letter because
important, or what ought to be important, to other people is totally irrelevant. People themselves will decide what product or service will benefit them and whether to buy it. This is the way it should be — it’s their money that they are spending and not yours!

Strictly from a business point of view, your product or service is not creative unless it sells! It must satisfy some human need or want. The basic human needs and wants are sex, shelter, security, health, happiness, money, love, relationships, self-esteem, status, and prestige. With the right innovative product or creative service, you can tap into most humans’ greed for all these needs and wants and become so successful and wealthy that you can satisfy all of your own greed for all these needs and wants.

One aspect of marketing is the nature of the product itself. The first step of marketing is to make your service or your product unique. Then keep changing it so that it remains unique. You won’t have to focus so much on pulverizing your rivals, as many people must do in the marketplace, because your competition will be yourself.

So which product or service are you going to sell to people? The most important principle here is to select a product or service for which there is a large market. You have to first ask yourself: “Who is going to want to buy my product or service?” Then you better have a damn good answer!

The key is to think big. You aren’t thinking big if your intention is to write and sell poetry. Plain and simple, most of the world is not interested in poetry. Whatever your product or service, your market for it should meet the following criteria:

- Your market for your product or service can be easily identified.
- A large segment of people is interested in your product or service.
- The market for your product is growing.
- People who are interested in your product or service can afford it.
- People who are interested in your product or service are willing to spend money on it.

Once you have identified your product and your target market, you have just started your marketing task. Like everyone else with an unreal job or unconventional business, you must master the
innovative titles, tag-lines, and techniques that help your product or service stand out in the marketplace. Not only must your product or service be one of a kind instead of one of many, you must show your target market how your product or service is, in fact, different from any other in the marketplace.

Anyone who creates a one-of-a-kind product or service can charge a much higher price. People with wealth love to pay a lot for what they buy; this gives the service or item more value. I can give no better example than Donald Trump and his 2006 speaking tour, from which he earned $1.5 million for each one-hour talk. Having given ten speeches, Trump earned a total of $15 million, plus expenses. In the same vein, several Fortune 500 executives not so long ago were paying Anthony Robbins one million dollars a year as a retainer for his services as an inspirational coach. Of course, this may have changed due to the recession.

No doubt both Donald Trump and Anthony Robbins are master salespeople. Selling, one aspect of marketing and an essential business skill, is difficult for some of us mainly because we must deal with rejection. But learning how to deal with rejection is good for us; our self-esteem increases and we end up liking ourselves more. We also end up more successful after we learn to brush off rejection as something perpetuated by idiots, morons, and misfits who all don’t know a good product or service when they see it.

Even artists can learn how to deal with rejection and sell their work. They must learn what most art schools don’t teach them — business know-how. If you are an artist, you don’t have to sell your soul to be a marketing expert. Your marketing expertise, in fact, enhances your soul and allows you much greater opportunity to introduce your art into the world. All successful artists today are successful at marketing and at managing their careers. Either that, or they have delegated these two tasks to someone else who has good marketing skills.

Marketing art is not all that difficult; indeed, it can be much easier than creating art. One great resource is the book *Art Marketing 101* (ArtNetwork Press, 2004) by Constance Smith, which helps artists take care of their business, with tips on everything from making winning portfolios to cultivating clients.
Fifteen Minutes of Notoriety Beats the Best Advertising Money Can Buy

As already emphasized, one of the most important principles for unconventional business success is to create awareness of your product or service. If you are an artist, a life coach, a public speaker, or a business owner, you must get the word out about your product or service. The problem is that keeping your name in front of the public can be more expensive than ever.

Another major problem is that we live in a world where consumers actively resist most marketing, particularly advertising. When humans are foolish enough to read an idiotic advertisement, they realize that they have wasted their time and haven’t gained anything useful. Eventually, most individuals don’t look at most advertisements. I, for one, can spend a whole hour reading the newspaper and not read one advertisement.

Hiring a celebrity spokesperson to promote your product might help, but I bet that you can’t afford this. Even if you can afford a beautifully executed commercial on the Super Bowl broadcast, it’s still an extremely risky bet. You will be lucky to gain enough sales of your product or service to pay 10 percent of the cost of the celebrity and producing and running the commercial.

This means that you have to look for cost-effective alternatives. The best one is publicity. Publicity is information that concerns a person, a group, an event, or a product and that is disseminated through various media including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, and the Internet. Notoriety is often achieved by the spreading of such information. An especially compelling advantage to this approach is that publicity requires little or no money; all it has to cost you is your time and effort.

You can hire your own public-relations person if you have to. But why would you want to? A professional P.R. firm can end up costing you anywhere from $2,000 to $10,000 just for a basic publicity campaign. If you use your creativity, you can get extraordinary results, better than most P.R. firms will get you. Let’s say that you spend twenty hours and save yourself $5,000 that a P.R. firm would charge. You will end up making $250 an hour by doing it yourself. How often do you make this amount of money? What’s more, it has been my experience that generating one’s own

Ninety-nine percent of advertising doesn’t sell much of anything.

— David Ogilvy
publicity can be a lot of fun.

The biggest advantage that publicity has over advertising is that people see publicity as much more credible than advertising. Indeed, fifteen minutes of notoriety beats the best advertising money can buy nine times out of ten. Now is this cool, or what? Something that you can get for free can be ten to a hundred times as effective as something for which you have to pay thousands of dollars. In fact, even millions of dollars can’t buy the same results that the best free publicity can give you.

Above all, publicity sets you aside from the competition much better than advertising ever can. One key to getting publicity is controversy, so this entails ruffling some feathers and even getting a good portion of the population downright upset at you. Using this approach means that perhaps a quarter to a third of the public will love you, with the remainder either hating you or being indifferent to your marketing message.

The problem with most publicity seekers is that they are trying to be too nice; they are not willing to take a stand or be the least bit controversial. I was successful in getting a ton of publicity because of the controversial title and content of The Joy of Not Working. Talk-show hosts particularly liked my boldness in saying things with which over half of their listeners and viewers disagreed.

For instance, within the first few months after I self-published The Joy of Not Working, I received a phone call from a producer for Peter Warren’s radio show on CJOB in Winnipeg. I had never heard of Peter Warren, but I gladly accepted an opportunity to do a telephone interview for an hour. I expected this interview to be similar to those I had already done either on the telephone or in the studio with several talk-show hosts. With me as their guest, most of the talk-show hosts used a theme for their show such as “Are We Working Too Hard?”

Boy, was I in for a cool surprise! Peter Warren started his show by saying something like, “We have never had as many of our listeners wanting to get at a guest on our show as we do people wanting to get at Ernie Zelinski. Zelinski is the author of the recently published book The Joy of Not Working. Zelinski has not held a job for years and believes that anyone who works hard for a living is stupid.” This left me perplexed, not quite sure whether I should be infuriated, and very much amused all at the same time. I came to the brilliant conclusion that I could have a problem

The secret to success is to offend the greatest number of people.
— George Bernard Shaw
Given my success with controversy, I would suggest that you not be afraid to offend someone. Not offending anyone might be a smart thing to do when you work for the government or when you go to your best friend’s birthday party, but not when you are trying to get publicity to develop a market for your product or service.

Never let the urge to be nice to everyone interfere with your being different. The urge to be nice stems from wanting to be liked by everyone. “The disease of niceness cripples more lives than alcoholism,” remarked British actor Robin Chandler. “Nice people are simply afraid to say no, are constantly worrying about what others think of them, constantly adapting their behavior to please — never getting to do what they want to do.”

Just getting your fifteen minutes of fame, as promised by Andy Warhol, will be extremely difficult if you are a carbon copy of all the nice people out there. The news media aren’t in the business of gratuitously writing about just anyone — the news media are in the business of providing interesting stories for their readers. It has been my experience that the chances of the media writing about me are increased dramatically if I follow these three principles:

- Be first.
- Be different.
- Be daring.

Being first is important. If someone were to ask you which team was second to climb Mount Everest, no doubt you would reply: “Who cares?” (If you are one of those weird trivia buffs who really cares, the answer is Jurg Marmet and Ernest Schmidt.) The point is, generally speaking, people won’t remember who was second in accomplishing something extraordinary.

Being different and daring is just as important. “Good P.R.,” advises Richard Branson, “is really about having something different to say in the first place.” To be different, you must strive to be what no one else but you can be. If you want to lead an anonymous life, then go ahead and be like everyone else — fit in and be part of the pack. Conforming to society, and thinking like the rest of the herd, will bring you the nebulous result of fitting in and being liked a little bit by everyone, but not being liked a whole lot by anyone. You will certainly never attain great recognition or any fame by following the herd.

Only by being different and daring can you be controversial. Clearly, the media loves controversy — take advantage of this. If
had an original idea in their whole life.” The reporters are probably right.

If you want to get publicity for your product or business, you have to do something truly new to stand out. Tell the media something they don’t know. Surprise them with something totally different. Find something bizarre to tell the world. Give the interviewer an astonishing new statistic or report a new survey that contradicts popular belief. What you need is a story with spice and vigor to it.

**Try Something So Stupid That It May Pay Off Big Time**

When it comes to marketing your product or yourself, it’s important that you don’t lose touch with the craziness in yourself and not be afraid to go public with it. The more attention you pay to what the masses are doing, the more you will realize that the everybody Else-is-doing-it approach isn’t the way to put your mark on this world. While it’s tempting to join the masses, always remember that you have meaningful career dreams and extraordinary things to pursue.

As I have said before, you should be excited, even crazy about what you are doing. Anything worth doing is worth having fun while doing it. Marketing your product or service is a great way to enjoy yourself. What sort of quirky marketing can you come up with? I suggest that you try something so stupid that it may pay off big time.

Here is an example of how I used an original promotional idea to differentiate myself from my competition and make a few extra bucks. The idea was used to market my first book and seminars on creativity. After self-publishing The Art of Seeing Double or Better in Business, I wound up with about twenty-five defective copies, which were either cut crooked or had missing pages. I took these back to the printer, expecting a refund. The printer, however, told me that he had given me eighty extra copies over and above those I had paid for. Because I didn’t want to throw the defective copies away, I decided to hang on to them for a while.

Not long after, I ran into Lance, a former
are giving the book to their employees. Several radio stations, credit unions, school boards, professional associations, and universities have already purchased the book in bulk.

