

KARY OBERBRUNNER

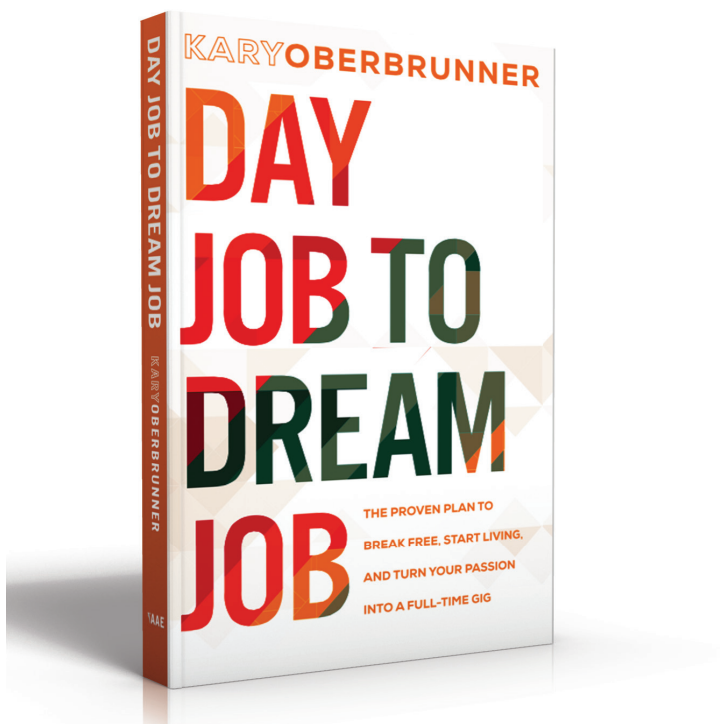
FOREWORD BY DAN MILLER
NY Times Bestselling Author
48 Days to the Work you Love

DAY
JOB TO
DREAM
JOB

THE PROVEN PLAN TO
BREAK FREE, START LIVING,
AND TURN YOUR PASSION
INTO A FULL-TIME GIG

We hope you enjoy this sample of
Day Job to Dream Job.

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A NOTE TO THE READER

For each of us, there comes a moment when we have the choice to stop *talking* about life and start *living* life. Unfortunately, the bulk of humanity never makes this transition.

The reason? By their own admission, most people hate their job.

But here's the unfiltered truth.

You can't hate your job and love your life.

We're holistic people, and we can't separate Monday through Friday from Saturday and Sunday. We may try to compartmentalize our lives, but everything is connected.

The good news is that people all over this planet are waking up to what's possible. They're exchanging their day job for their dream job and turning their passion into a full-time gig. This choice isn't without risk, but a life without risk means you're already dead. And as you might imagine, death is no way to live.

I'm excited to see what you'll do with this content. Since it was first published back in 2014, I've seen this book help thousands of people from various cultures and industries go pro. It's the same content that helped me move from Prison to Plan to Payoff many years ago.

I've kept much of the content from 2014 the same. However, I've updated some key parts that needed refreshing. Much of the world has changed since then—opportunities,

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technology, knowledge, and more. Savvy people leverage these innovations.

So, if you're ready to start living, then let's begin. This is your *defying* moment, and when you look back in a few years, you'll realize it was also your *defining* moment.

Talk soon. And remember—I believe in you
—Kary

PART **ONE**

The Prison





CITIZENS OF SHAWSHANK

*And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud
was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.*

—Anaïs Nin

So this is what freedom tastes like,” I whispered.
That day the sun seemed brighter. The sky looked
bigger. The world felt warmer.

My senses of sight, sound, and smell were immediately
heightened.

I knew peace instead of hypocrisy or pretension.

Wonder and curiosity tapped me on the shoulder, two
friends I thought I’d lost somewhere along the way.

I felt free.

No stress.

No anxiety.

No fear.

Something woke me up from an uninvited slumber. I was
more aware and more alive than I ever remember feeling in
my adulthood.

With one choice I exchanged captivity for creativity.
Routine for risk.

I was reborn.

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I escaped my day job and entered my dream job.
I knew my life would never be the same again.
I was right.

MEET THE DREAM JOBBERS

I'm not alone. All over this world brave souls are making a bold move. The funny thing is, very soon this choice may no longer seem so bold. Exchanging your day job for your dream job may soon seem like the most logical choice available. As normal as breathing air and eating food.

I call this tribe the Dream Jobbers (from here on out the DJs). I'm one of them (that story later), and I hope you become one too.

At this moment, the majority of people are seriously considering leaving their day jobs. According to a reputable poll, "Eighty-six percent of the employees polled said they planned to actively look for a new position in the upcoming year. Another 8 percent said they may do so and are already networking. Only 5 percent intend to stay in their current position."¹

This number, 86 percent, is drastically increased from just four years earlier when only 60 percent said they planned on actively looking for a new position.²

What's with the increasing trend of people exchanging their day jobs for their dream jobs? For starters, the benefits are unbeatable.

Benefits of Joining the Dream Jobbers

1. **Freedom**—Go as you please.
2. **Finances**—Earn as you wish.
3. **Fulfillment**—Live as you like.

CITIZENS OF SHAWSHANK

We'll take a deep dive into each of these benefits. Along the way, I'll weave in a variety of DJ stories and insert my own when appropriate. I think it will give you encouragement and perspective while planning your own day job jailbreak.

DO YOU FEEL TRAPPED?

Discover Freedom—Go as You Please

About nine years ago, on a Friday morning, I met my friend Chet Scott at a local Panera. “Why are you so happy?” I asked. Chet’s glowing smile needed an explanation.

“Oh, nothing much,” he replied with sincerity. “I guess I’m just content.”

Content? Now there’s a word you don’t hear much, I thought.

“Tell me, Chet, why are you so content?” I joked back—sort of. Truth is, at that point in my life I wanted to know his secret.

“Well . . . I guess I’m just at a place in life where I don’t *have to* be anywhere I don’t want to be,” he stated.

I let his words sink in for ten seconds, then blurted out, “What do you mean you don’t *have to be anywhere?*”

Despite my words, I knew exactly what he meant. Chet spoke authentically of a freedom few people ever find. Six years prior, he’d left his day job and entered his dream job. Since then he had created a life of freedom. He only worked with his “ideal” clients, and he had the bandwidth to read, write, and exercise.

His life seemed . . . light. Not easy, but light.

Me, on the other hand? I lived on a different planet. Maybe even in a different solar system. Before I made my

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dream job switch, a large portion of my life seemed like one big *have-to*.

Our weekly “marathon meetings” were the worst. My coworkers and I spent nearly our whole day in one epically bad meeting. Ever hear of Patrick Lencioni’s book *Death by Meeting*? His subtitle captures the conundrum: *A Leadership Fable about Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business*.

But unfortunately, at my workplace, our weekly experience wasn’t a fable. Come to think of it, Patrick must have placed hidden cameras in our offices to get inspiration for his book.

Maybe you’ve experienced these epically bad meetings at your day job too. Here are a few descriptors that might jog your memory.

TEN COMPONENTS OF EPICALLY BAD DAY JOB MEETINGS

1. **Unclear Edges**—Waltz in or out when you want; we’ll be here.
2. **Leaderless**—Only a ship needs a captain. Meetings are led by consensus.
3. **No Agenda**—Who needs one? This would require advance thinking.
4. **Amnesia**—Didn’t we talk about that last meeting? No notes = no memory.
5. **Disengagement**—Distraction helps ease the chronic pain.
6. **Side Conversations**—You’re more interesting than the perceived “agenda.”
7. **No Outcome**—Let’s meet to relate, not to achieve our vision or mission.

DO YOU FEEL TRAPPED?

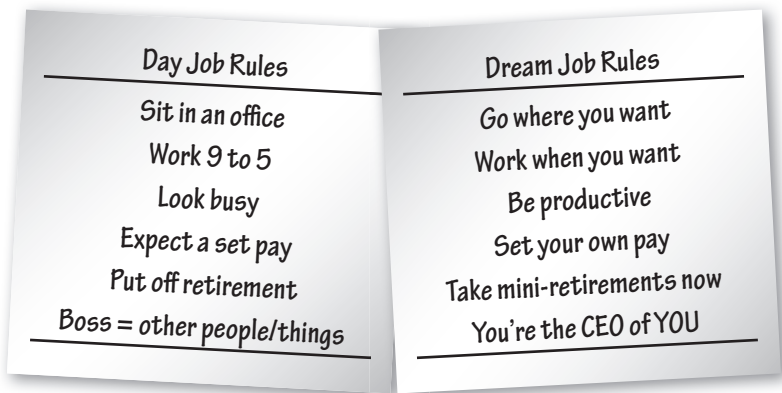
8. **Indecision**—Loops should never be closed. Let's table it until next time.
9. **No Accountability**—Nobody assigned? Nobody acts. Nobody to blame!
10. **Foggy Future**—Next meeting time and place?
Not now, but only after seventeen back-and-forth emails.

