

How to be your own boss in 10 easy steps!



One of the best ways to control your schedule and your life is to *be your own* boss. There are so many ways to get started that it is often difficult to choose how. With so many choices, we are often guilty of not making any. That is why I am going to give you a step by step guide on how to be your own boss without any confusion. Just know that it is going to take work. Each step, although simple and clear, requires commitment and time. Easy does not mean fast. Nevertheless, with consistency and a strong commitment you can achieve your goals.

TIP: I highly recommend you print this guide and in the margins (and in your calendar) write in dates that you hope to achieve each of these steps by. Goals without deadlines are just fleeting thoughts. **Be sure to set actionable goals!**

As promised, here are 10 easy steps that have kept me JOB FREE for years:

1. **Decide exactly how much money you want to make and how much time you are willing to dedicate to earning it.** Sounds simple huh? Well you cannot get directions for your journey if you do not know where you are going. Do you want to work 20 hours a week? Do you want to make \$10,000 a month or \$1,000 a day? Knowing what you want will help you identify the steps you need to take to achieve it. If you wanted food you would know where to get it. However, success is not found in grocery stores. What good would it be if you wanted to be a personal trainer but were going to school to be a chef? Figure out what you want and then you will be able to learn exactly how to make that happen.

If you are finding it hard to decide how much you want to make and how much time you are willing to work here are some tips. To begin, decide why you would like to be successful. Please note that there is a difference between why you should and why you will. If you want to be a personal trainer, the reason why you *should* is probably to combat obesity and help people live healthier lives. However, the reason why you *will* is that you love to work in workout clothes, make a great income, and want to have the time freedom to take off to Bora Bora.

Be positive. Remember most of the things people say are for millionaires do not cost a million dollars. That trip I just mentioned to Bora Bora has been referenced many times by my friends as a “once in a lifetime event” a “dream,” and some even call it unrealistic. However, if you head on over to Expedia.com and research how much the trip actually costs you will see that the price is nowhere near \$1 million. It may cost more than an evening at the State Fair but it is good to know exactly how much you need to make in order to make your dreams come true.

Let’s say you realized that your dream vacation was \$10,000. Isn’t it nice to know that if you were your own boss, less than \$1,000 a month would make your dreams come true? I think so. Decide now.

2. **Focus on something- not everything.** Some entrepreneurs are very multi-faceted and have several talents and interests. Some people have the option to choose between being a life coach, a personal trainer, a chef, and even being a video marketer. Having many talents is wonderful but it can hinder you from achieving success. If you do not choose something to focus on you will be a jack of all trades but an expert of none. To be your own boss you must be great at *something* not everything.

In the beginning it may not entirely clear what you want to do. It will never be clear until you get more specific. List everything that you would love to do for a living. Look at that list and honestly differentiate what are career options and what are simply hobbies. Perhaps some things on the list can be goals for you to aspire to. For instance, you may want to be a fitness competitor but hardly ever workout or eat healthy. You can aspire to achieve that goal someday but for now you can focus on something that is a better fit for you.

I recommend considering ways to be your own boss which will not take a tremendous amount of training. For example, going to a seminar versus going to medical school are ways to compare how much time the career track you choose will take. Choose something that complements skill sets you already have. **What can you do now with what you know?** What do you have experience in? What can you do to add value to your industry? Remember that the decision you make will impact how long it takes to achieve the goals you set for yourself.

Tip: Do a little research on both what your skills are and how successful people got their start. To research your skills you can ask family, friends, and coworkers to describe your skills in three words. What they say may surprise you! Interviewing successful people to see how they got started may give you insights on how everyone's journey is different. If you interviewed Kelly Clarkson, you would learn she started as a waitress!

3. **Focus on your “profit centers” not necessarily on your interests.** If you get an opportunity to get clients in personal training but feel that you truly want to be a chef you have a problem. You are not focusing on your opportunity to make money; you are focusing solely on what is fun for you. The most important part of being your own boss is being able to afford it. So if you want to fire your boss, you must be willing to work in areas that make you money whether you are thrilled about it or not.