*The Art of Seeing Double or Better in Business* is available only directly from me through my seminars or if you purchase 10 or more copies (20 after July 1). A price list and an order form are enclosed. Information about my seminars is also enclosed.

Sincerely,

Ernie J. Zelinski

My reasonable mind jumped in at this point and tried to convince me this was a “dumb idea,” which wouldn’t work and wouldn’t do much for my reputation. Luckily, my instinctive mind told me to be unreasonable and do it anyway. Truth be told, a bad reputation is better than no reputation at all — if you have a bad reputation, at least some people know that you exist!

I was sure that some people to whom I was about to mail the half-books would think I was unprofessional, or even crazy. But I also figured a lot of people would remember me. What’s more, my curiosity was getting the best of me; I was wondering how human-resource professionals in corporations would respond to receiving either a top or bottom half of my book. To be sure, I felt a little silly while stuffing half-books along with a copy of the letter in envelopes.

I am happy to report that this idea was so stupid that it paid off big time! Sending the half-books with the above letter resulted in several orders for ten books, which further led to sales of several hundred books as well as several seminar presentations for one client. At this point, the extra revenues from this crazy idea had totalled somewhere between $10,000 and $15,000.

This gets much, much better, however! After I let the media know about my success using this stupid idea, I received a lot of valuable publicity via two feature newspaper articles, which led to other seminars and book sales. In fact, given the profits this crazy idea generated, I calculated that I could cut perfectly good books in half and still have this promotion be highly profitable. The cool thing is that two years later I was in Vancouver about to make a speech when I was introduced to a gentleman in the human-
resource industry. He exclaimed, “Hey, I know who you are! You sent me half of a book some time ago. To this day I still show it to people who come in my office!”

One final note about this “stupid” idea: I set it aside for well over a decade, but I recently revitalized it and now utilize an electronic version. I offer the top half of my recent book *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free* on my website. (If you would like a copy, you can download it in PDF format at www.real-success.ca — again, this e-book is free just like the other great things in life!) There is no doubt that giving away the top half of *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free* has contributed to the book’s respectable sales and overall success.

All things considered, if you want to be a successful marketer, you must realize that the best marketing techniques often go against common sense. There is no telling where a stupid idea might lead if you are willing to try it out. Be bold and be shameless. Try anything that is legal to get your product or service noticed. With the right stupid idea, applied to the right intelligent product or service, you will get extraordinary results.

**Claim Your Way to Fame**

One of the best ways to get publicity for your product or service is to make your own claim to fame. What you need is a title. Needless to say, I am not talking about a title such as “Your Highness” or “the Right Honorable” although you may well deserve both. For marketing purposes, your title should tell the world that you are one of the leading authorities in the field that you work in. It also helps if the title is a bit controversial.

I can give no better example than Frank Ogden of Vancouver, B.C., who calls himself Dr. Tomorrow. Ogden is a master marketer, and over the years his title has helped him establish himself as a prominent futurist, even though some people question his credentials and his expertise. The *Financial Post* newspaper described Ogden as a “20th Century visionary” and called his ideas and deeds “outrageous,” an ideal combination of qualities for a life of profitable nonconformity. Ogden even went so far as to trademark “Dr. Tomorrow” in several countries, including Canada. This title helped Ogden become a highly successful speaker on the conference and convention circuit.
With a title, you can use publicity to build your business and personal brand by positioning yourself as a qualified and credible expert, particularly in the media. Again, media people are willing to help you if you give them what they want. Thus, you must find a way to make your expertise known to the media so that they can contact you whenever they need someone to comment on a particular product, service, or story.

After Paul Hartunian — yes, the same creative individual who sold the Brooklyn Bridge — wrote a book called *How to Be Outrageously Successful with the Opposite Sex* (Ultimate Secrets, 1991), he claimed in his press releases to be “the nation’s leading authority on dating and relationships.” No one else gave Hartunian this label — it was his own claim to fame. Hartunian even challenged anyone who thought he or she was America’s leading authority on dating and relationships to call any of the over 1,000 radio talk shows he was on. No one ever did. Hartunian says, “To this day, I remain the undisputed, unchallenged nation’s leading authority on dating and relationships.”

Giving yourself a title is a form of branding. The better the title and the more visibility you have, the easier it is to get media coverage — and keep getting more. A greater share of the marketplace for your product or service can belong to you if you can get the word out about it using a unique title. If you are an Afro-American artist, for instance, why not call yourself “The Afro-American Renaissance Man” or “The Artist with an Attitude” or “The Enlightened Artist” or “The Paint by Wonder Artist”? Once you have claimed a title, there are many avenues that you can pursue to further establish yourself as a renowned expert in your field:

**Twelve Ways to Claim Your Fame**

1. Get yourself featured in publications.
2. Get interviewed on a radio talk show.
3. Appear on the television news.
4. Write a regular column about your field of expertise for print media and/or websites.
5. Publish a monthly newsletter that you send to subscribers and to all your media contacts.
6. Connect your product or service to a charity or cause.

*It’s not enough to be the best at what you do. You must be perceived as the only one who does what you do.*

— Jerry Garcia
look for (which, of course, may vary from show to show) are topics that are fun, entertaining, fresh, topical, and presented by well-spoken guests. Don’t be afraid to blow your own horn. Talk about your product or service, but do talk from your heart and not like a poorly trained used-car salesman.

The power of being featured as an expert even in a small newspaper or on the smallest of radio or TV stations is not to be underestimated. What happens when we hear a financial consultant on a radio talk show? He immediately commands credibility. We all think, “If he is on the radio, he must be good.” Moreover, if he mentions that he has written a book, he must be even better. Yet this financial advisor may in fact have one of the worst track records while some obscure financial advisor is making his small group of clients filthy rich.

The key is to keep your name, title, and even your face continually in front of the media. Sometimes we forget how many opportunities there are for us to get publicity about our products and ourselves. Each day there are thousands of broadcast shows alone that are hungry for good guests. In fact, every day more than 4,000 American radio and TV shows book more than 10,000 guests. You can be one to them.

Give Yourself Away to the Influencers of This World

All things considered, word of mouth is still the most important means of marketing a product or service. Word of mouth is created by getting your product or service in the hands of people who will appreciate it and will talk to friends and associates about it. The best way to get people talking is to give your service or product to key individuals — talk-show hosts, columnists, seminar presenters, celebrities, and chat-line addicts — who are going to mention it to many people, who will mention it to even more people.

With the right product or service, the more you give away, the more you end up selling. I have now spent approximately $40,000 giving away over 12,000 copies of my books. But let me not dwell on my own case because I have one that is much better. A few years ago, Marlo Morgan self-published a book called Mutant Message Down Under. Three years later, Morgan had sold 270,000
More Money Won’t Bring You More Happiness — It Works the Other Way Around!

As I start writing this chapter at one of my favorite coffee bars, the time is 3:30 p.m. Today is November 23, a day when it is common to have two feet of snow on the ground in Edmonton and a temperature high of 21°F. The lowest temperature recorded for this time of the year is -29°F (yes, that’s a minus). Because today’s temperature reached an abnormal high of 61°F, and there was absolutely no snow on the ground, I went for a most enjoyable bike ride for an hour and a half in the early afternoon — and just for the record, I didn’t get up until the crack of noon.

Yesterday, also a bright sunny day, was even better when the temperature reached a record high of 68°F. I went running for an hour wearing just a T-shirt and shorts, something I could normally not do on November 22 unless I flew to Las Vegas, at least 1,500 miles south of my hometown. Both yesterday and today I saw only a handful of people taking advantage of this great weather to run, cycle, golf, or walk. Not only did I feel prosperous, I felt truly blessed to be able to do what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it.

Sadly, most people in conventional jobs, even if they earn $500,000 a year
Dear Mr. Zelinski,

Recently, I went on strike, furious with my client, feeling that I was always abused. By striking, I put them in a very compromised position that they’d have no way out of except by meeting my demands, which was a six-figure-dollar amount. They prepared to fight, but it was a lost cause. All I had to do was hold out for a couple of months and they’d eventually give up and I’d be rich! So why couldn’t I sleep at night?

One day my sister-in-law let me borrow your book, The Joy of Not Working. Three chapters in and I immediately realized what a terrible mistake I was making. My problems weren’t with my client at all. I was the problem. I had lost my passion for the work months earlier, and as a result I began to find other ways to combat the emptiness in my life: guitar, taekwondo, learning foreign languages, dieting. I wanted to add more, but I couldn’t; work blocked the way.

It seems so obvious now, but at the time I was quick to blame the people at work rather than the idea of work itself. Once I put these two parts of my life together, the solution became crystal clear. I called my client at once, explained my position, and we agreed to part on good terms.

Am I nuts? Did I really just pass up a small fortune because I couldn’t put up with a little fight? I don’t think so. I think I’m richer now because of it. A day lived to its fullest is worth far more than any money you could hope to earn by sacrificing it.

Thanks for helping me see what was always there.

Sincerely,

Thomas Allen

To be honest, I am not exactly sure how the information in The Joy of Not Working put Thomas Allen’s problem in proper perspective and convinced him to
If these are all elements of happiness, and they can’t be bought, then it follows that happiness can’t be bought with cash. When you finally accept this, it is much easier to break the relationship between work and money. This in turn gives you the opportunity to pursue your true work that may be totally unrelated to what you are presently working at to earn a living.

Of course, if we are extremely poor (starving or homeless), more money can bring a much better life. But beyond a certain level — not as high as you may think — more financial resources don’t translate into more happiness. The evidence is overwhelming, as indicated by numerous studies. Here are four:

1. A recent study compared average life satisfaction with the purchasing power of tens of thousands of people in twenty-nine different countries. In poor countries, not surprisingly, purchasing power and life satisfaction were clearly related. Surprisingly, however, in countries half as rich as the United States there is absolutely no relationship between money and happiness.

2. Another study confirmed that people in rich countries are not any happier than those in poorer ones. “During the 1980s, the West Germans had double the incomes of the poor Irish, who year after year reported more satisfaction with their lives,” claims David Myers, a sociologist at Hope College in Michigan and author of *The Pursuit of Happiness* (Harper Paperbacks, 1993).

3. The Alfred P. Sloan foundation found an inverse relationship between self-reported child happiness and parental income in the United States. Blue-collar and middle-class kids identified themselves as happier than wealthy ones.

4. Two Canadian studies found that the unhappiest
were making $30,000 a year, and had to be creative to make ends meet, than they are now making over three times as much money.