Rather than forward progress, day jobs with regular meetings like this are defined by sideways energy and tons of it.

Yet all over the world, people are solving the sideways energy pandemic with one simple strategy—escaping “prisons” by exchanging their day jobs for their dream jobs. As a result, these DJs reclaim the rights over their lives by changing the rules of the game.

THESE RULES WERE MEANT TO BE BROKEN

Check out these rules below. Which ones do you want to follow?



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Although we're early in our conversation, I know what you might be thinking *even now*:

Sounds impossible.

I can't do that.

How?

If you feel like pushing back, I understand. But just like when you learned how to ride a bike, you need to suspend the judgment of knowing how. Remember back all those years? You reached a point where you had a big enough *why*.

Maybe you were sick of riding with training wheels.

Maybe you were tired of being made fun of.

Maybe you wanted to be like the older kids.

Regardless of your rationale, your *why* for riding a bike quickly turned into figuring out *how*.

Be encouraged. We'll spend the first part of the book discovering the *why*. Then the rest of the book we'll explore the *how*. I'll give you The Dream Jobber Plan, the same nine steps I've used to help thousands of people realize their dream jobs.

You might think DJs are superhuman—or at the minimum, superstars. But they're not. They're just like you and me. DJs heard the same statistics you've heard for years. The only difference is they did something about them.

You know the numbers. Compared to the rest of the industrialized world, Americans

- Work more.
- Take less vacation.
- Work longer days.
- Retire later.¹

DO YOU FEEL TRAPPED?

A closer look reveals that this overworked/imprisoned trend started decades ago. Author Juliet Schor, who wrote the best-selling book *The Overworked American* in 1992, concluded that “in 1990 Americans worked an average of nearly one month more per year than in 1970.”²

As the years rolled by, this trend began to slowly and steadily shape expectations of work. Fast-forward to today, and you approach your work differently. Day Jobbers choose their work and try to fit their life in the remaining margins. They work to maintain a lifestyle they can't enjoy because they're trapped in their work. Other developed countries aren't much different. By and large, we've adopted an “either/or” mindset when a “both/and” one exists too. Notice the subtle but significant differences.

<u>The Day Jobber Mindset</u>	<u>The Dream Jobber Mindset</u>
EITHER freedom OR finances	BOTH freedom AND finances
EITHER flexibility OR security	BOTH flexibility AND security
EITHER significance OR success	BOTH significance AND success

The mindset you choose is up to you. With the economic collapse of 2008, aka the Great Recession, the Day Jobber mindset seems less appealing and even less realistic.³ Many people's promises of financial prosperity crumbled overnight. With it, their fiercely guarded nest eggs cracked unexpectedly.

All over the world, a new class of people is throwing away the Day Jobber mindset. Why spend decades earning enough money to eventually experience a brief season of freedom near the end of your life? Morbid, but true. *Why wait until you're almost dead before you start to live?*

DJs work *and* play. They create *and* rest. They've chosen to integrate their lives. In the words of L. P. Jacks, they're masters in the art of living.

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A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play; his labor and his leisure; his mind and his body; his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through whatever he is doing, and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself, he always appears to be doing both.⁴

Imagine your friends and family seriously scratching their heads when they observe you. Not because of your new wardrobe, but because of the way you work. You have so much fun because you love what you do and work doesn't seem like work.

Similarly, imagine your coworkers confused because you can't wait to spend time with your loved ones. You look forward to investing in these relationships because, like you, they're life-giving.

Freedom is the first benefit of joining the DJs. Because they've achieved freedom, they can now go as they please. They've exchanged their *have-tos* for *want-tos* and their day jobs for their dream jobs. But this freedom isn't the only benefit. DJs experience financial freedom too.

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

Create Financial Options—Earn as You Wish

I have a confession.

I'm not a crier. Some men are, and I respect them for that. I, on the other hand, have probably cried fewer than five times in my adult life.

One of those times was on May 18, 2010. After serving nine years in my day job, I turned in my resignation. With a wife and three children under age five, I felt unprepared to enter the world of unemployment—hence the tears. That afternoon I found myself sitting in my director's office, emotionally informing him I couldn't accept my promotion with complete integrity.

Promotion? Yep.

You see, in my line of work, sometimes they appoint a successor prematurely. I felt honored they'd chosen me to run the future organization. The catch? Succession was in the distant future, *like ten years away*. In the prime of my life, I wasn't comfortable making a long-term commitment to the organization. Besides, I had reservations about the position overall.

Was it a good fit? Was it really my calling?

In my heart, I knew it wasn't. But I had few other options, or so I thought. Stepping back from the situation, I could see common sense trying to lead me. My head and my heart entered a great debate:

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This is why I went to grad school—to run organizations like this one. Why wouldn't I take it? Thirty-three years old with a young family isn't the time to reinvent yourself.

I felt caught between my present day job and my potential dream job. Not a fun place to be. It kind of felt like having to vomit but being unable to get it out. I believed resigning was the only honorable thing to do. (Vomiting didn't seem too honorable at the time.)

Despite taking a bold stand for integrity, I'm a little embarrassed to say I came close to begging for severance. I needed to buy time to figure out how to launch my dream. At that point in my life, I had an incredibly ignorant view of finances. I didn't understand my value in the marketplace or the power of passive income—two common and fatal mistakes of many Day Jobbers.

I wasn't ready to jump.

And yet life found pleasure in pushing me dangerously close to the edge. Thankfully, I had a gracious boss and an understanding director who allowed me to keep serving on staff despite refusing the promotion. I stayed in my day job for another two years, giving the organization my best efforts. I truly loved the people I served. But at the same time, I knew my day job wasn't my final destination.

In those subsequent two years, I increased my awareness. I also accumulated massive clarity around how to increase personal value in the marketplace and create passive income. I'll share these discoveries, beginning with Facebook.

MEET THE FACEBOOK PHOTOGRAPHER

You probably don't recognize the extent of your own talent. Instead, you're dependent upon external forces (like day jobs) to establish and authenticate your value. Day jobs seduce us

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

with titles. Positions quiet our internal unrest. But as long as we work for other people's dreams we don't have to answer questions such as these:

- Do I truly have value in the marketplace?
- If I didn't have my day job, would anyone still pay me?
- If I started my dream job and someone refused to pay what I'm really worth, would I walk?

These big-boy and big-girl questions scare most of us away from seriously considering our dream jobs. And as long as you're comfortable with the familiar, you'll continue to play safe and small in your day job.

This was *almost* true for Julie. A brilliant photographer, for too long she considered photography only a part-time passion. Although unwilling to admit it, she secretly fantasized about one day being paid for her talent. Despite her desire, she didn't want to put herself out there and risk rejection. Eventually, a friend of a friend contacted her through Facebook.

My friend told me you're pretty good at taking photographs.
We can't pay you much, but we have a few hundred dollars
budgeted.

Can you snap a few pictures of us at our wedding?

Evidently, a professional photographer's price had tipped their scales, and so they messaged Julie instead.

Like a giddy little girl, she thought aloud, "A few hundred dollars? Someone's actually going to pay me to do what I love?"

In a matter of moments she messaged back, attempting to shroud her enthusiasm with a little bit of professionalism.

Thanks for your inquiry.

I think I could make something work for that budget.

Let's chat.

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To the bride's surprise and delight, Julie did much more than snap a few pictures. She over-delivered and captured the couple with a unique blend of creativity and authenticity. She exceeded their expectations and word got out—and Julie has since then raised her rates. Still priced well below the industry standard, Julie is beginning to learn what her clients already know.

She's worth it.

Julie needed a little nudge, that's all. Short on self-belief, she found that a simple Facebook message acknowledging her talent pushed her over her insecurities.

Julie's self-limiting beliefs are more common than you'd think. The bulk of us grow up conditioned to see a large chasm between what we love to do and what we get paid to do. We talk ourselves into believing our passions will always be unpaid labors of love.

For the small minority who break through these self-limiting beliefs and receive funds for our products and services, we often undercharge. We'll fantasize about receiving a windfall through a hidden treasure, a lucky ticket, or an unexpected inheritance. But such income is for the most part undeserved.

Raising your rates as a result of intentionally increasing your value is much different. This type of modification flows from deeper issues. To put it frankly, most of us are uncomfortable with this type of internal exploration.

Raising your rates requires slaying some fairly big mental giants. These giants will try to scare you right back into your day job.

RAISING YOUR RATES MEANS SLAYING THESE GIANTS

1. **Rejection**—Dismissing your price doesn't mean they're dismissing you.
2. **Justification**—The need to prove your value puts you on the defensive.