Profit centers are activities that provide you with the income you need to live the life you want. Let’s say you can successfully replace your income as a personal trainer. Doing so will allow you to quit your job and make more money in 20 hours than you normally make in 40 hours a week. Although you may prefer to be a chef, you now have an extra 20 hours a week that you did not have before. You are officially your own boss and can use that extra time however you want.

In that time you can explore how you are going to leverage the time and money you have now to work in a way that inspires you (such as being a chef). However, if you wait until the conditions are perfect before you can fire your boss (like making great income as a chef rather than as a personal trainer) you are delaying your dreams. Be flexible and willing to achieve your dreams one milestone at a time.

The main goal here is to be sure that you are *not* getting in your own way. Success is not a door you walk through, it’s more like a ladder you climb. You have to be willing to be open minded to what actually gives you control over your life. Once you learn how to work on your own without depending on a steady paycheck, the sky is the limit as to what you can accomplish in life. Go for your dreams and be open about achieving “mini” dreams on the way there.

Tip: Think of all the mini ways in which you achieve your BIG dreams! (i.e. start a blog, get a logo, hire an assistant, get coaching, etc)

List at least one now: _____

4. **Go make some money for your dreams without relying on a job or a bank to make them a reality.** Now that we are clear that it is important to make money in order to fire your boss it is important that you work on that. Not everyone is going to have a service or product they can offer immediately. That is no reason to stop your journey. You should not wait to invent something or have the funds to invest in an expensive franchise. You can start making money from home by selling *other people's* products.

To do so profitably with little to no money when you begin you have a couple of viable options to explore. First you can be an affiliate of a product. That means that there are people who already have products to sell and they are willing to give you a portion of their profits for helping them sell it. **Popular websites to become an affiliate include: Amazon.com and ClickBank.com.** You can make anywhere from a few cents to hundreds of dollars depending on the volume of units sold and their individual prices. Being an affiliate is a great strategy for people who have a large email database of emails or have a great way to develop one.

The second option is to join a network marketing company. Network marketing companies have lucrative compensation plans that pay you based on your personal sales volume and on the sales volume on any other distributors you recruit. That means that you are not the only one who is responsible for your income! By enrolling in the company and getting both customers to buy the product or service and recruiting others to do the same you can enjoy leveraging your time and making a lot of money with only a small investment to begin.

Note that results vary with either of these strategies and you must work diligently on both in order to fire your boss. In the beginning you will both have a boss and be your own boss. It may be a lot to handle but it is totally worth the trouble. Having been job free for years now, I know that these strategies are profitable and can provide one with a great lifestyle.

5. **Break out of your comfort zone and start networking with successful people in your industry.** Your net worth is usually a reflection of your network. Go out there and find the best people in your niche and aspire to be like them. Success leaves clues and it is important for you to start learning from them. I'm sure you have heard the saying "it's not *what* you know but *who* you know that matters." The saying does not only apply for those seeking job opportunities, it also applies to those seeking mentorship and knowledge.

In addition, you should look for and attract people who can learn from you. Yes you! You have something great to offer the marketplace. Don't be shy about it. It is important to have an online presence so that people can get to know you. Having a blog that you use to collect e-mail addresses is a must. **You need to begin to gather email addresses.** Doing so will help you bring awareness to the marketplace when you have a new project, an updated blog post, or an upcoming sale. People are busy and their attention is being pulled in a million directions online. If you have a way to contact them (like their email address) you can cut through the clutter and reach out to them.

Also, collecting email addresses will be a great way to measure how many people you have reached. If you have 100 email addresses you will know that you are off to a good start but as you see the numbers increase to the thousands you will know that people are responding well to what you have to offer them. Having a way to contact your list will give you infinite ways to grow your business, contact those who are a fan of your work, and get feedback from them. I absolutely love to email out surveys and ask people to tell me what is important to them. Knowing exactly what they are looking for helps you serve them as best as possible.

TIP: Collecting email addresses is best done using an auto responder. Go check out <http://ileanharris.com/resources> to learn more about them.