When you fall into the trap of feeling unhappy and thinking that more money will make you happier, you should ask yourself, “How many more material possessions and how much more money do I need to be happy?” Take at least five minutes to think about this. Be careful. Your devious mind may play tricks on you. If your answer is that you want it all, you better ask yourself, “You want what? And how much money?”

To be fair, perhaps you want fewer possessions and less money than I do. The point is that the less you need in material and physical comforts, the freer you become. These comforts have their place but they should not be the highest on your list. When you need fewer material and physical comforts, you are much better prepared to pursue an unreal job or unconventional business for the initial period when you may not make much money.

Perhaps by now you are thinking that I’m trying to convince you to forget about earning more money than you earn today. Not at all! That is not my intention. As much as anyone else, I enjoy earning money and spending it on things that enhance my life and the lives of others.

Although the rumor that money doesn’t buy happiness is, in fact, true, earning more money is not a total waste of time. Having financial peace of mind can be liberating. There are enough of other problems in life without having financial problems to add to them. I just want to point out that the less money you need to be happy, the freer you become.

There, incidentally, is another important relationship between money and happiness, one that I hadn’t noticed before I started writing this chapter. In three of my other books I claimed that more money won’t bring more happiness. But I hadn’t noticed that, in fact, it works the other way around — more happiness will bring more money! Put another way, if we first learn how to be happy with little or no money, then money will come much more easily into our lives.
indicated Oprah Winfrey. “And that is being able to make a
difference, not only in your own life, but in other people’s lives.”

You must be clear, however, about what it takes to attain
financial freedom. Luckily, there is no secret to attaining financial
freedom. Contrary to popular belief, financial freedom is not having
a million or two in the bank. Financial freedom is simply having
more money come in than goes out. If you are a master at handling
money, financial freedom is much easier to attain than most people
realize.

Derek Foster is a great example. Foster was featured in an
article in *The Globe and Mail* about the time I was preparing to
write this book. Surprisingly to most people, but not to me, Foster
managed to retire shortly before he turned thirty-five without
having had a high-paying job and without inheriting any money.
Foster, a former telemarketer and Radio Shack salesman, has
recently spent some of his surplus leisure time writing a book
called *Stop Working, Here’s How You Can!* (Check out the book on
Foster’s website at www.stopworking.ca.)

Foster challenges the popular belief
that financial freedom is attainable only
after decades of working hard at a high-
paying traditional job. “What are you
going to do with two-million dollars when
you’re eighty years old?” asks Foster.
Perhaps you are married and have already assumed that Foster is
single and has no kids. Wrong again, Sparky! Foster, in fact, is
married and he and his wife have two children.

Although Foster has never had a high-paying job, he started
setting aside $200 a month in an investment account when he was
an early-twenties university student. Any unexpected cash, such
as a tax rebate or a Christmas bonus, was also saved. Foster kept
up the $200 a month contributions even when he backpacked
Europe and spent time working and scuba-diving in Australia.
This allowed him to acquire a modest investment portfolio along
with a house worth $179,000 in Wasaga Beach, Ontario, by the
time he was thirty-four.

Today the Fosters’ family of four lives happily and freely on
about $30,000 a year. Although his wife has a part-time job at a
local ski hill, Derek Foster himself does not work. According to
Foster, the key to being financially independent is to build a nice
nest egg. Also, make lifestyle choices that reduce your overhead
such as living in a small town where real estate is inexpensive.
Then if you can structure your finances to minimize taxes and

Always remember: *Money has no power of its own.*
— Suze Orman
Perhaps you have financial problems because you earn way too little and can’t cut expenses. In this case, if you want to upgrade from a dump you’re living in today to something closer to the Taj Mahal in the next few years, you have to make some changes in your life. You will have to take a hard look at many things, such as the type of friends you have, how much TV you watch, your motivation level, how much of your creativity you use, your hard-core beliefs, your chosen career, your passions, and whether you suffer from the world-owes-me-a-living syndrome. To some degree, you will need to make some effort to either work more, change your line of work, or work smarter.

Some people get very angry when I try to challenge or shake up their money beliefs. One erroneous belief they hang on to is money can buy happiness. They also hold on to the erroneous belief that they can’t make more money, even when they desperately want more. Sadly, self-limiting beliefs about money become self-fulfilling prophecies. You can succeed financially if no one else believes in you. But it is practically impossible to succeed financially if you don’t believe in yourself — even if a million others do.

So again, the best way for you to attain financial freedom is to earn more and save more of what you earn. Pretty easy, isn’t it? There is one major problem, of course: If you have been working at a corporate job for years, you don’t have much control over your income. Sure, you can choose to work some overtime if it is offered to you, but this can be quite limiting.

The point is that if you are not controlling your income, someone else is. The problem with the corporate world is that most employees are at the mercy of their employers, dependent on what is given to them in the way of their salaries and raises. In the United States, some employers don’t even provide healthcare coverage to their employees. If you want to increase your income, you have to look outside of your current job for a better source of income. This takes an entrepreneurial mindset instead of a typical employee’s mindset.

The late Joe Karbo, author of The Lazy Man’s Way to Riches (F. P. Publishing Co., 1973) stated it best: “Most people are too busy earning a living to make [real] money.” In this regard, one important benefit of what I do for a living is the opportunity to make a great deal of money in a relatively short period of time. One of my books appearing on The New York Times bestseller list, for
lead to big results; small ideas lead to small results, sometimes no results at all.

Once you have at least one great product or service, the number-one enemy is procrastination. Many people have great ideas and plans, but few ever do whatever they claim they are going to do. If they want to succeed at developing and marketing their service or product, they may have to stop watching TV entirely, stop going for drinks with acquaintances from work, stop going to sports events, and stop shopping for junk — regardless of the name brand on it — that doesn’t enhance their lives one bit. They must use the extra time and the money they save to get serious about their dream business.

You don’t necessarily need blockbuster projects such as the pet rock or Paul Hartunian’s Brooklyn Bridge idea to make good money. A series of small, profitable ones will suffice. It has been my experience that sometimes it’s the small things, going the extra inch and not necessarily the mile, that can end up making you some real money.

Several years ago, I started writing a book called *The Lazy Person’s Guide to Success*. Two or three months later, I did the title proud by quitting when the book was half completed. I gave up on the book entirely, thinking that no publisher would be interested. When a Spanish publisher requested a copy of another book, on a whim I decided to send half the manuscript to her as well, even though she hadn’t asked for it. My devious, “reasonable” mind told me it was a waste of time and money to send the half manuscript, but my creative, “unreasonable” mind told me to send it anyway.

Surprisingly — to my reasonable mind, anyway — several months later this publisher made me an offer to publish the book in Spanish (she thought that the half-manuscript was the complete book). The opportunity to get another book published and an advance of $3,000 were sufficient motivation for me to finish the book. Later I sold American and other foreign rights to a total of thirteen different publishers.

*The Lazy Person’s Guide to Success* has now made me almost $85,000 in pretax income. Had I not sent the half-manuscript to the Spanish publisher, this book would never have been published and would not have added to my career success without a real job. This example shows the value of extra effort. A little can go a long way. In other words, it’s the little things that count — many little
Derek Foster has done it by himself, I have done it by myself, millions of others have done it by themselves, and you have to do it by yourself. It’s that simple. Otherwise, you won’t get to experience the extraordinary lifestyle that is available to people who work at unreal jobs or operate unconventional businesses.

Your Prosperity Will Grow to the Extent That You Do

Now let’s talk about prosperity, because freedom and prosperity go hand in hand. Regardless of how much money you make, it’s pretty hard to feel prosperous if you work at a job that imprisons you. A recent British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey reveals that six in ten British workers are unhappy in their jobs. The survey also showed a majority of workers reporting:

- The feeling that their work is not useful to society
- Feelings of insecurity
- Exhaustion by the time they get home
- Work-related stress
- Worry over inadequate income

If the BSA findings are anything to go by, it appears that most jobs are spiritually devastating and corporate employment, by itself, is no cure for the above ills. This is why so many people plan to leave the corporate world for good. Interestingly, more than half of all female workers in Britain have already left or are seriously considering escaping the conventional nine-to-five working world in a bid to create their own dream job and reclaim their freedom.

According to a 2005 survey by global recruitment and human resource consulting firm Hudson, 73 percent of female professionals in Britain are disappointed with their career progress to date. What’s more, 47 percent of all female professionals do not expect to be working full-time five years into the future. Preferring to follow a career path that offers flexibility, rather than fit in with the demands of the corporate world, British female professionals plan to set up their own businesses, work flexibly, or pursue a freelance career.

Of course, many people who appear to be on top of the world in their careers are terribly unhappy, not only these

My outlook is that little things are the trip. I’m very happy with very little. Maybe that’s why I have so much.

— Linda McCartney
one time I even had the sobering experience of sleeping in my car for two cold winter nights when the temperature was -21°F. Extremely cold, of course, but this is still far from the bottom. As Mike Todd said, “I’ve never been poor, only broke. Being poor is a state of mind. Being broke is a temporary situation.”

Many years later I am fortunate enough to have a good income, be spending substantially less money than I earn, and investing a nice surplus each year. Having been broke on more than one occasion makes me a lot more grateful for the financial position I enjoy today. Yet I sometimes felt just as prosperous when I was broke as I do today.

For instance, the year I wrote The Joy of Not Working I was in debt big time, but I was filled with hope and vigor, the true feeling of prosperity. I recall telling a few people that I had a good sense about the book and “it may just make me a million dollars.” For the record, to date the book has earned me about half that amount and it still gives me a nice residual income whether I am awake or asleep. This would not have been possible if I hadn’t felt prosperous enough to take up writing and self-publishing when I had no savings and little income.

Spiritual leaders say that as a matter of course prosperity will come when you are pursuing the right things with your life. To feel truly prosperous, you may have to leave the corporate world for good simply because prosperity and freedom go hand in hand. For some people this means having to give up a substantial amount of their income, at least for a certain period of time.

Most people are too afraid to give up a secure job because they don’t think that they have what it takes to leave the corporate world. False beliefs about your limitations will hold you back from gaining freedom. No complaining and no victim stuff. Okay? The more loving your personality and the more love you have for life and your work, the more money you will attract and the more you will enjoy spending the money.