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

3. **People-Pleasing**—You can't work with every client, nor should you
4. **Discounting**—Why do the same amount of work for less pay?
5. **Cheapness**—High-maintenance clients reveal themselves at the point of sale.
6. **Ignorance**—Clients are paying for your complete journey toward greatness.
7. **Misunderstanding**—Your rates reflect equipment, insurance, education, etc.
8. **Haters**—Unhealthy people exist and you're bound to encounter some.
9. **Criticism**—Not everyone values expertise. Who cares?
10. **Lies**—Don't stoop down to the negative self-talk inside your head.

Which giants take up your headspace? How long have they lived there?

Your pricing says way more about your self-image than your personal value. Of course, some professionals overcharge their clients, but most of us do the complete opposite. If your fees are too low, it's very possible your self-image is too low.

But slaying mental giants isn't enough. To enter your dream job, you also need a new perspective on income.

ACTIVE INCOME IS LIMITED

That May afternoon, sitting in my director's office, I only understood active income. You do the work and you get paid—*once*. When you want to get paid again, you need to

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spend more time, effort, and energy because the income is nonrecurring.

Obviously, active income isn't scalable. Since you exchange your time for a singular payment, limitations exist. Your service is limited to you—your presence, your focus, and your schedule.

In 2010, my day job represented 100 percent active income—hence the tears. I knew if I didn't work, I wouldn't make money.

Today, in my dream job, active income reflects about 50 percent of my business. This comes from my coaching, public speaking, live events, consulting, and writing.

PASSIVE INCOME IS UNLIMITED

Passive income is different. In this structure customers and clients pay you repeatedly for work you only did once. This income is recurring because it's not limited to your presence, your focus, or your schedule.

Obviously, passive income is scalable. You can serve five orders just as easily as five thousand. Although your product or service initially takes time to create, you'll repeatedly get paid for the original time, effort, and energy you invested.

Back then my day job represented 0 percent passive income. However, today in my dream job, passive income reflects about 50 percent of my business. This comes from my international certification programs, online products, affiliate commissions, book royalties, and audio/video recordings of my speaking.

Passive income is superior because it scales. It knows few limits because it's not finite like you. Passive income works even when you don't.

My friend Scott knows this firsthand. Reflecting on his former coin-operated businesses from twenty years ago, he shared his perspective. "Something shifted inside me when I started my first passive income generated business. I enjoyed the

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

feeling that I got to play with my kids, while my coin-operated machines were hard at work all around the city making money. This allowed me the time to do what I wanted to do.”

Scott realized that more time *and* more money is a win-win. I’d argue additional time is *even more* valuable than additional money. You can always gain more money. But once time passes, it’s gone forever.

YOUR SECRET NAME SHOCKED US

I’ll never forget when my friend (now business partner) David Branderhorst and I experienced our first taste of passive income—almost by accident. Without too much thought, we created our first online program—the Your Secret Name Team.

We centered the experience around two concepts—a passive income business and a passive impact business. Notice the difference:

- **Passive Income Business** = INCOME from a venture in which an individual does not directly participate.¹
- **Passive Impact Business** = IMPACT from a venture in which an individual does not directly participate.

Here’s how it all happened. My fourth book released in September 2010. In a matter of weeks, we realized this book was special (and it had little to do with me). The book touched on an issue common to many adults and teens alike—identity. I blended my story of overcoming self-injury with the reader’s journey of discovering who they were created to be.

My friend Gabe (and then later Geno) created an interactive website that combined free tools with support from our growing community.² My friend Josh produced a beautiful book trailer, and we began getting emails from people of various backgrounds and struggles.³ They told us about their

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newfound freedom and how they discovered a connection with their Creator, their community, and their core.

Stories of victory over suicidal thoughts, depression, prostitution, workaholism, anorexia, and low self-esteem poured in. We continued sharing the message as best we could, but we'd reached our capacity. My day job brought its own set of challenges and commitments. And although I entertained thoughts of jumping into my dream job full-time, book sales alone didn't come close to paying the bills.

Then it happened. I received an email from Desiree Arney, a stranger in New Jersey touched by the message. Long story short, after a couple of chats David and I asked her to join our "team."

The word *team* was a bit presumptuous. Although we wanted to change the world, we didn't have a plan, a platform, or a paycheck. We figured passion was enough, so we kept moving forward. A few months later we decided to have a conference, and over one hundred people showed up. Toward the end of the conference we blocked off an open mic time for participants to share their thoughts about the day.

The stories of transformation people shared blew us away. Feeling momentum and divine favor, we created the Your Secret Name Team. We needed a way to multiply our impact and fund our efforts. I knew I couldn't accept every gig, and although I felt a little guilty turning down some opportunities, my family and day job took precedence.

We priced the Team at a modest \$997 and in no time we added a dozen members from all over the world, including Europe and New Zealand. Additional team members trickled in, and our impact and income increased slowly but steadily.

Because of our desire to alleviate suffering and pain in impoverished areas, we gifted a few slots to nonprofits in Uganda and Honduras. (We felt their lack of resources shouldn't prevent them from helping those in need.)

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

Even better than the passive income was the passive impact.

I remember one chilly Ohio afternoon playing with my three children on the living room floor. I think Isabel won out with her game choice—sleeping giant. Our stomachs were full from a scrumptious Sunday lunch, and the wood in the fireplace crackled and popped. Snowflakes fell softly outside, and my wife and I smiled at each other as we tried to keep up with three active kids.

Later that evening I checked our Secret Name Facebook group. Thrilled to read the posts, I saw that three separate team members had conducted Your Secret Name events in their own cities just that weekend.

I smiled. While I enjoyed my loved ones in the comfort of my home, our passive impact business was igniting. Our team was communicating this message of hope to people needing healing. It hasn't stopped since.

Looking back, I needed to feel my fears and tears that day in May with my director. I needed to become aware of my own ignorance. Until that point, I didn't know what I didn't know.

Two years after I turned down the promotion, after extensive study and application of how to increase value in the marketplace and create passive income and impact, I finally jumped. I left my day job and pursued my dream job full time.

Be encouraged. I'm a simple guy who's never taken a formal business class in my life. Those who know me well also know I hate numbers and calculations. When I hear words like QuickBooks I *quickly* exit the room. Despite time in higher education, my coursework was in other subjects.

I'm not unique. You'll meet many others in this book who aren't business majors either. Yet all these DJs have something compelling in common—results! Despite being fearful at first, they jumped and learned how to soar.

You can too.

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THE FIVE MOST FREQUENT FEARS

If you feel a little fearful when entertaining thoughts of entering your dream job—congratulations! You're made with the same DNA as us. In my travels, I've discovered that most Day Jobbers struggle with a combination of these five fears:

Day Jobbers' Five Most Frequent Fears

1. Failure
2. Inadequate resources
3. Incompetence
4. Rejection
5. Getting stuck

Although you'll never reach a place where you eliminate fear, you must train yourself to act in spite of it. Remember, fear isn't the enemy. Inaction is.

Best-selling author Seth Godin says, "When we deny our fear, we make it stronger. Life without fear doesn't last very long—you'll be run over by a bus (or a boss) before you know it. The fearless person, on the other hand, sees the world as it is (fear included) and then makes smart (and brave) decisions."⁴

Fear, the great paralyzer, woos you to freeze, flee, or fight. This built-in response alerts you to potential danger. But remember, fear is your friend, not your enemy. Invite it. Don't fight it.

From our earliest experiences, fear helped us humans avoid extinction by guiding us into paths of self-preservation.

Times have changed. Self-preservation is no longer the goal. Who wants to reach the end of life and simply say "I made it"? Mere existence isn't your objective—deep experience is.

Don't misunderstand me, DJs feel fear too. They've just discovered how to override this internal alarm system and achieve

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

their greater goals. They know the risks, but they focus on what they'll gain rather than what they'll lose. They keep the objective front and center despite the potential dangers that lurk all around.

A story might help illustrate the point.

I detest heights, but the other day I climbed my roof. I don't usually enjoy hanging out high above the ground, but this time I had a good reason. During the past rainstorm, gallons of water flowed down our siding. My wife kindly pointed this out in case I tried to forget. Our clogged gutters needed an adjustment. Good thing I had an answer.

With clean gutters the goal, I climbed the ladder with a leaf blower in hand and immediately got to work. Standing in the center of the leaf-covered roof, I looked like an expert from the old *Ghostbusters* movie—power pack and all. Those poor leaves didn't have a chance against my powerful jet stream of air. They flew off the roof and met their impending death—though they were already dead.

In no time, I had the center of the roof clear. Still, I needed to move toward the edges to truly fix the problem. I'm not an expert at home improvement, but even I know the gutters aren't in the center. Funny thing was, the closer I got to the edge, the more shivers I felt through my legs and fingers.