6. **Live now like no one else so later on you can live like no one else.** Some people are willing to be great, as long as it does not mean sacrificing anything good. You should be willing to put in the time and effort that it takes to be successful. There will be nights when your friends are out and about but you decide to stay home to work. Know that you are making the right choice by staying on track. You must be willing to stay focused on your goals. You can go after your goals as slow as you want or as fast as you want. Imagine wanting to lose 10 lbs and eating healthy once a week. Do you think you are going to meet your goal with that inconsistency? It would obviously be better if you ate healthy during each meal rather than once in a while.

If you are not careful Hollywood can rob you of your success. You are not going to gain insight into all of your problems and solve them in 1-2 hours when the movie ends. You are going to succeed, struggle, fail, and conquer your goals. You have to keep your head up high and keep going. One of the best ways to address this is to set a budget, a schedule, and get an accountability partner. By setting a budget you can set aside money for your dreams and reward yourself as you reach milestones. Find a balance between suffering and splurging. Moreover, setting a schedule will help keep you organized and on track. With so much to do and so little time we are often guilty of thinking of everything and doing nothing. **Setting a schedule will help you budget your biggest asset- your time.**

Finally, getting an accountability partner will help hold you to the promises you made yourself. Not only will an accountability partner remind you of what your goals are but they will encourage you when you achieve them. Many of us entrepreneurs start as “solopreneurs.” Getting an accountability partner will give you a team member that is very valuable to the morale and will give you a great reason to keep on going.

7. **Prepare yourself for failure.** Failure will be your best teacher and mentor on your journey to becoming your own boss. You will never know what works for you and what doesn't until you do it. One of the reminders I give new entrepreneurs is that "you do not know what you do not know" but you have to move forward anyways. You may not always fail but you may not always succeed either. You must be prepared for both. The best part about failing is understanding what does not work.

A great way to learn from failure is by listening to yourself. When you host a conference call, record a video, or present on a Webinar, you should record it. You learn a lot about yourself when you stop to listen to your work. You will realize that you may have spoken too fast, given the message in a disorganized order, or maybe you were not asking enough questions to engage your audience. If you listen to the work you did, especially in the beginning, and do not find anything wrong with your work then you may have a problem.

If you do not find anything wrong with your work then you are either not being open minded enough or do not have the training to identify your areas of improvement. In that case, it is important to have someone else listen to the work you did. Although it is possible that you did a great job from the beginning it does not mean that there are no areas of improvement. It's always about what you did wrong; it's about what you can do better.

One cannot prevent failure but you can certainly grow from it. Not all readers are leaders but all leaders are readers. You must develop yourself. Failure is going to happen but you do not have to let it happen in vain. Look for books in your industry that you can learn from. If you cannot afford an expensive coach a book is a great alternative. For a few dollars you can learn from great thought leaders. It's a great way to learn from your mistakes and make an effort to ensure that they never happen again.

8. **If you want more, you must be more.** Often people want to make more money, look better, and have more time without doing anything differently. It all boils down to personal development and how much effort you put into being your own boss. There may be a period during which you have to multi-task and wear several hats at once. You may have to juggle having a boss and trying to be your own boss at once. In other cases you will also be juggling family life and an array of personal matters.

The more you can handle in the beginning, the better you will be at being your own boss. The better you get at focusing on problem solving (rather than “problem counting and complaining”) the faster you will be your own boss. Entrepreneurs like to work, they just dislike jobs. So if you want to be your own boss because you don’t like to work you got it twisted. You have to be prepared to take on a lot of responsibility and handle it with the posture of a leader.

Moreover, people like to invest in products and services that are both fair in price and worth way more than they are paying for. Who doesn’t love a good deal? For you to be more profitable, your products and services have to be more valuable. When Donald Trump started his real estate development business, he did not start as a billionaire. To become a billionaire he had to do more and get better each time. You are no exception.

There will always be competition in your industry. The better you become by reading, going to seminars, obtaining coaching and mentorship, and learning from your mistakes, the more success will come from your efforts. If you do the same thing over and over, you will get the same results repeatedly. Therefore, to have more you must be more. Take your business seriously and find a way to stand out. Do you have great customer service? Do you have an amazing twist on a traditional business or product? Why will people invest in your products and services over others? What are you willing to do that your competitors won’t in order to be your own boss? When you have the answers to that, get ready for your business to take off.