To make my point about the victim stuff, let me ask you this: How far do you think a young black woman, from a poor family, with a weight problem, and who was sexually molested as a kid can go in life? Most people with the victim mentality will likely respond, “Not very far. She has everything going against her, particularly being poor, having been sexually molested, and being black.”
personal growth may require that you overcome the fear of leaving a secure job for a less secure job, with less pay, but a lot more freedom. Not so long ago I received a letter from Dan Karpf of Andover, New Jersey. As I have said before, I am surprised by the number of interesting characters who have quit their full-time jobs after reading The Joy of Not Working to pursue a freer and more prosperous life. Dan Karpf was one of them.

Dear Mr. Zelinski,

I’ve wanted to write to you since I finished reading your book almost two months ago.

After working for various companies for the past 17 years, I got fed up with the long hours and long commutes and wished for an easier life. Thinking about quitting the company I was working for after being cut down to three days a week, I came across your book.

You have written down what I was feeling. Although I am too young to retire, why should I push and stress myself to come home to sleep and start all over again the next day? I had purchased a house by a lake two years ago and didn’t have any free time to enjoy the country life I wanted to. By working three days a week, I found that I am able to pay my bills and survive.

Cutting back useless expenses, and doing part-time consulting, I quit my job and never looked back. I am relaxing more, resting on my hammock, and cooking dinner for my wife who is still doing the commute. Although I am back at work, I set my own hours, and am home by 5:00. The summer is coming and I am looking forward to living in relaxation.

Thank you for teaching me that life is worth living and is more than work! I recommend your book to everyone who is looking for a better life.

Sincerely,

Dan Karpf

You may be able to feel a lot more prosperous by making significant changes in your life as Dan Karpf and millions of corporate employees do every year. Feeling more prosperous doesn’t necessarily mean earning more money. Sometimes it
According to Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko, co-authors of *The Millionaire Next Door* (Pocket Books, 1998), most self-made millionaires are masters at handling money. They are not driving this year’s model of car, they are not wearing designer clothing and Rolex watches, and they are living in a modest home. Indeed, most millionaires say that building financial independence is far more a priority than impressing others. These people who have the golden touch with money are more likely than the average person to have clothing mended or altered, wear a pair of shoes for eight to ten years, reupholster furniture instead of buying new stuff, and buy items in bulk and redeem coupons.

Let’s review the main discoveries of Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko in *The Millionaire Next Door*. According to them, wealth attained by most self-made American millionaires is the result of a lifestyle of satisfying work, motivation, perseverance, planning, and, above all, self-discipline. Keep in mind that most of these individuals reached millionaire status before they were forty-five. There were seven common denominators among the 1,115 millionaires studied for the book:

- They choose the right occupation.
- They are creative in marketing their products and services.
- They live well below their means.
- They efficiently utilize their time, energy, and money in ways that support wealth-building.
- They put much greater value on attaining financial independence than displaying high social status.
- Their parents did not provide financial assistance to them.
- They encourage their adult children to be economically self-sufficient.

Although all of the above factors are important for attaining wealth, pay particular attention to the first two. Choosing the right occupation is a main premise of this book. Another premise of this book is that you must be creative in marketing your product or service, regardless of the unreal job or unconventional business you choose for leaving the madness of the corporate world.
Wealth consciousness means having respect and admiration for accomplished individuals when you meet them. Several people I know constantly criticize all rich people with comments such as “Anyone who is rich has shafted other people to get to where they are today.” Of course, this may be true of a small percentage of rich people, but it is certainly not true of all. Moreover, people who constantly criticize rich people will never become rich themselves because they would have to become someone whom they resent.

One of the most important elements for successfully hanging around accomplished individuals is not being envious or resentful of their success. When you encounter wealthy people enjoying their money, bless them and say, “Isn’t it wonderful that they have attained so much wealth and are enjoying some of it?” There can’t be any pretending on your behalf. Deep down you have to truly admire and be happy for wealthy people. Take delight in their success and you will be further on the road to real financial success yourself.

**Try to Spend More on Your Career Training and Personal Development than on Your Next Hairstyle**

If you have never done this, attend a two- or three-day motivational event sometime soon. One thing will stand out among the array of successful and polished speakers: They all will say that their success and polish is due to the self-help books they have read, the seminars they have taken, and the mentors with whom they have worked. Surprisingly, most will also admit that they were miserable failures early in their lives.

Take, for example, John Assaraf. He was the leader of a street gang when he was nineteen. Assaraf wanted to change his life but he didn’t know how. “I got a job selling real estate,” says Assaraf, “and fortunately someone took me to a sales training seminar.” He has spent over $500,000 on seminars and coaching in the twenty-five years since then. It seems like a fortune — and it is until you learn that his current net worth is over $1 billion! The return on Assaraf’s investment in education has been approximately 2,000 percent.

Harv Eker, author of *Secrets of the Millionaire Mind* (Collins,
motivational books, seminars, and CDs, I subscribe to both Publishers Weekly and Book Marketing Update. These two publications cost me about $650 a year. The subscriptions have more than paid for themselves. Indeed, the leads I have found and followed, along with several subsequent chains of events that resulted, have generated over $100,000 in extra revenue for me.

I am always dismayed by people who want to get into the writing or publishing businesses and have no problem spending money on the latest expensive material goods. But will they spend money on important subscriptions or products that could help them become successful in an exciting career? It has been my experience that over 95 percent won’t. Luckily for me and other successful people in my line of business, these wannabes pose no extra competition to us because they are not truly committed to achievement and success.

If you want to be a success at an unreal job, try to spend more on your career training and personal development than on your next hairstyle. One of your best investments from your education account may be hiring a life coach. Coaching will help you get to your ideal lifestyle more quickly and elegantly. Surprisingly, even many of the most successful people have life coaches. As indicated earlier, several Fortune 500 corporate executives pay Tony Robbins a retainer of one million dollars a year so that they can call him anytime for inspiration and advice.

Pay heed to Jelaluddin Rumi’s poetic words written over 800 years ago, “Sell your cleverness, and purchase bewilderment,” if you want to have more prosperity come into your life. Whether through a book, a magazine article, a seminar, travel to another country, or a conversation with a truly successful person, whatever it is that you undertake, always look to broaden your experiences and your education.

It should go without saying that education in itself is meaningless. You must put it to good use. Many people — usually the lazy, unmotivated, unsuccessful, and broke in this world — claim that self-help products don’t work. Every time I hear someone say that self-help materials don’t work, I am somewhat mystified. Underlying this statement is a belief that the materials are all bogus and that whoever created any self-help material is doing it strictly for the money. This is tantamount to saying that college professors and schoolteachers prepare all their lesson
ten, this great book rates an off-the-chart fifteen. My testimonial alone should be sufficient motivation for you to purchase Koch’s book and not worry about the price. The $17.95 you spend on the book can bring you back a hundred times your original investment in extra time, money, and enjoyment of life.

Of course, you should not take all career and personal development advice as gospel. You do not need to take the techniques to extremes nor do you have to do everything suggested. Advice reflects one particular person’s truth and view of the world. Take whatever useful ideas you need from career and personal development material. Every book, seminar, or coaching session should have at least one important tool, strategy, or insight. Take what appeals to you and discard what doesn’t work for you. This applies to this book as well.

Your creative mind is your greatest asset and you should be spending money to enhance it. Regardless of the amount you allocate for your career and personal development, this overall point is important. The money you put in your education account is an investment in yourself that can reap unbelievable returns. Search out the best tools available to open up your creative side, get you focused, and direct you toward attaining career success without a real job. These tools may cost you a tidy sum at the outset, but they will save you time and make you a lot more money in the long run.

Prosperity Spending Is Good for Your Financial Soul

Paradoxically, the most important thing that money can help provide is personal freedom, but earning or having a lot of money is not necessarily liberating to everyone. Although not a problem for most people, particularly today’s North Americans, it is all too easy for some of us to fall into the trap of spending too little money. Once we have worked hard or smart for many years to create an independent income, it follows that we should be enjoying a portion of it.

Earlier in the book I mentioned my celebration to honor my twenty-five years without a real job. Before I committed myself to having it, I had talked about this event for months. Yet I almost
No amount will be too large for me. Granted, this is not exactly a project worthy of my receiving the Nobel Prize in Economics, but heck, this is one of the things I can be very good at — particularly when someone else is paying the tab. In the event I am overbooked, give Elton John or Michael Jackson a call. Either one will show you how to feel prosperous and enjoy money like never before.

If it’s a crushing experience to spend money for something you would like and can easily afford, you haven’t gained freedom — you have psychologically imprisoned yourself. What good is having a lot of money if you still do tasks that you hate? In fact, living ridiculously below your means is just as bad as living way above your means. Staying in a dive by choice, and no longer by necessity, doesn’t make much sense. This is definitely a sign of poverty-consciousness and not prosperity-consciousness.

Feeling prosperous means paying your utility bills on time and with a smile on your face. Prosperity means not only giving to the homeless person, but having a smile on your face when you do it. Prosperity also means buying fresh produce with a smile on your face instead of buying day-old bread or bargain overripe fruit with a scowl on your face. Still more, being prosperous means tipping generously with a smile on your face when the waiter has given you great service instead of trying to stiff him with a mere 5 percent, or worse, no tip at all.

Even when you aren’t earning a great deal of money, it’s important to at least once a week do something to reward yourself — to feel prosperous and deserving of money. While I was earning an income under the government’s so-called poverty line, and over $30,000 in the red due to my student loans, I would still have at least one dinner in a good restaurant each week. This was my declaration of my prosperity and of my forthcoming wealth. The weekly dinner was also a reward for my being committed to my creative projects. Now that I can afford it, I have lunch at a restaurant or coffee bar every day, and I usually have dinner at a decent restaurant two to three times a week.
The Unquestioned Quest for Corporate Success Is an Idiot's Journey at Best

In the first edition of this book, I devoted chapter 7 to the subject of friendship, based on the premise that you haven’t achieved real success in your life unless you have real friends. Most of the material was adapted from a gift book called Life’s Secret Handbook for Having Great Friends that I wrote a few years ago. (This gift book was published by French and Spanish publishers but it was not ever published in English.)

For the record, I still believe that success at the friendship game is an integral part of being an overall success in life. The reason that I have introduced completely new material in this chapter for the revised edition of this book is that I wanted to provide a work model for individuals who feel that they are organizationally averse, too smart to work in corporations, and too prosperous to do mornings.