Why the sudden fear?

My body fired off an internal alarm system warning me about *my* impending death only twelve inches away. Looking over the edge at a possible twenty-foot tumble persuaded me to proceed with caution. As a safety measure, I transitioned from my feet to my backside. I'm sure the Ghostbusters would have been impressed with my "skills."

Achieving my goal meant overriding this internal alarm system. Thankfully, those blocked gutters flowed freely in a matter of minutes. To my delight, my wife and kids acknowledged my efforts, accolades lasting all of 2.5 seconds.

While on the roof I acknowledged my fear, yet I chose to act in spite of it—something all DJs do. Fear shouldn't

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enslave you, it should serve you. It acts as a compass, alerting you what to do next.

FIVE TIMES YOU FEEL FEAR

In times of fear you begin to wonder, *Why exert the effort?* And why not huddle safely in the center of the “roof” of life? You can, but that’s where dead people hang out. You only feel alive when you’re pushed outside your comfort zones. Fear simply means, “You’re in unfamiliar territory.”

It visits you when you’re near the edges.

Five Times You Feel Fear

1. The edges of your abilities
2. The edges of your resources
3. The edges of your understanding
4. The edges of your relationships
5. The edges of your experiences

When you push yourself beyond the edges—pay attention. At that moment you’re dangerously close to a breakthrough. And that’s when you’re truly alive.

Author Joseph Campbell sees this as one of our highest needs. “People say that what we are seeking is a meaning for life. I don’t think this is what we’re really seeking. I think what we’re seeking is an experience of being alive.”⁵

Prepare yourself.

Critique and criticism will come for you. Every DJ encounters it. The only thing that might surprise you is the source. Most often it comes from friends and loved ones.

Their caution might come through questions:

DO YOU FEEL ENSLAVED?

What makes you think you can do that?

Who do you think you are?

What will you do when you fail?

Why would anyone want to hire you?

Other times their caution comes through statements:

Don't come crying back to me.

Remember, I warned you.

You'd better have a backup plan.

You don't have what it takes.

Take a deep breath. Most of their comments aren't meant to be painful. They're not trying to sabotage your success. They just don't want to see you get hurt.

When you don't seem fearful, loved ones often take it upon themselves to make sure you feel their fear. They'll grasp for stories, statistics, or crash-and-burn examples about your relatives who tried to do something similar and ruined their lives.

Receive their comments with gratitude. Then refocus and solidify your resolve. Many times these lectures reveal ignorance. They're just warnings passed on from one generation to the next.

We see this pattern play out in the famous monkey experiment told by business professors Gary Hamel and C. K. Prahalad.

DON'T BE A SQUEALING MONKEY

Researchers placed four monkeys in a room that had a tall pole in the center with a bunch of bananas suspended from the top.

One of the hungry monkeys started climbing the pole to get something to eat, but just as he reached out to grab a banana, he was doused with a torrent of cold water. With a

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squeal, the monkey abandoned its quest and retreated down the pole. Each monkey made a similar attempt, and each one was drenched with cold water. After making several attempts, they finally gave up on the irresistible bananas.

The researchers removed one of the monkeys from the room and replaced him with a new monkey. When the newcomer saw the bananas and began to climb the pole, the other three grabbed him and pulled him down to the ground. After trying to climb the pole several times and being dragged down by the others, he finally gave up and never attempted to climb the pole again.

The researchers replaced the original monkeys, one by one, with new ones, and each time a new monkey was brought in, he would be dragged down by the others before he could reach the bananas. In time, only monkeys who had never received a cold shower were in the room, but none of them would climb the pole. They prevented one another from climbing, but none of them knew why.

Much like the original monkeys, negative people try to pull you down with their criticism and critique. They've felt their own dreams within their grasp, but they fell a few inches short. Rather than push through their pain, they fled instead. Now they've made it their self-appointed mission to prevent anyone else from going for their dreams.

Convinced their motives are pure, they're reminded of their failed dream every time you pursue your future dream. Uncomfortable with your action, they'll try to prevent you from feeling pain by pulling you down too.

DJs don't stoop to their level. They keep moving and growing. While others sit in scarcity and poverty, DJs soar in abundance and prosperity.

Finances are the second benefit experienced by the DJs. Because they've achieved solid finances, they earn as they wish. They've increased their value in the marketplace and their mastery of passive income. But freedom and finances aren't the only benefits. DJs experience fulfillment too.

DO YOU FEEL DISSATISFIED?

Experience Fulfillment—Live as you Like

Fulfillment only comes when you're aligned and at peace. Multitasking your day away may appear productive, but at what cost? Stress, burnout, and depression are a high price to pay.

You might wonder, *Who isn't busy these days?* Realize this—*DJs aren't!* Here's how their pace compares with Day Jobbers:

Day Jobbers' Pace	Dream Jobbers' Pace
Undisciplined	Intentional
Focused on activity	Focused on accomplishment
Busy	Bold
Stressed	Significant
Flustered	Fulfilled

Intentional, NOT Undisciplined

DJs choose where to invest their time, and therefore they multiply their impact. Day Jobbers indiscriminately add more things to their calendar. This strategy lessens their overall impact.

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Focused on Accomplishment, NOT Activity

DJs accomplish much more because they show up filled up. They contribute comprehensively, unlike Day Jobbers who are frazzled because of overactivity.

Bold, NOT Busy

DJs aren't swayed by the popular opinion of being overcommitted. They're willing to be different because they choose impact over acceptance.

Significant, NOT Stressed

Day Jobbers live on their leftovers. DJs make life their main course. DJs become significant as a natural result of their choices.

Fulfilled, NOT Flustered

DJs live as they like because they control their time. Day Jobbers have no time, and therefore they have no control.

YOUR NEW FRIEND NAMED MARGIN

DJs naturally stand out because they prefer fulfillment over activity. This bucks against popular thinking because most people mistake relaxation for laziness and busyness for achievement.

Tim Ferriss, author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The 4-Hour Workweek*, explains the fallacy of such thinking:

Being busy is a form of laziness—lazy thinking and indiscriminate action. Being overwhelmed is often as unproductive as doing nothing, and is far more unpleasant. Being selective—doing less—is the path of the productive. Focus on the important few and ignore the rest.”¹

DO YOU FEEL DISSATISFIED?

Hmm . . . sounds sort of counterintuitive:

Do less to accomplish more.

Develop a strong core so you can be selective.

Do the best thing and cut out all the other noise.

Many Day Jobbers are still working mentally even when they're off the clock. They never turn it off or shut it down. Margins do both. They help you create space for life to catch up with you.

Have you ever tried reading something without margins? I have. Not fun. I remember back in graduate school, before the days of ebooks. For one of my classes I occasionally photocopied a few pages from a massive twenty-pound reference book. I'd shrink the text to fit the oversized page onto an 8.5 by 11-inch piece of paper.

When my photocopies came out, I struggled to read the small font that ran off the edges of the page. In no time at all, my eyes would jump lines, and I'd end up losing my place. Frustration would set in—the entire process proved unenjoyable at best.

This describes Day Jobbers perfectly. They keep trying to squeeze more into their schedules. Without any margins, they struggle and lose their place in life. Frustration sets in and their lives are unenjoyable at best, hardly a picture of fulfillment.

What's the solution?

If you want fulfillment, you must create something every DJ has in their life—margins!

Margins Create Space for:

1. **Laughter**—You can't laugh if everything is serious.
2. **Generosity**—You can't give if you have nothing left.
3. **Memories**—You can't remember if you weren't present.

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4. **Prayer**—You can't pray if you're self-sufficient.
5. **Dreams**—You can't dream if you can't imagine.
6. **Love**—You can't love if you're self-absorbed.
7. **Exercise**—You can't exercise if you don't value yourself.
8. **Creativity**—You can't create if you're merely a machine.
9. **Experimentation**—You can't experiment if you don't have time to fail.
10. **Reflection**—You can't reflect if you don't value rest.
11. **Spontaneity**—You can't be in the moment if you're stuck in the future.
12. **Rest**—You can't sit if you can't stop.
13. **Joy**—You can't pour out if you haven't been filled up.
14. **Peace**—You can't breathe deeply if you can't catch your breath.
15. **Friendships**—You can't expect to have friends if you fail to be one.

You can't survive without food, water, or sleep. (College students might disagree with the *sleep* part.) Yet many people believe you can survive *and even thrive* without margins. Your Designer seemed to think otherwise by gifting you one full day of rest and recreation in every seven.

Recreate. I love that word. It reminds me

- We're unfinished and still in process.
- We're alive and growing and in need of input.
- We weren't created merely to produce.

DO YOU FEEL DISSATISFIED?

Machines, on the other hand? They're created specifically for output. We place a higher value on machines with a higher capacity for output.