Taking into account the differences in lifestyles that people in North America have, it really is a crazy and unfair world out there. On one hand, there are millions of people who bust their butts slaving away for organizations year after year — earning a meager paycheck that doesn’t even pay the basic bills.

On the other hand, there are thousands of organizationally averse individuals who have found a much better way. I am talking
Why don’t you do Mark Twain proud by following his philosophy about work? As Twain indicated, there’s no sense in working at something that enslaves you. If you are currently in a job that you don’t like, you must find ways to enjoy it for the time being while working toward being able to leave and pursue something much more enjoyable. Working at something you love is the biggest secret of all when it comes to attracting happiness and wealth.

Matching the type of person you are with what you do for a living may seem like common sense. Unfortunately, most individuals who dislike corporations don’t have jobs that truly complement their personalities. Worse yet, they don’t realize how much these jobs are a form of slavery.

The fact that you have put a lot of time and effort into your career doesn’t mean that it is desirable and worthwhile. And being too embarrassed to admit that you made the wrong choice for so many years shouldn’t stop you from pursuing something different. Sure, a lot of distasteful things in life can be justified and endured with enough clever rationalization. But to what end?

The unquestioned quest for traditional corporate success is an idiot’s journey at best. Hence the challenge — escape the organization for good! Finding a vocation that offers fulfillment, but doesn’t involve going broke in the process, is important. You increase your chances dramatically for finding such a vocation if your overhead is low. Bingo! The Internet can help you escape the organization for good.

You Don’t Have to Be Able to Walk on Water to Make Money While You Sleep

Is it possible to truly find a non-organizational career that is fulfilling, that you gain energy from, that you dream about, and that you live for? The answer is a resounding yes, provided you have a personal passion. If you love photography, travel, dogs, cats, rock climbing, or any one of thousands of hobbies and interests that appeal to other individuals, you can capitalize on that hobby or interest and have a lot of fun at it.

The place to profit from your hobby or personal interest is on
following this work model is not the greatest way to make a living, particularly for anyone like me who is organizationally averse.

The Regular Person’s Work Model


The above work model ensures that you have to work long and hard for the corporation. Now, this isn’t a bad work model for most people. Fact is, career success without a real job isn’t for everyone. Weirdly, some people enjoy a corporate job and the hour or two commute that comes with it. They even like having a boss who tells them what to do, along with the routine of working nine-to-five for a mediocre salary that in many cases hardly pays the mortgage for a dump.

Frankly, I think that they are nuts. The reckless pursuit of insanity is not for everyone, however. If you are like me, you want an alternative work model so that it works hard for you and you don’t have to work all that hard for yourself.

It just so happens that there is such a work model. It even ensures that if you drop dead one day, the money will still keep coming into your bank account. Your heirs won’t even know from where the money is being sent.

Better still, with this alternative work model, your heirs couldn’t stop the money from coming into the bank account even if they so desired. Clearly, a regular job isn’t going to provide this money stream. If you work once and you get paid once, that’s dumb. If you work once and get paid many times, that’s smart.

Following is the work model that I subscribe to and that I advocate that you adopt:

The Smart Person’s Work Model

Of course, $3.5 million or $35 million would be amazing, but $350 million for a two-year-old website shows the incredible upside. Granted, Club Penguin is an exceptional case. I can nevertheless give many more cases of websites that were started from scratch and were eventually sold for hundreds of thousands — even millions — of dollars. Your goal, however, should not be to make a big pile of money by selling a website; it should be to create one or more websites that can help you escape the corporate maze and make you a decent living by working two to four hours a day.

Let’s get back to the cost of entry: The great advantage of most Internet businesses is that you don’t have to “bet the farm” when you start them. Many successful online businesses have been launched for around $500, with some costing less than $200. If an idea turns out to be a dud, you will find out fairly quickly, walking away having lost only a few hundred dollars. At the same time you will have acquired valuable knowledge to move on to another idea.

In fact, one of the tricks to becoming a successful online entrepreneur is to diversify and multiply your streams of income. Of course, you should never put all your financial eggs in one basket at the best of times. If you have several websites all targeting different markets, one that starts failing will not present a big problem. You can sing a happy song and focus your efforts on your other websites — in addition to starting new ones that offer great opportunity. Once you have successfully set up one or more moneymaking websites, it’s relatively easy to start another one to capitalize on another opportunity.

What’s more, as you become more knowledgeable, it will take you less effort, less money, and less time to set up each successive website. A lot of the features of websites can be automated, which means that you will eventually have a decent income by working a few hours a week. The key is to start small, but think big. Stay within reason, however! Rome wasn’t built in a day — or in five years, for that matter.

When starting your online business, you don’t even need to sell your own product to adopt The Smart Person’s Work Model, which earns you money whether you are awake, asleep, or dead. You can earn a reasonable income selling other people’s products, without having to handle the products. This also means that you don’t have to invest in risky product development or put out a huge amount of cash to buy inventory that will never sell.
Clearly, there are many other opportunities to make money on the Internet in many other ways. For instance, a college student not so long ago decided to try to finance his education by selling one million pixels of advertising space on his web page for a dollar per pixel. Advertisers had to buy a minimum of 100 pixels; if they did, they could post any image linking to anywhere they wanted. Shockingly to most people, but not to the creative people of this world, this college student made his one million dollars within a few months.

You don’t necessarily have to come up with something unique like this college student did to make money on the Internet. As Anthony Robbins says, “Model the masters.” In other words, look at what other successful people are doing and adopt their strategies for your own success. Then put a special twist on your product or service to make it stand out in the marketplace.

**Top-Ten Ways to Make Money on the Internet**

1. Sell your expertise. Whether you are a business consultant or a horse trainer, you can use your website to promote your services.

2. Sell your artwork or handicrafts online. People sell everything from homemade soap to dog clothing to paintings to photographs on the Internet.

You may protest, “But I don’t have any unique marketable skills or interests to make money in one of these ten ways!” Rubbish. This is what many people say. Fact is, a lot of successful individuals at one time had trouble figuring out what turned them on. Today they are operating profitable Internet businesses from which they get great enjoyment and satisfaction.

Start with the premise that if other ordinary people can be successful on the Internet, so can you. What you must do is dig deeper! Look harder at yourself. Unique skills and interests come in a variety of shapes and forms. For instance, your interest in traveling is something on which you could base a moneymaking website. Likewise for coin collecting, quilting, or reviewing astrology websites.

If you can’t pinpoint any specialized talent or knowledge that you have or can easily acquire, reminiscing about your enjoyable life experiences can be a big help. Think about all the hobbies, jobs, and volunteer work that you have pursued. Write down the special skills that you have had to use and the interests that you developed.

Take some time in answering the following questions:

Ten Questions to Help You Find Your Internet Niches

1. What would you do if you knew that you wouldn’t fail?
2. What sports do you play or watch on TV?
3. What makes your heart sing?
4. What lifetime accomplishments are you most proud of?
5. What would you do if you could do anything in this world?
6. Do you have a specialized collection of items? Of what?
7. What brings a smile to your face just thinking about it?
and are looking on the Internet for a solution to the problem. They must also be willing to pay a decent price for your product or service that solves their problem.

Minimally, you must do at least some research that will help you pick the right niche into which you can market your product or service. The key is to find a market small enough so that you won’t have too many competitors, but still large enough for you to make a good profit.

You have to ask yourself what sorts of problems people are going online to try to solve, within the areas of interest that you want to pursue as an online business. If you can identify a problem or several problems that are neglected by most of the other websites out there, you can capitalize on this market.

Of course, the market must have the money to spend on your product or service. Identify a group of people who are desperately trying to find something online without success — and then offer them that something at a reasonable price. They will eagerly purchase it, knowing that you have saved them a lot of time and made their lives easier.

Above all, you must ensure as much as possible that you are selling to a niche market with true profit potential. Plain and simple, regardless how great your product or service, your chances for success are nil if no one is looking for that product or service on the Internet or no one is willing to buy at the price that you have set for it.

For instance, consider the case of someone who is a personal life coach and wants to use the Internet to market his or her service. Today when I typed “personal life coach” into Google, there were 2,070,000 results. Then I used a free keyword tool website and found that only about nine people a day type the term “personal life coach” into search engines. The bottom line is that, near as I can tell, there is a mountain of competition with a molehill of demand for personal life coaches on the Internet. This doesn’t look like a great idea for a successful Internet business!

Not to say that there is no viable Internet business for a personal life coach. He or she may be able to develop an e-book and sell it on an Internet site directed toward men and women who are being forced to return to the workforce after having been retired but who have run out of money.

—— Timothy Ferris

The fishing is best where the fewest go and the collective insecurity of the world makes it easy for people to hit home runs while everyone is aiming for base hits.
Seven Main Ways to Get Traffic to Your Website

1. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) — Your individual webpages need to be properly optimized to attract free search-engine traffic. Even though I don’t consider myself an SEO expert by any stretch of the imagination, I have managed to get traffic to my websites: For example, type “retirement quotes” into Google’s search engine and you should see that two of my webpages from separate websites come in the top-ten positions on the first page.

2. Pay Per Click Advertising — Many website owners like pay per click (PPC) advertising because it is much faster than SEO in getting traffic to websites. You don’t have to wait for search engines to spider your site. The disadvantage of PPC advertising is that you have to pay for your traffic. This can be expensive and the volume of traffic can be low. The key is to ensure that you don’t pay more for traffic than you earn from selling your or someone else’s products.

3. Content Marketing — Useful and relevant content on your website will draw free traffic from the search engines. Check my Retirement Quotes Café website (at www.retirement-quotes.com) and you will see why it comes up in the top three or four positions on Google when people search for “retirement quotes.”

4. Press Release Marketing — Press releases about your product or service is not an option that too many Internet marketers consider, and yet it’s a tremendously good source of links and free traffic to your sites.

5. E-mail Marketing — This is a method to bring your visitors back time and again using an autoresponder service and a regular newsletter sent to an e-mail list that you have generated over time.
number 3 position — out of 7,570,000 webpages listed as vying for this search term.

I get a lot of satisfaction out of my webpages such as this one being on the first page on Google searches given that I learned how to achieve these results myself and did not have to pay a search engine optimization expert big dollars like some people do for their results. There is even better news for you. Compared to ten years ago, there are many resources available online today that can get you started for a very low budget — even at no cost whatsoever!

Let’s get something straight right now: Effective website design, speaking strictly from the revenue-generating point of view, has little or nothing to do with what most of the high-priced web design experts will tell you. Too many dubious “professionals” in this field, such as graphic designers and search engine optimization people, are trying to pry your precious money from you without helping you make money online.

Fact is, most everything you will learn from “expert” web designers about Internet marketing will be wrong. What the establishment teaches people about web design and marketing strategy is largely grossly self-serving, overly expensive, and completely ineffective.

Don’t ever fall for the very false adage “You get what you pay for.” This adage is used by people who want to intimidate you into paying big bucks for something that you don’t need. For even things that you need, you can often get just as great quality and service for a low price as you can get for a high price.

I can offer no better example than my friend Ken, who wanted some special html code written for his website. The first person that Ken contacted wanted $1,500. The second person quoted a price of $1,200. Ken contacted a third person. This guy said, “What’s the big deal? This will only take me a few minutes. How’s seventy-five dollars sound?” Ken used this guy and got exactly what he wanted.

For a website to be effective, you must keep things simple. You require a killer landing page with few buttons. Stay away from expensive graphic designers,
are absolutely — W R O N G! Long sales copy, in fact, is much more effective. Organizations such as the Internet Marketing Center in Vancouver have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars testing which is more effective. Long sales copy wins hands down. I don’t want you protesting that you like short sales copy more than long sales copy. What you like is totally irrelevant when it comes to profiting from the marketplace.

What matters is what works in the marketplace. Long sales copy works simply because it works. People don’t necessarily read all the ten or so pages of sales copy. They read what they want to read. There must be a lot of testimonials and a lot of substance for sales copy to be effective; it takes at least five pages of sales copy to accomplish this.

Above all, for a website to be effective, you must provide information worth reading. This does not necessarily mean that the information must be original. It must be presented in a way that is original, however. Make it controversial. Make it exciting. Make it interesting. Make it newsworthy. Make it sell.

**Do It Badly — But at Least Do It**

Now that I have got your hopes up, I want to make one thing clear: If you would like to make a living without a real job, but don’t want to put any time, any effort, and at least a little money into it, then an online business isn’t for you. What I am saying is that operating an Internet business is not for the faint of heart or the world-owes-me-a-living crowd.

The problem is that some people just want to sit at their desks, press a few buttons on their computer, and collect their checks while they watch TV. Clearly, you can’t expect the sales to magically start flowing into your bank account!

Sure, there are scammers out there who will try to convince you that you can get rich with no effort, no work, and little investment.
world-owes-me-a-living syndrome that is now a plague in North American society. Unfortunately, a lot of my friends and acquaintances have adopted this sense of entitlement without actually admitting it.

Let me explain. About a year and a half ago, I discovered that the Internet Marketing Center in Vancouver, B.C., was offering a two-day Internet marketing course for free. The condition was that you had to place a $97 deposit, which would only be returned if you stayed the full two days. This is a pretty good condition, however.

I was aware that IMC used to charge $895 for the same intensive seminar. Even though I knew that part of the Internet Marketing Center’s new marketing strategy was to try to sell you some of their pricey Internet marketing products and mentorship programs by getting you into their two-day seminar, I jumped at the chance to attend.

Because I had to fly from Edmonton to Vancouver and spend three days there, the cost to me was still in the neighborhood of $700. Even so, I felt that I could acquire an incredible amount of valuable knowledge about Internet marketing. The good news is that I did. In fact, the knowledge that I acquired was much more valuable than I anticipated.

A few months later the Internet Marketing Center was offering the same two-day seminar in my hometown of Edmonton, but this time the cost was $97. IMC guaranteed that if you didn’t like the seminar after the first day, then you could get the $97 returned to you. I had acquired so much valuable information from my attending this seminar in Vancouver that I made a point of telling about ten of my close friends and a few acquaintances about the Edmonton event. Keep in mind that most of these people would like to have the lifestyle and freedom that I have earned.

How many of these individuals took this seminar? Not one of my close friends did. An acquaintance who is an artist and musician did, however. Unfortunately, she has not utilized very much of what she learned even though at one time she was thinking of signing up for the $8,000 mentorship program. Of course, information is useless if you don’t put it to good use.

If you want to avoid remaining in a career rut like these friends and acquaintances of mine are likely to do for the rest of their lives, what you must do is dare to explore. Fact is, many people break through their self-imposed constraints when they become more
It’s Never Too Late to Be What You Might Have Been

Over the last few years, whenever working on a new project, I have reflected upon the words of Thomas Carlyle: “The best effect of any book is that it excites the reader to self-activity.” In this regard, I hope that this book will infect you with the motivation and commitment that you require to pursue some of your dreams.

Whether it’s making new friends or having a more fulfilling career, a dream not acted upon will remain just a dream. The strongest single factor for attaining any one of your dreams is self-esteem — believing you have talent and creativity, believing you deserve your dream, and believing that it is possible for you to attain the dream.

It’s important to contemplate the wisdom of this Chinese adage as it relates to your dreams: “If you get on the train today, you’ll overpay your fare. But if you don’t, you’ll be left behind in the dust.” In other words, you can pay the high price today that has to be paid for you to pursue your dreams, or you can keep waiting for the perfect moment when you don’t have to pay the price, and end up never getting to where you want to go.

Most of us, above all, are committed to comfort, low risk, and stability. We don’t want to work at anything important in life; on the contrary, we want all the important things in life to come.

The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.
— Henry David Thoreau
When I was in my early teens, for instance, my dream was to be either a schoolteacher or a businessman. Unfortunately, I made the mistake of going into engineering because of a school principal’s dubious advice.

Being in prison is punishment; so is work that is not done with joy — as I found out by being an engineer. Perhaps you, like many people, are a firm believer that “work was not meant to be fun — that’s why they call it work.” More power to you. In fact, congratulations! You don’t have to take any action and can continue to get perverse satisfaction from all the suffering and complaining that you love to immerse yourself in.

Just keep in mind this little bit of wisdom that comes from Edmond Bordeaux Székely in his book *Creative Work: Karma Yoga* (Academy Books, 1973): “If you feel that work is a punishment or hardship, or if you have no desire for work, or live in the hope of retiring soon — do not think you are entertaining the thoughts of a wise man; you are merely dancing to mental tunes that savages played ten thousand years ago.”

Fact is, work can be fun and satisfying if you are prepared to make it happen. A better way of life is available to you if you are presently trapped in the corporate world. Escaping corporate life can give you the freedom to become more of a person than you have ever been. Why not take advantage of it? Remaining in a lousy job will ensure that you never become the person you have always wanted to be. You have to ask yourself: “How long do I work at a lousy position before I have too much of working in a lousy position?”

The good news is that it’s never too late — or too early, for that matter — to change direction in your life, to be what you might have been. Of course, those who are resistant to change at thirty will be even more resistant to change at ninety-three. Don’t be one of them. If you keep doing what you have been doing, you will keep getting what you have been getting well into infinity and beyond.

Ron Smotherman in his book *Winning Through Enlightenment* (Context Publications, 1979) concluded: “Satisfaction is for a very
wrong job or is doing it wrong. Maidoff spent long hours at work, later hurrying to socialize with the bigwigs of New York at cultural events and parties well into the night.

“The years raced by,” Maidoff told a CNN/Money reporter. “I wasn’t seeing the seasons. I wasn’t seeing my wife. I wasn’t watching my children grow up the way I wanted to.” So when he was forty, Maidoff bought a farmhouse in a small Tuscan village outside Florence. Three years later, he closed his New York firm and gave up all the trappings of traditional success. He packed up his family and moved them to the farmhouse in Italy.

Maidoff’s plan for success without a real job was to make it as an artist. Although he had painted part-time for years, Maidoff made his move with nervousness and reservation. He had no idea how he would do and whether anyone would buy his art.

Several years later, Maidoff, sixty-three at the time, was enjoying a lifestyle that is about as good as it gets for an artist. Not only was he living in Tuscany, his paintings were being featured in galleries around the world. Some of his works had already been featured in exhibits along with the likes of Niki de St. Phalle, Cy Twombly, Man Ray, and Alexander Calder. Moreover, Maidoff had been invited by to exhibit or received awards from such prestigious centers as the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

Maidoff insisted that his talents hadn’t given him any unique advantage to pursue a lifestyle that many others only dream about. I wholeheartedly agree with Maidoff. A similar lifestyle to the one Maidoff is enjoying isn’t available only to people who get it as a retirement prize after toiling away at a high-paid job that they hate for several decades. People can create unreal jobs with similar lifestyles at any age.

Sadly, many people — even those with exceptional talent and significant financial resources — continue to toil away at jobs they hate because they are afraid to give up the trappings of traditional success. If you are one of them, no doubt there can be a privileged, cut-above-the-crowd feel to having a high status job with great pay — until you factor in the fact that you have no creative fulfillment and virtually no freedom. Even worse, you are not happy.

If your work doesn’t give you personal satisfaction, or you have stopped learning and being challenged, this is a good sign that you should move into another career altogether. Pay attention to what

It's the people who risk going too far who find out how far they can go.

— T. S. Elliot
- Does my lifestyle complement my partner's?
- Do I spend enough money on my personal education?
- Do I complain too much, particularly about my job?
- Do I criticize people who are successful instead of blessing them?
- Do I take sufficient vacation time?
- Do I have enough real friends in my life and do I devote sufficient time to see them?
- Do my time commitments allow me to make a contribution to making this world a better place?
- Am I grateful for what I already have in my life?
- Do I do something special for myself every day?
- Am I living in the right country or in the right part of the country?
- What will make me feel better about my career?

Above all, ask yourself what would give you true happiness. Listen to your answers carefully. Once you know what will make you happy, you must not wait for destiny to show you the way. Do whatever you have to do to attain it. You cannot afford not to.

Whatever you dream of doing, begin today. “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do,” warned Mark Twain. “So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Success is when you don't know if you're working or you're playing.
— Warren Beatty

Look Ma: Life's Easy

Perhaps even after reading this far you are still convinced that it is best that you forget all this nonsense and stick to a real job, for fear that you will find yourself in the poorhouse in no time, with the wolf at your door. Nothing is certain in life so I can’t make any guarantees either way. Remember, however, that negative thoughts often create your reality and life ends up sending you pretty much what you expect.