Humans are different. We're not machines. We're a beautiful blend of

- Body, soul, and spirit.
- Sex, sweat, and laughter.
- Tears, hopes, and longings.
- Desires, fears, and dreams.

You need rest and recreation. These two essential components fuel fulfillment.

HUMAN DOINGS OR HUMAN BEINGS?

When you check out of life only to produce within the prison called your "day job," something inside you dies. Busyness may mask the pain, but it certainly doesn't eliminate it.

Consider that life is too short to

- Spend tens of thousands of hours in misery.
- Live in chronic pain just to survive until another weekend.
- Fail to make the maximum contribution with the gifts and abilities entrusted to you.
- Hold on to a job for the sole reason of a paycheck or retirement benefits.

Steve Jobs understood this brevity. It served as a filter for his choices, including his employment ones.

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When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: “If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you’ll most certainly be right.” It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” And whenever the answer has been “No” for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.²

Easy to say but difficult to do, right?

But consider the unique time in which you live. For thousands of years humanity was, for the most part, stuck with their fate. Choices eluded us, and we were locked into our lot in life. If your daddy or grandpa was a blacksmith, then likely so were you. If you were born into an agrarian environment, then you probably stayed there.

Not so today. Regardless of what you believe, you *do* have a choice. You can live as you’d like.

Fulfillment is the third benefit of joining the DJs. Because they’re fulfilled, they live as they like. They’ve exchanged activities for accomplishment and their day jobs for their dream jobs.

Now that you know the three benefits of the DJs (freedom, finances, and fulfillment), the real question is: When can you start?

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

It's a great time to be alive, and your chances for success are far greater today than at any other time in human history. According to Darren Hardy, who cofounded an internet company in early 2000, “Your chance at entrepreneurial success is 564 times greater than just 13 years ago.”¹

He explains why.

We raised several million dollars to get started [in 2000]. Building the website, the software to run it and servers to deliver it cost nearly \$1 million. Today that website could be built for less than \$5,000. We spent the other millions to hire experienced tech talent (we paid a high price because of limited supply) and on marketing in the days before Google AdWords, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.²

Besides these encouraging odds, there are five additional reasons why the time is right to exchange your day job for your dream job.

FIVE REASONS WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

1. More Access (“The Who”)

If you know the right rules and abide by them, no one is beyond your reach.

In 2004, Tony Blair became the first prime minister to master text messaging publicly. He used this technology to answer questions directly sent to him from his citizens.³ Imagine what people would have thought thirty years ago about directly communicating with the leader of their country about political policies. No commoner had access like that.

Today you can easily communicate with government officials, professional athletes, experts, celebrities, and prominent religious leaders.

Some strategies are more effective than others, and plenty of websites share their opinions on the matter. They range from connecting through paid phone calls to negotiating personal meetings.⁴

DJs connect with leaders through relational strategies—ones that give back value instead of merely taking.

Back when I was first writing this book, I sat in a park in Powell, Ohio, framing up some chapters. I found myself reading *The \$100 Startup* for the third time. Chris Guillebeau wrote this amazing *New York Times* best seller. It had helped me find my wings a couple of years before when I struggled with leaving my day job. I felt indebted to Chris for his wisdom and work, and I wanted to express my gratitude.

While reading his book, I also had one quick question. I thought, *If only he were in this park. Then I could ask him. Bummer.*

Rather than letting that whim pass me by, I did something else. *I took action.* I went to Chris’s website and spent some time looking around. Not only did my appreciation for him soon grow, but also my desire to shoot him a quick note of encouragement became irresistible.

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

After a few minutes I found his contact info and wrote him a quick thank-you. I also included my simple question. Then I clicked *send* and quite naturally went back to reading.

Within five minutes I received a brief but personal email from Chris himself. He even answered my question with a resounding *yes*.

Knowing Chris’s schedule, he probably got my message while traveling somewhere in Norway or India. (He visited every country in the world between 2002 and 2013.)

Nonetheless, I found the whole exchange rather ironic. Five minutes before, I’d found myself reading an insightful *book*. Fast-forward a few minutes, and now I was having an email conversation with this insightful *author*.

My experience isn’t unique.

If you know the right rules and abide by them, you can access previously “unreachable” people. It helps if the person you’re trying to reach is a kind and generous human being like Chris. Nonetheless, I framed my email according to a certain set of rules.

Use the rules and you come across as informed. Abuse the rules and you come across as ignorant. The choice is up to you.

We’ll unpack these rules and many other helpful strategies in The Dream Jobber Plan. For now, just remember that today you have more access to the people you need to connect with than at any other time in human history.

2. More Resources (“The What”)

If you know where to go, the world is at your fingertips, literally.

In July 2008 the iPhone App Store had only eight hundred apps (application software). Five years later that number has jumped to over one million apps.⁵ Today it’s over 2 million. And that does not include all of the apps available for other

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smartphones, which adds 4 million more. Some apps may relate to your dream job, others may not.⁶

There is an app for writing emails while you walk, for on-the-spot payments, for remotely accessing your computer, for help with invoicing and time tracking, and many others. I only mention a few apps to illustrate a point. You have several million more left to explore.

My point?

You have more resources available than you'll ever need. You also have more allies committed to your success than ever before. Breathe easy because you're not alone.

You have chat rooms and online communities ready to serve you. People today want to help, even with the simplest of questions. You no longer need the yellow pages. (Do they still have those?) Just ask your Twitter followers for the name of a trusted mechanic or an unbeatable speed-reading course. They'll jump in and offer advice.

In past stories and folklore, heroes received gifts of special superpowers to aid them in accomplishing their mission. Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn granted Elvish items to the remaining members of the Fellowship of the Ring.⁷ Frodo received the Light of Eärendil, which emitted a brilliant light in the darkness to help him on his journey.

Today, you can get a free flashlight app for your smartphone to help you on your journey. (Same effect, although the name is definitely not as cool as the Elvish version.)

My advice?

Don't wait for an elf. Visit the App Store or Google Play Store instead. Today, many of our "superpowers" come via technology, communities, and resources.

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3. More Connected (“The Where”)

If you know where to go, the world is at your fingertips, literally.

If you can get online, you can run your businesses.

I don’t need to convince you because you probably already know—physical space is no longer a barrier that keeps you from starting your dream job. Currently, I’m outside enjoying the weather on a beautiful afternoon. The only drawback? To get to my destination I had to walk through a minefield of geese droppings. Nonetheless, I’m presently overlooking a quaint pond, sitting on a soft bed of pine needles, listening to an epic soundtrack, and writing to you on my laptop.

I’m living my dream job.

Ten minutes ago, when I checked my phone, I had three messages needing a response. One was from a coaching client, one requested me to do a presentation on one of my books two months from now, and one was a request for a retreat with business leaders next spring.

I conduct all this “business” without an office. At this point in my life, I *choose* not to have an office. This might cause some people to lose respect for me.

Aren’t I “big” enough to warrant an office?

What if my clients find out I don’t have one?

Will my clients think less of me?

Will I lose the ability to negotiate fair fees for my services?

Am I secretly a bum?

Perhaps it sounds a little odd, but I’m not worried if my clients find out. *I’ve actually already told them.*

My choice isn’t related to an expense issue but a life-style one.

I’ve had a beautiful office space offered to me free of charge, no strings attached. I graciously turned it down for no other

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reason than the fact that an office doesn't fit my business or my lifestyle.

Keep in mind, DJs design, create, and maintain structures and strategies that support their goals. A physical office doesn't support my goal of freedom. I spent more than a decade tied to my day job. In that period I had an abundant number of *have-tos*.

I *have to* go to that meeting.

I *have to* work outside my strength zone.

I *have to* miss that event.

I realized that although I was doing many “good things,” the price was more than I was willing to pay. Sure I had health insurance, a steady paycheck, and an amazing community—but I didn't have my freedom.

Now I do. And because I do, I'm keenly aware of adding anything that limits my freedom. Currently, my wife and I could pick up for the next three months and travel internationally with our kids.

How?

I run my business predominantly on my laptop and my smartphone. These two tools have enabled me to do some amazing things:

- Start a nonprofit
- Cofound a publishing company called Author Academy Elite
- Close six-figure contracts

All this action stemmed from the convenience of coffee shop patios with WiFi connections.

As a general practice, I don't tell other people they *don't* need office space. Maybe they *do*. It might serve their lifestyle and business well.

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Personally, it makes me claustrophobic. Instead of that office space serving me, in no time at all, I know I'd be serving *it*. I'd feel the need to go “into the office” to justify having the address printed on my business card.

Dan Sullivan, founder of Strategic Coach, says, “An office is where an entrepreneur goes to hide from opportunities.” And because I'm an entrepreneur, I want to be close to opportunities. I also want to be close to what I value—my wife and kids.