Sometimes the most difficult aspect of adopting a more relaxed
success without a real job much easier. You are about to discover an awesome paradoxical life principle. It is called The Easy Rule of Life. In fact, I wrote a complete book on this life principle; the book is called Look Ma: Life’s Easy (ironically, one of my best books, which is published in Spanish, French, Korean, Russian, and Chinese but, alas, not English).

Following The Easy Rule of Life can get you from Loserville to Success City in record time. (You may also want to call this principle The Easy Rule of Success.) Once you master it, you will know whenever you are taking a way-too-casual and blasé approach to something that couldn’t be more serious and important to you. This is a diagram of The Easy Rule of Life:

The premise of the Easy Rule of Life is that when you always do the easy and comfortable, life turns out difficult. When you regularly do the difficult and uncomfortable, however, life turns out easy. Think about it carefully, and you will see how this rule applies to all areas of your life.

In particular, think about how this paradoxical life principle applies to attaining career success without a real job. To be sure, career success without a real job will not always be easy — you may have to do many difficult and uncomfortable things to attain success. But once you attain success, life will be much easier.
changing your life.

It’s easy to wring your hands and whine about the lack of opportunity in today’s world. It’s much harder and more uncomfortable to acknowledge that there is a lot of opportunity, spot it, and capitalize on it. If you are not doing something risky and uncomfortable every day, you are stagnating as a human being. There are probably at least one hundred different areas in your life in which you are taking the easy and comfortable way at this time.

Most humans believe that anything which is extremely difficult shouldn’t be attempted. This is, of course, pure nonsense. On the contrary, the idea that something is extremely difficult is a good reason for tackling it. Every extraordinary achievement was once considered not only extremely difficult, but impossible by the experts. Yet this did not stop the people who pulled off these achievements. Think Thomas Edison! Think Albert Einstein! Think Mother Teresa! Think Richard Branson!

“But my life is already difficult and I don’t want it to be more difficult,” you vehemently protest. “I am sure my abilities don’t match Edison’s, Einstein’s, Mother Teresa’s, or Branson’s. Because I have had a tough life already, I am afraid of doing anything new on my own. I don’t like making mistakes and most of my family and friends will likely make fun of me if I fail.”

Let me try to put this as delicately as I can: So what? In case you haven’t heard about him yet, let me introduce you to an amazing individual from Vancouver, B.C., in order that you can put your own life and your own circumstances in proper perspective. When he was only nineteen, Sam Sullivan sustained a broken neck in a skiing accident. The accident that fateful day paralyzed him from the neck down and confined him to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

During the first two years after the accident, Sullivan lived with his parents; then he moved into a rehabilitation facility and went on welfare. Each year he became more dejected about being a quadriplegic, and his life in general. Seven years after the fateful day, at the age of twenty-six, Sullivan realized that he had lost his youth and his life was wasting away.

Sullivan became even more depressed because his life wasn’t going to get any better, given the hopelessness of his situation — or so he thought. At this point he seriously considered cashing in his chips — in other words, putting a gun to his head and pulling...
supposed to wave the flag as he clutched it. This presented a problem for Sullivan, given that he had limited use of his hands. Grabbing the flag was out of the question, let alone waving it.

Someone suggested that Sullivan could have an assistant take the flag while he sat alongside in his wheelchair. This would have been the easy and comfortable way out for him but he would have no part of it. “That symbolism doesn’t work for me or my life,” said Sullivan. He attacked the problem with his creative mind and had the Vancouver city engineers design a special device to fit on the side of his automated chair so that he could wave the flag himself.

Sullivan has likely never specifically read about The Easy Rule of Life in one of my books, but he certainly knows about the way it works and its merits. Notwithstanding that his days before traveling to Turin, Italy, were filled with budget meetings and feuding politicians, he spent some time secretly learning how to speak Italian. He then astonished the Vancouver media, The Washington Post reported, as he rolled around the Turin airport speaking perfect Italian to the employees who helped him into a specially fitted van that accommodated his electric wheelchair.

If you were fortunate enough to see the closing ceremonies of the Turin Winter Olympics, which I went out of my way to see on TV because of Sullivan, you will have to agree that it was a sight to behold. Sullivan made Olympic history gliding on to the central stage in his electric wheelchair. Turin Mayor Sergio Chiamparino passed the Olympic flag to Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee, who inserted the flag into the special pole holder attached to Sullivan’s wheelchair. Sullivan obviously enjoyed being under the spotlight as he moved his wheelchair back and forth with a hand control and waved the flag eight times as is the custom in the closing ceremonies.

After his return from Turin, Sullivan was inundated with fan mail from people around the world who had learned a few things about him and had seen him wave the Olympic flag at the closing ceremonies. Sullivan received more than 1,000 letters and e-mails; among the fan mail were personal stories from individuals struggling with personal tragedy or disability, who claimed Sullivan inspired them to seek a much better life — or just better live the one they already have.

Politicians use a rule of thumb that for every letter they receive,
Failure Is the Universe’s Way of Ensuring That Too Much Success Doesn’t Happen All at Once

Although this book is about pursuing your dream career via an unreal job or operating an unconventional business, remember that there is no such thing as a perfect job or business. Regardless of the route you take to career success, you will always have to overcome barriers and adversity. What’s more, you will have to experience failure.

But failure, put in proper perspective, can have its positive aspects. For instance, I first self-published my international best-selling book The Joy of Not Working because I was quite sure no major publisher would be interested. Surprisingly, I still failed to get an American publisher after the book had sold 10,000 copies in Canada the first year, which is the equivalent of selling 100,000 copies in a year in the United States. In fact, twenty-five American publishers still rejected my Canadian bestseller. Talk about getting no respect! Following is a form rejection letter that I received from one of the publishers:

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for sending us the proposal/manuscript. We regret that we are unable to use your material. As you know there are many reasons to decline a manuscript, so please do not consider this to be a judgment on the value of the work. We just don’t see this particular piece fitting into our list at this time.

We wish we could respond to each proposal with a personal note, but the heavy volume of submissions we receive makes it impossible to do so. Please be assured that your proposal was given careful and thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your interest in Ten Speed Press.

Sincerely,

The Editors

Perhaps you have noticed that the publisher that sent me the above letter was none other than Ten Speed Press, whose imprint

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You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take.
— Wayne Gretzky
you of who you really are.”

It has been my experience that the key
to career success without a real job is to
fail more than the average person is
willing to endure. If at first you don’t
succeed, you are about average. Never
overlook the power of the law of averages,
which says that if you try enough times,
you are likely to succeed sooner or later. It follows that if you
double your failure rate, you are also likely to double your success
rate. Thus, you should be eager to fail if you want to succeed.

I am not saying that you will necessarily succeed in every area
of life that you attempt. You may, in fact, try one field of endeavor,
fail at it, wind up in another field, and succeed wildly at it. Perhaps
you didn’t know that Mark Twain had to endure his share of
failures. He lost considerable money on patents that he thought
held great promise. Twain registered three patents under the
moniker Samuel Clemens, which was his real name.

One patent was for Mark Twain’s Memory-Builder, a pegboard
game to help people learn the history of the world. His other two
patents were for an adjustable strap on the back of a vest and a
scrapbook with preglued pages. None of these patents ever made
Twain any money. Yet he was able to adapt to these flops and not
have them interfere with his being a successful author.

Above all, failure must be taken in stride and with humor. After
having lost over $40,000 on one of his patents, Mark Twain
declared, “I gave it away to a man whom I had long detested and
whose family I desired to ruin.”

Viewed from a spiritual point of view, failure is the universe’s
way of ensuring that too much success doesn’t happen all at once.
Failure is also the universe’s way of ensuring that you enjoy your
success once you attain it. In short, a life without failure won’t get
you anywhere worth going — a life with a lot of failure will,
however. Again, it’s all in how you play the game, isn’t it?

**Do Your Best and the Best of Things Will Come Your Way**

Leaving corporate life would be more appealing for some people if I
told them that attaining career success without a real job was easy
for me, but I can’t — because it wasn’t. The good news, however, is
that it was a heck of a lot easier than it would have been for me to
the years. All I have to do is keep doing my best. There is no more that I can ask of myself. I will still attain much more success than millions of North Americans who have much greater talent and ability than me, but seldom, if ever, do their best.

Doing your best should be a lifelong journey. The measure of your success is not how well you have done relative to anyone else in society. Instead, the measure of your success should be how well you have used your creativity and ability to achieve worthy goals, regardless of how humble these goals are.

Doing your best means rising above the mediocrity so prevalent in society today. Being average just won’t do. Indeed, most people are so mediocre that it is not necessarily a great compliment to say that someone in particular is above average.

If you don’t want, as George Thorogood sang in his famous song, to “Get a Haircut [and get a real job],” then you must do your best and pay whatever price it takes to become a success without a real job. Avoid clinging desperately to the concept of traditional success and doing your best will come more naturally.

Most people don’t do their best because they don’t enjoy what they do. They are working primarily for the reward of the paycheck, at the same time resisting the jobs they don’t like. As a result they don’t know the definition of excellence and never do their best. If you ask them how they are doing, they will reply, “Average.” They even think that being slightly above average is quite a remarkable accomplishment.

Take a little time and list the things that promote your being average, including the people with whom you hang around. To rise above mediocrity you must remove everything in your life that represents mediocrity. Surround yourself with people and things that represent excellence and you will be inspired to do your best so that you, too, represent excellence.

“If you don’t do it excellently, don’t do it at all,” advised Avis President Robert Townsend. “Because if it’s not excellent, it won’t be profitable or fun, and if you’re not in business for fun or profit, what the hell are you doing here?”

Fact is, real success in our chosen careers comes from excellence, which requires that we constantly produce results beyond the ordinary. We must always try to go past the psychological limits we impose upon ourselves. This starts with the commitment to excellence, which is the commitment to do our
The Top Ten Best Uses of Your Time

1. Attempting different things that hardly anyone else is doing
2. Utilizing inspirational books and tapes to educate yourself about your unreal job or unconventional business
3. Developing intellectual property
4. Meditating and exercising
5. Laughing and playing and celebrating life with your friends
6. Doing things that relate to your overall purpose in life and that bring you career success without a real job
7. Enjoying the present moment for all it is worth
8. Saving and investing your money in optimum ways
9. Doing things that you love and are good at
10. Working at a great unreal job

At the heart of using your time well is not to indulge in any blaming and any complaining. You must take absolute responsibility for your career and the rest of your life. You will do your best when you want to do something, not because you have to do it, and not because you are trying to please somebody. No one will ever expect you to achieve the impossible. You must not hope to be more than you can. It is not always possible to achieve as you want, but only as you can. Only in knowing your limitations, and doing your best, will you come closest to perfection.

If you enjoy what you do, and you always do your best, you will have no regrets. If other people try to criticize you for your lack of traditional success, you won’t have to accept the poison they are trying to inflict on you. In your heart you will know “I have done my best at what I love and I have no regrets.”

Another key to achieving career success is the suppression of resentment toward successful people who represent excellence. Spend more time in the presence of masters instead of resenting them. Bless the masters and learn from them. The way to become a smarter person is to find a really smart person and pay close
success principles in this book. Here is a summary of what it takes, in my view, to make your dream of having a remarkable and satisfying lifestyle come true:

**Ten Golden Rules for Attaining Career Success Without a Real Job**

1. Choose work that you truly enjoy.
2. Choose an area that allows you great freedom.
3. Don’t make your main purpose earning a lot of money.
4. Create an unreal job or start an unconventional business.
5. Choose an area that you can expand to multiple streams of income.
6. Identify your target markets and serve them well.
7. Be creative, particularly in generating new ideas and in marketing your products and services.
8. Spend big bucks on your career development and learn from the best in your field.
9. Contract out anything that you dislike or are not good at.
10. Work as hard as you have to for a good living — and as little as you can get away with!

Now is the time to take all the important material in this book that is relevant to your life and run with it. It is my wish that you will be motivated enough to undertake the difficult things that have to be done in the short term, so that your life becomes easier in the long term. As you should have learned by now, life isn’t always easy.

In fact, as I approach the completion of this book, I am glad that life is not as easy as many people would like it to be. Writing intently for at least three or four hours a day, instead of taking it easy for the last four months, has reminded me of the great satisfaction and other rewards that come from undertaking difficult, challenging, and sometimes frustrating projects. Of course, I still have other challenges ahead; the major one is marketing the book so that it doesn’t fade away into the land of...
happening, however, until these people had made a commitment to their dream job and actually started working toward it. Then the magic began.

With your high intention and commitment, something magical can also start happening in your life. You must allow yourself the experience of letting go of corporate life and jumping into the flow of an unreal job, however. Only then can the magic begin in your life! What will help the magic even more is your having a purpose bigger than making a lot of money just to spend or hoard. You must have a purpose that is bigger than you, in other words.

Once you are totally committed to your purpose, the “how you get there” will eventually show up just in the process of your putting the effort, energy, and persistence into getting there. Meaningful relationships between causally unconnected events and people will start to happen. You will receive money out of the blue when you need it most, and sometimes when you don’t need it except to remind you that you are doing the right thing in your career. Facts or figures that you need for your website or a book will appear in today’s or tomorrow’s newspaper. One obstacle after another will disappear, sometimes suddenly, sometimes after some time. Many unconnected events will converge in fortuitous ways.

Taking responsibility for your dreams and goals is important. Let’s say that on some mystical level you already took responsibility and utilized your tremendous mental powers to create me writing this book for you. In other words, if it weren’t for you, for the five months that it took me to write the manuscript, I could have been in Vancouver relaxing, cycling,wining and dining at great restaurants, and having coffee at my favorite coffee bars. I trust, however, that you will allow me to spend some time marketing this book and doing a host of other enjoyable things before you again create me writing another book for you.

In the interval, use the principles given herein that best apply to your life situation. The concepts are simple, but profound changes can be made in your life if you apply them. How do I know? All of these success principles have been used by thousands of people worldwide to transform their lives and achieve career success without a real job. If you accept these principles, and follow them religiously, they will transform your life, too.

Always keep in mind that success ultimately is a mode of

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

— Eleanor Roosevelt
traveling and not the destination itself. If you experience career success without a real job long enough, however, you will reach the point of no return. Indeed, there will be no going back to a real job. You will have likely passed the point of no return when you experience the majority or all of the following symptoms:

**Irrefutable Signs That You Have Achieved Career Success Without a Real Job**

- You no longer know how to prepare for job interviews and don’t care that you don’t know.
- You wonder why people get up before 9:30 A.M.
- Most people with real jobs criticize or envy you.
- You rely on job ads rather than the Dilbert cartoon for your laugh of the day.
- You are always the last one to know when there is a holiday for working people and you happily work your usual four to five hours anyway.
- You don’t ever need any job references.
- You no longer have a Daytimer because you forget to look in it after making an entry.
- Multitasking means working on your laptop in a coffee bar for two hours and watching attractive members of the opposite sex at the same time.
- You know what resume means but have completely forgotten what résumé means.
- You are confident that you will have no problem adjusting to retirement.
- You forget to set your clocks ahead or behind one hour and there are no consequences.
- You realize that prosperity does not require hard work or having lots of material possessions — just creativity, personal freedom, and work that enriches you.
- You have no financial problems because you save more money than most people who earn twice as much as you.
- You can go a whole year without having to set an alarm clock.
You feel sorry for people who have to work at a real job — even those who earn a million a year.

You have great friends and spend a lot of time with them, even dropping your work entirely for two or three days when a friend from out of town comes to visit.

Working at your unreal job connects you to all that is bigger than you.

You enjoy your unreal job; thus, you can be both at work and not at work simultaneously.

You get much more enjoyment out of the work you do than from the monetary rewards.

You know you are no longer employable in a real job and don’t care.

You try to keep an open mind about hard-working lawyers, executives, and doctors but you still can’t help feeling just a bit superior.

You wouldn’t trade your present livelihood for anything else — bar none!

Ah, career success without a real job — there is no life like it! Career success without a real job is adventure, satisfaction, riches, and happiness all on your own terms! I can sing its praises as well as anyone. I have earned it, I am living it, and I am enjoying it.

You can, too. My wish is that there will be thousands of ordinary people who read this book, are inspired by it, and eventually achieve extraordinary accomplishments working at an unreal job or operating an unconventional business. With your intention, commitment, eccentricity, dedication, and creativity, you can be one of them!

All things considered, attaining career success without a real job is a game in many ways. It’s important to play the game here and now, in the present. Of utmost importance is to find a version of the game worth playing, a version that you truly enjoy. Ensure that you laugh and have fun, even when the score is not in your favor. You have to play the career success game with gusto, and if you get really good at it, you will miraculously transform all aspects of your life — forever! After all, it’s all in how you play the game, isn’t it?

It doesn’t matter who you are, where you come from. The ability to triumph begins with you. Always.
— Oprah Winfrey
About the Author

Ernie J. Zelinski is an authority on early retirement and solo-entrepreneurship. His recent books include *101 Really Important Things You Already Know, But Keep Forgetting*, the bestseller *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free* (over 100,000 copies sold and published in seven foreign languages), and the international bestseller *The Joy of Not Working* (over 225,000 copies sold and published in seventeen languages).

Ernie has negotiated ninety-seven book deals with publishers in twenty-seven countries for his various books — which have now sold over 550,000 copies worldwide. Feature articles about Ernie and his books have appeared in major newspapers including *USA TODAY*, *Oakland Tribune*, *Boston Herald*, *The Washington Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *Vancouver Sun*.

Ernie occasionally speaks on the topics of early retirement, solo-entrepreneurship, and applying creativity to business and leisure. He recently spoke to over 2,000 executives and scholars at the National Turkish Society for Quality Convention in Istanbul.

Ernie likes to hear from the readers of his books. His e-mail address is vip-books@telus.net and his mailing address is:

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To download a free e-book with over half of Ernie’s international bestseller *How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free* or to download his other free e-books such as *The Joy of Being Retired: 101 Reasons Why Retirement Rocks (and Work Sucks!)* along with *101 Reasons to Love a Recession* — visit his funky websites:

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THE JOY OF NOT WORKING:
A Book for the Retired,
Unemployed, and Overworked —
21st Century Edition

Ernie Zelinski could change your view of the world forever. Ernie has already taught more than 225,000 people what The Joy of Not Working is all about: learning to live every part of your life — employment, unemployment, retirement, and leisure time alike — to the fullest. With this revised and expanded edition, you too can join the thousands of converts and learn to thrive at both work and play. Illustrated by eye-opening exercises, thought-provoking diagrams, and lively cartoons and quotations, The Joy of Not Working will guide you to enjoy life like never before.

HOW TO RETIRE HAPPY, WILD, AND FREE: Retirement Wisdom That You Won’t Get from Your Financial Advisor

With its friendly format, positive tone, and lively cartoons, How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free is for those individuals who absolutely, positively want to read The World’s Best Retirement Book. Nancy Conroy of the Association of Pre-Retirement Planners raves: “How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free is optimistic, practical, humorous, and provocative AND comprehensively addresses the many issues impacting individuals as they think about their retirement.” How to Retire Happy, Wild, and Free has sold over 100,000 copies and has been beeen published in 7 foreign languages.

Available at fine bookstores throughout the universe, or by ordering directly from the publisher.

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Career success is much more than having a real job and earning a decent income. Real career success is truly enjoying what you do for a living and having the personal freedom to perform your work virtually any time you want.

This one-of-a-kind career guide challenges and inspires you to:
- Create your own dream job or operate an unconventional business.
- Find your own important mission, true calling, or passionate pursuit with which you can make a great living.
- Gain courage to escape the corporate world so that you don’t have to spend the rest of your life trapped in a cubicle.
- Be creative and have fun in your work.
- Restructure your life so that it has meaning, direction, and joy.
- Take charge of your physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual well-being.
- Experience true personal freedom in all areas of your life.
- Above all, get the most out of your life — personally and professionally!

This revolutionary book is for those millions of organizationally averse people who would like to break free of corporate life so that they have complete control over their lives. Throughout the book you will read about several ordinary individuals who have attained extraordinary success without a real job. International best-selling author Ernie Zelinski, whose books have sold over 550,000 copies worldwide, also uses experiences from his own life to show how the powerful success principles on the pages within can help you joyfully avoid the shackles of the corporate world for the rest of your life.

This second edition (originally published as Real Success Without a Real Job) includes a new chapter with a work model for people who are too prosperous to do mornings and want to make money while they sleep. Positive, lively, and captivating, Career Success Without a Real Job is designed to help you live an extraordinary lifestyle that is the envy of the corporate world — it truly is the career book for people too smart to work in corporations!

"Ernie Zelinski helps others find the time to live."
- Boston Herald