Besides, what kind of author, coach, and speaker lives at a desk? *Not a very good one*. John le Carré warns, “A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.”⁸

Don't misunderstand—I'm not against offices. But I'm vehemently against the lies that hold you back from your dream job. A common one holding many people back is that you need a tremendous amount of capital devoted to office space before you open up shop.

Not true.

Most people who pay for their office space feel guilty if they don't use it. They feel the need to show up in their artificial environment to make their magic happen. And so, most office space occupiers settle right back into a 9 to 5 routine because it's the model we've all witnessed for decades.

Pretty soon these folks are buying staplers, desks, chairs, wall calendars, and dry-erase boards because that's what they were told an office needs.

With high monthly overhead devoted to office supplies that fill new desks and employees that fill empty cubicles, they soon get sucked into “the crazy cycle.” Beginning financially in the hole every month, they take on less-than-ideal clients to break even. They fail to see the new prison they're designing. Fast-forward twelve months and they have a full slate of toxic clients. They wonder how they got there.

Time out from this scary nightmare!

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Who says you need an office?

Who says you need employees?

This is the new frontier. Traditional business protocols no longer control you. You're free to explore, create, and innovate.

Don't believe me?

Meet Mike Myers—not the famous comedian but the accomplished educator.⁹ He has a single mission—to *magnify the talents inside his students so they can realize confidence and success*. He founded Magnifying Talents Tutoring without a partner, without employees, and without office space.

He began the same way all DJs do—with a dream. That dream turned into a website and then into a business. Now if a child wants immediate tutoring from Mike, good luck. He's booked solid, even after raising his rates.

For years Mike worked as a teacher during the school year and then ran a painting business during the summer. The three-month painting business eventually took its toll. No painter shows up in June with a full set of clients. Mike would begin bidding jobs as early as January, making it difficult to balance his teaching job and his home life.

After a little coaching, Mike decided to take the big step. He sold all his painting equipment and started his tutoring business. By following The Dream Jobber Plan, Mike transitioned into a sought-after tutor.

Since then he automated his scheduling and payment processes, which let him invest more time in his wife and two children. He created a vibrant summer business that complements his teaching profession the rest of the year.

Office space, employees, and every other perceived “pre-requisite” are excuses to delay your dream job. In reality, if you can get online, you can run your business.

For those doubters in the house, I'm not claiming your dream job is at that place now, but it could be. Through

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

outsourcing, freelancing, and independent contractors, your business can run incredibly lean. That is, if you want it lean.

Some don't. But we'll explore those alternatives too.

Remember, in this space, all your have-tos are now up for grabs. You're redefining the rules and creating a new life of want-tos.

4. More Incentive (“The Why”)

If you don't have to stay, why would you?

Here are five reasons why you should start your dream job. We'll unpack them one by one.

Five Reasons to Start Your Dream Job

1. Your day job isn't permanent.
2. Your engagement level will increase.
3. You'll become a master in the art of living.
4. People's lives will change.
5. You will live longer.

1. Your Day Job Isn't Permanent

Meet John, Nancy, and Louise. Each of them used to think they had to stay in their day jobs. John had been in his company for sixteen years, Nancy for twenty, and Louise for twelve. Over the years, each built valuable results, solid seniority, and close friendships. John commented, “My company felt like my second family.”

Without any forewarning, each was told their day job had been eliminated.

Nancy explained the weird twist, “For the past fifteen years my job had been to help other people in the company transition out. Overnight, I learned that I'd be the one transitioning.”

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Nancy's, John's, and Louise's credentials seemed bullet-proof . . . or so they thought. Still, when the corporate ax swings, someone's head has to fall. Unfortunately, John had relocated just six months before receiving his shocking news. He soon found himself in a new town, in a new house, and unemployed.

"I couldn't believe it," John explained. "For a few weeks after the news, I really doubted myself. I kept wondering, *What did I do wrong?* But the truth is, I didn't do anything wrong. My wife had to go back to work, and our family roles shifted quickly."

John, Louise, and Nancy each have kids in high school or college. Each has a beautiful home and rich friendships. But despite their personal plans, their companies had other ones.

Whether you're ready to accept it or not, the statistics point to a brand-new world:

- **Unemployment**—In the last fifteen years, the unemployment rate approached 10 percent.¹⁰
- **Jobs**—The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that people hold an average of eleven jobs just between ages 18 to 44.¹¹
- **Careers**—The average US worker will have many careers—seven is the most widely cited number—in his or her lifetime.¹²
- **Length**—The BLS reports that the median number of years that wage and salary workers remain with their employer is 4.6 years.¹³
- **Roles**—Studies estimate half of the American workforce will soon consist of freelancers, consultants, independent contractors, entrepreneurs, "electronic immigrants," and so forth.¹⁴

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

In summary, the average worker will change her career seven times, hold eleven jobs before the age of forty-four, remain in her current place of employment for less than five years, and probably move into a freelance/independent contractor role.

Few people remain in their companies for twenty, sixteen, or even twelve years. John, Nancy, and Louise were the exception. And in each situation, the transition was done to them, not the other way around. Even if you want to believe your day job is safe, secure, and permanent, it's not.

This is why you must prepare yourself for your dream job now, not later. In the case of Nancy and Louise, providentially each was engaged in my Deeper Path Coaching Cohort *before* receiving the tough news.¹⁵ Part of the process requires them to write out their dream job with crystal clarity.

Louise commented, “If I hadn't been working on my dream before I got the news, I would've been shell-shocked. Because I'd already identified it, when I was told my job was eliminated I actually felt some relief. In a strange way, it was the permission I needed to go out and start my dream job.”

Louise has done just that. She took a course on how to manage her own website and maintain her own social media, and then she launched her business. Just like that.

“I feel alive again.” She chuckled. “I don't know why I waited so long. The other day, one of my clients sincerely thanked me for the value I'm giving her. She said many of her relationships are improving because of our work together. I know this is what I was created to do and I'm overflowing with gratitude.”

Louise needed to be kicked out of the nest before she learned how to fly. Nancy and John are flying in their dream jobs too.

Just the other day, Nancy told me, “Through the Cohort I wrote out my purpose: *exposing students' big ideas by nourishing their dreams and guiding their intentions*. Because I now know

what I really want, I just accepted a job offer at one of the largest universities in the country. I get paid to coach students as they develop and launch their careers.”

Was the jump scary? Sure.

But too many times we focus on the cost of acting. DJs flip the equation. They do serious reflection on the cost of *not* acting. They take inventory of what will happen if they *stay* in their day job rather than if they *leave*.

Louise had no idea what she was missing because she was so focused on producing results. Life passed her by as she climbed the corporate ladder. Ironically, the ladder eventually broke. Looking back, she admits there were obvious gaps along the way.

“On an increasing basis, my boss required me to make key decisions against my gut. I hated implementing those decisions. They bordered on unethical. At a minimum, they were poor leadership decisions. I went with them because I didn’t have any other options.”

2. Your Engagement Level Will Increase

Louise now realizes in her last few years on the job she suffered from disengagement.

She’s not that unique. The Gallup Organization regularly surveys employees in the United States and around the world. They’ve discovered some shocking statistics about engagement in the workplace. The most recent findings for US workers may surprise you. (Many other countries reveal an even dimmer reality.¹⁶)

Not Engaged—55 percent of the United States working population is not engaged. These people do just enough to get a paycheck. Merely going through the motions, they feel that if they could leave their day jobs, they would. They live and work from half a heart.

Actively Disengaged—16 percent of the United States working population is actively disengaged. These people take

calculated, strategic steps to steal from their employer, spread lies about coworkers, and create disunity in their work environment. They communicate their disengagement through unproductive actions. They sabotage themselves and those around them. They're not bad people, but they're “stuck” people acting negatively. They live and work from a broken heart.

Engaged—29 percent of the United States working population is engaged. This small segment takes responsibility and ownership for their assignments. They realize their work is an extension of themselves and because they're on fire, so is everything they touch. They live and work from a full heart.¹⁷

Based on this Gallup research, 71 percent of US workers desire to leave their current day job. They stay because they don't think they can transition to their dream job or they struggle knowing how.

Of course, all this disengagement carries a financial cost, “up to \$550 billion annually in lost productivity.”¹⁸ And in addition to the expense in dollars, there's an emotional price to pay.

3. You'll Become a Master in the Art of Living

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung said, “The greatest burden a child must bear is the unlived life of the parent.”¹⁹

When disengaged parents or guardians come in from a long day at work, their first response is to kick the proverbial dog out of frustration. When they do, they're kicking much more than the dog (as if kicking a dog isn't sad enough). They're kicking their children's hope and optimism about their own future. Children take cues from what they see. They watch closely and listen intently. If their parents or guardians feel trapped, enslaved, or angry about their jobs, then they figure, *What hope do I have for my own future?*

Their undeveloped minds struggle to understand the logic of staying in school only to eventually enter a job they're going to hate. Perhaps this is why over eight thousand US high school

students drop out *every day*.²⁰ They rationalize, *Why exert the energy if frustration is all I have to look forward to?*

The disengaged and actively disengaged, all 70 percent of them, cope by compartmentalizing their pain. They convince themselves they can be engaged in their “personal lives” even though they’re disengaged in their “professional lives.” Unfortunately, this strategy doesn’t work. Who we are is who we are, *wherever* we go. If you’re imprisoned at work, you’re not free at home. Your mind doesn’t stay at work. It travels with you.

4. People’s Lives Will Change

There’s much more at stake than you. It’s a deal that even eclipses your loved ones. Staying disengaged in your day job is quite possibly the most selfish action available. Because when you delay your dream job, you also delay life change in other people.

Sound crazy?

That thought certainly didn’t cross my mind when I sat crying in my director’s office back in 2010. All I could think about was my family and their needs. My mind fixated on everything I was about to give up. As much as I’d like to pretend otherwise, my thoughts weren’t focused on the future readers of my books or the future members of my online programs.

Since then, I’ve matured.

I realized that my journey is much bigger than me. I discovered that by pursuing my dream job, I injected more believability, authenticity, and credibility into my message and myself.

I didn’t come to this conclusion on my own. People like Austin Miller helped me realize this. He sent me an email two days ago that made my day job to dream job switch worth it. I share this as an encouragement. Your future tribe is waiting on you. They need the transformation you’ll stir within them. But they need you to embrace your dream job first.

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

Here’s Austin’s email:

Hope you’re having a great week! I wanted to say thank you again for following what God put on your heart. Because of your obedience, my life has been impacted and forever changed. I appreciate your wisdom, and I’ve loved the Thursday night *Deeper Path Coaching Cohort*. I’m glad I took the step of faith a few months ago, when I was unemployed, knowing God would provide clarity for the future steps of my life. I’m loving my new job, and I’m now a soul on fire. —Austin

Reading his words humbled and encouraged me. I had no idea that by pursuing my dream job other people would also find the courage and confidence to pursue theirs. Before my day job switch, I was too immature and inexperienced to see it.

If this hasn’t already happened to you, it will. DJs receive unexpected affirmations from their tribe. Mike Myers is one such DJ. He and his wife saw a former client out in public the other day. The student ran up to both of them, dragging his parents with him.

“Mom! Dad! It’s *him*! It’s Mr. Myers . . . my tutor, the one who helped me learn how to read!”

Based on his enthusiasm, it appeared that this student had just bumped into his favorite rock star. Equally surprising were the parents’ responses. Thrusting out his hand and offering a firm handshake, the father said, “Mr. Myers, you’ve helped our son so much. He’s like a different child . . . and his confidence is unbelievable.” The mother completed the circle by adding her own heartfelt compliments.

Who would have thought that switching from painter to tutor would have elicited so much appreciation? Mike had no idea that pursuing his dream job would change a child’s future. Now, with a few years as a tutor, he’s seen dozens of futures changed forever.

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You can't discount your dream job. DJs never do. Check out four truths they never ignore.

Four Truths DJs Don't Ignore

1. World changers don't let themselves get in the way of changing the world.
2. Your message is even bigger than your self-limiting beliefs.
3. *Selfishness* says, "If I pursue my dream job, what will I lose?"
4. *Selflessness* says, "If I pursue my dream job, what will others gain?"

You forget these truths when you get lost in your own story. But you take your responsibility a little more seriously when you realize other people bind their dreams to your action—and your inaction.

If your message is stuck, then chances are so is your tribe. It's difficult to change someone's life if they haven't experienced your product or service.

For most people this seems like an encouraging but unbelievable thought. *Dreamers like Steve Jobs and Thomas Edison changed the world, but little old me? How could my dream job change someone else's life?*

Don't buy into the false humility act! It doesn't serve you or your tribe.

We need to hear your voice.

We need to see your passion.

We need to discover your idea.

My life changed because certain people pursued their dream job. People like my mentor, Dave Plaster, whom I

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

met in college. He taught me how to believe. People like my high school teacher Mr. Moore. He taught me how to think. People like my wife, Kelly, a licensed counselor. She taught me how to feel.

All these people, and many more, said *yes* to their dream jobs. Will you?

5. You Will Live Longer

Although the first four reasons for starting your dream job are important, the final one could be a life-or-death issue, literally. Perhaps it all sounds a bit melodramatic—until you look at the startling data. In his breakthrough book, *48 Days to the Work You Love*, author Dan Miller reveals the brutal truth:

- 70 percent of American workers experience stress-related illnesses.
- 34 percent think they will burn out on the job in the next two years.
- The *Los Angeles Times* reports that there is a 33 percent increase in heart attacks on Monday mornings.
- According to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more people die at nine o'clock Monday morning than at any other time of day or any other day of the week.
- *Entrepreneur* magazine adds that there is a 25 percent increase in work-related injuries on Mondays.
- Male suicides are highest on Sunday nights, with men realizing that their careers—and possibly their finances as well—are not where they want them.²¹

Staying in your day jobs may be hazardous to your health. Maybe your *why* for leaving just got bigger—way bigger.

5. More Instruction (“The How”)

If you apply this book, you can plan and implement your escape.

Harriet Tubman, escaped slave and famous conductor on the Underground Railroad, knew a powerful truth. Although incredibly successful, she commented, “I freed thousands of slaves and could have freed thousands more, if only they had known they were slaves.”²²

Regrettably, Tubman couldn’t convince certain people they were slaves. Therefore she couldn’t convince them of their need for escape.

It’s no different today. Because of this human tendency, I’ve spent the first section of the book proving that day jobs hold you prisoner. If I’d started by revealing the plan for escape, you would have felt unserved.

The truth is, most people refuse to believe they’re imprisoned. Sadly, they’ll sit in their cells (aka cubicles) and remain prisoners for the rest of their lives.

I believe you’re different.

I believe you’re still with me.

I believe you’re willing to explore The Dream Jobber Plan
and eventually implement your own escape.

THE SHAWSHANK INSIDE US ALL

Speaking of prison escapes, when stuck back in my day job I often thought about a particular movie—*The Shawshank Redemption*.

Remember it?

Most people do . . . at least now. It’s the prison movie with Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman. Funny thing is, on some levels it’s not about a prison at all. It took a little time, but the public eventually came to realize this too. And when they did, its popularity soared.

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

Despite being nominated for seven Academy Awards when it released in 1994, the movie won none. Although reception for *The Shawshank Redemption* seemed dismal at first, with ticket sales barely breaking even, it eventually picked up momentum through cable television and home rental. Twenty years later, the results speak for themselves.

The Shawshank Redemption

- Became the top rental of 1995.
- Reached the rank of the highest grossing rental of all time.²³
- Was featured in AFI’s 100 Years . . . 100 Movies list.²⁴
- Was heralded as the *It’s a Wonderful Life* of its day.²⁵
- Secured the top movie spot of all time (as voted by the public).²⁶

Why does some movie about a guy stuck in a prison garner a cultlike following even today? As pointed out by Roger Ebert in his critical review, “Mostly the film is an allegory about holding onto a sense of personal worth, despite everything.”²⁷

When making the switch from our day jobs to our dream jobs, you’ll see amazing parallels with *Shawshank*. If you’ve already seen the movie, you’ll benefit from a quick recap. If you haven’t, understanding the plot will help you see your current situation more clearly.

The movie, which takes place in 1947, begins with banker Andy Dufresne (played by Tim Robbins) receiving two consecutive life sentences at Shawshank State Penitentiary. Convicted of murdering his wife and her lover, based on circumstantial evidence, Andy finds himself rather quickly in a brand-new world with brand-new rules.

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Unfortunately, this particular world, run by a coldhearted warden, snuffs out any wisp of hope. The warden embodies a strange blend of religious hypocrisy and institutional reformation. He enjoys crushing hope out of everyone who steps out of sync with his intentionally designed culture of cruelty. The new prisoners, affectionately called “new fish,” experienced this cruelty the moment they stepped in Shawshank.

Except for Andy. He seemed immune.

Despite his false imprisonment, he maintained an incredibly optimistic outlook. Choosing to rise above his circumstances, Andy had every opportunity to give up and give in. The victim of rape, abuse, and deception, Andy didn’t allow circumstances to destroy him or his hope. He continued to survive and thrive mainly due to a little secret only he knew.

Andy quickly befriended a fellow inmate nicknamed “Red” (played by Morgan Freeman). This contraband smuggler and “citizen of Shawshank” knew the rules of the game. Despite serving his own life sentence, Red periodically found himself up for potential early release. Unfortunately, each time he faced the review board, they answered his attempt to define rehabilitation with the response—*rejected*.

Serving as the narrator throughout the movie, Red helps the viewer understand more about life in Shawshank and Andy’s demeanor that seemed to rise above the stone-cold walls:

He had a quiet way about him, a walk and a talk that just wasn’t normal around here. He strolled. Like a man in a park without a care or worry. Like he had on an invisible coat that would shield him from this place.²⁸

Andy’s fellow prisoners lacked these “invisible coats,” even when released. After serving fifty years in Shawshank, one convict named Brooks reentered society, quite unsuccessfully. Although free on the outside, he still suffered from a mental prison on the inside.

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Unable to perform the simplest jobs like bagging groceries at a local supermarket, Brooks tells himself it's easier to end his life than try to create a new one. Red shared his perspective about Brooks's mental condition:

This place is all he knows. In here, he's an important man, an educated man. A librarian. Out there, he's nothing but a used-up old con with arthritis in both hands . . . These walls are funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. After long enough, you get so you depend on 'em. That's “institutionalized.” . . . They send you here for life, and that's just what they take. Part that counts, anyway.²⁹

Sounds mighty similar to the bulk of Day Jobbers I've met. Even after retirement, many still feel imprisoned by their jobs. They can't rest, relax, or enjoy life. Although they're free on the outside, they still suffer from a prison on the inside.

Maybe this is why Andy spread hope and humanity in an incredibly hopeless and inhumane place. Shortly after Brooks's suicide, Andy broke the rules. Locking himself in the same office as the public address system, Andy broadcasted a piece of music by Mozart across the entire prison for everybody to hear—guard and prisoner alike.

Obviously impacted by Andy's rebellion, Red revealed his thoughts. “It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made these walls dissolve away . . . and for the briefest of moments—every last man at Shawshank felt free.”³⁰

Andy achieved his mission. But he also paid a horrible price—two weeks in solitary confinement. His fellow inmates greeted him at lunch upon his release. They had imagined he would carry a broken spirit with his tray of food that day. To their surprise, he appeared more impassioned and carried even more courage.

Obviously confused, they let him know it. Andy told them it was the easiest time he ever did because Mr. Mozart

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accompanied him. Now even more confused, they thought he'd brought a record player with him.

ANDY: The music was here . . . and here (*tapping his head and his heart*). That's the one thing they can't confiscate, not ever. That's the beauty of it. Haven't you ever felt that way about music, Red?

RED: Played a mean harmonica as a younger man. Lost my taste for it. Didn't make much sense on the inside.

ANDY: Here's where it makes most sense. We need it so we don't forget.

RED: Forget?

ANDY: That there are things in this world not carved out of gray stone. That there's a small place inside of us they can never lock away, and that place is called hope.

RED: Hope is a dangerous thing. Drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside. Better get used to the idea.

ANDY: Like Brooks did?³¹

Andy didn't back down from Red's rationale. He had something the other prisoners didn't—*hope*. For them it was a word. For Andy it was an escape. And that's just what Andy did. He converted his attitude into action and devised a strategic escape plan.

That's what made him different. That's why he walked with a stroll. While the rest of the prisoners suffered from an internal prison, Andy knew freedom even before he tasted it. Although imprisoned on the outside, Andy was already free on the inside.

Similarly, I want to help you create an escape plan. Before I do, you'll have to admit that you're a prisoner. If you're still in denial, then I can't help. But if you want to escape your day job and enter your dream job, then I'd be honored to help you imagine and implement your own escape plan.

WHY THE “WHEN” IS “NOW”

THE DREAM JOBBER PLAN

If you want to jailbreak your job, you need a plan. In part 2 we'll customize The Dream Jobber Plan for you and your situation. We'll explore these nine steps one at a time in detail, but for now here's a quick peek:

Step One: DESIGN Your Story
Your GPS dictates your destination.

Step Two: DESIGN Your Space
Our experience reflects your values.

Step Three: DESIGN Your Service
Choose your solution, then your service style.

Step Four: CREATE Your Platform
If you want to be heard, you must be seen.

Step Five: CREATE Your Product
Products increase influence, impact, and income.

Step Six: CREATE Your Promotion
Market before you manufacture.

Step Seven: MAINTAIN Your Community
Every dream needs a team.

Step Eight: MAINTAIN Your Clarity
Complexity kills clarity.

Step Nine: MAINTAIN Your Credibility
Success is found in singularity.

THE DEEPER PATH

SITTING IN SHAWSHANK

I'm sitting in Shawshank prison right now, writing this book.

I made the trip to Mansfield, Ohio, to the Ohio State Reformatory—the prison used to film *The Shawshank Redemption*—with one single purpose in mind. I wanted to start off this first chapter literally inside the prison cell. I wanted the door slammed shut behind me and with it any chance of hope for escaping. I wanted to remind myself how I used to feel, completely separated from any chance at freedom.

I'm in the exact cell where Andy served solitary confinement as punishment for playing his famous anthem of freedom. Although it's June, this cramped room feels strangely cool. The lady who let me in tried to convince me that this entire prison is haunted. As if the ghost tour signs don't give me enough warning.

I'm not going to lie. It feels a little spooky. Unlike a mainstream museum, overpopulated with people, this one feels quite lonely. Come to think of it, I'm the only person in this entire block of cells. (OK, now I'm starting to scare myself.)

Trust me. These cells haven't been cleaned for decades. All the proof you need is the stained mattress in the cell next to mine.

It feels odd because I've been free for so many years now. Although I'm living my dream job today, it's easy to forget how long I spent stuck in my day job. I've vowed never to lose perspective and empathy for those still stuck.

That's why I came back.

For you.

I've seen too many causalities to stay silent. A former citizen of Shawshank, like Andy, I've since found my own Zihuatanejo.

Don't worry. Before we're done, that will all make sense—including Zihuatanejo. But in the simplicity of this moment,

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in the words of Andy, you only have one of two choices—get busy living or get busy dying.

I hope you choose to get busy living. And if that’s your choice, then keep reading—so we can get busy planning.

KEY POINTS

1. Dream Jobbers experience freedom (go as you please), finances (earn as you wish), and fulfillment (live as you like).
2. DJs reclaim the rights over their lives by changing the rules of the game.
3. Day Jobbers work to maintain a lifestyle they can’t enjoy because they’re trapped in their work.
4. DJs know how to increase two things—their value in the marketplace and their passive income.
5. Raising your rates requires slaying some fairly big mental giants.
6. Your pricing says way more about your self-image than your personal value.
7. Create a business that’s both passive income *and* passive impact.
8. Fear isn’t the enemy. Inaction is!
9. Margins create space for life to catch up with you.
10. Our chances for success are far greater today than at any other time in human history.
11. If you know the right rules and abide by them, no one is beyond your reach.

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12. If you know where to go, the world is at your fingertips, literally.
13. If you can get online, you can run your business.
14. If you don't have to stay in your day job, why would you?
15. If you read this book, you can plan and implement your escape.

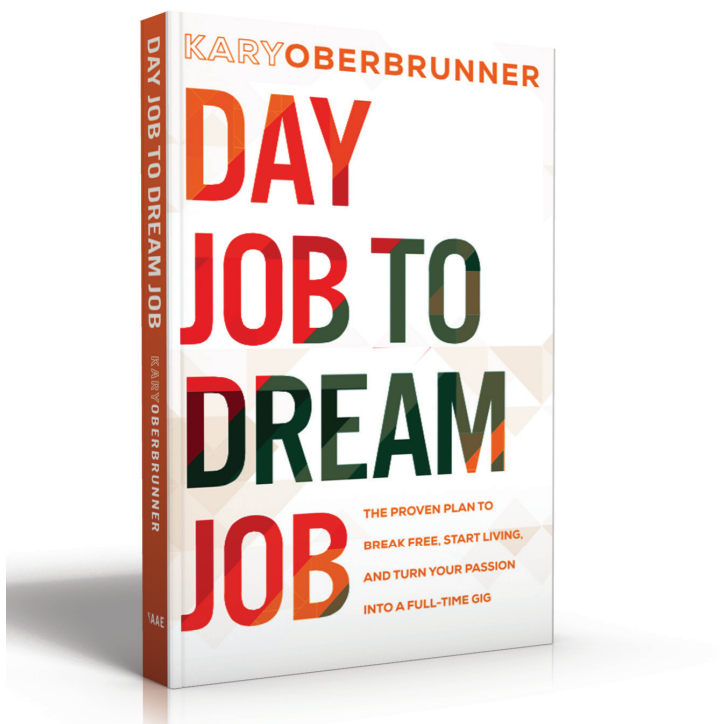
PART **TWO**

The Plan



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Day Job to Dream Job.

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