9. **Constantly push yourself to expand your business.** It is easy to get comfortable when you start making *any* amount of money. It will feel good to see any kind of progress. Imagine starting with nothing and then suddenly having something to lose. You will be tempted to hold on to it tight! You will naturally and instinctively want to keep doing the exact same things to keep getting the exact same results. You will be inclined to stick to what you know with the intention of avoiding a loss. But according to history, every company that has stayed in business for lengthy periods of time was constantly expanding and adapting their business to current trends.

One could argue that by doing the exact same thing that you are simply trying to be consistent. There is power in being consistent. I would rather have you do what you know how consistently rather than nothing at all. However, it is nothing more than a self-imposed ceiling on how much income you can make as your own boss. By pushing yourself to expand you are willing to go beyond your comfort zone. There are no limits to what you can do when you are your own boss. There is no one to tell you how many hours to work, at what time to show up, and what quality of work to put out. That is why we (entrepreneurs) use our paychecks as report cards to assess how we are doing.

Look at your income and challenge yourself to make more. How can you provide more value? Can you bundle your services with another company for increased exposure? What can you do to make more and push yourself beyond your wildest dreams? My advice is to expand before you are ready. Have you ever been to the mall in the fall and seen signs that say the stores are hiring for the holiday season? That is because they are preparing in advance for their busy season. DO the same and prepare for yours by expanding before you are ready.

The more comfortable you get with being uncomfortable, the more likely you will be able to become your own boss and keep it that way.

10. Have a job until you are able to support yourself as your own boss.

Quitting a job is so liberating. It felt so good to walk out of my job and never turn back. All the weight was lifted off my shoulders. Well, that was until I needed to make several payments and did not have a steady pay check to count on. I'm sure people could hear the desperation in my voice that expressed how bad I needed their business and their money. I got through it but if I could do it all over again, I would do it differently. I know for a fact that being desperate was not good for business. I did not have the confidence in my voice or a strong posture that communicated to a consumer that they were making the right choice in making a purchase from me.

The stress of bills and putting food on the table can hinder your concentration and ability to produce in your business. I understand that some people don't have a job to quit so the stress is inevitable. Therefore, I will say this: As you build your business, do not be ashamed to take on a part time job that is completely irrelevant to your business (like waitressing) in order to keep you afloat. In fact, having a job will motivate you to succeed in your business even more. Also, not only does a job give you the opportunity to have a roof over your head but it can give you income to invest in your business as you develop it. Need to self-publish a book? Do you want a professional photo shoot to improve your personal branding? Well a job can certainly help you with the much needed funds for that.

Tip: If you are going to have a job to help you pay for your expenses then be a good steward of your time and your income. When you are off work, do not slack off- work on your business. When you get paid, do not go to the mall and buy everything you see- invest in your business. Use your time and resources wisely. When you are your own boss, it is up to you as to how big your business gets, how much you work, and how much you make.

Work as if you were already a success story and the success story will come as a result.

Write your goals & strategies (Print Out)

- What is your goal?
- How much money do you want to make? A month..... A week....An hour?
- How much time do you want to work each week?
- How much time can you dedicate now (on a daily basis) to achieve your goal?

- Who do you know (or look up to) that has what you want? (Association is powerful. Pay attention to people who have what you want.)
- What distractions can you eliminate that will increase the amount of time you have to achieve your goals? (Can you commit to going out once a week rather than every night? Can you watch TV once a week rather than every night? Remember when you watch TV you are watching other people WORK and get paid rather than becoming your own boss.)
- Have you ever achieved a goal like this? What experience do you have that will help you through your journey? (Empower yourself and brag in this space as much as possible. Sometimes our own worst critic lives between our very own two ears.)

- Do you know anyone that has been through a similar journey as you that you can reach out to? If you do, decide how you can reconnect with them. (Support is key for entrepreneurs. If you do not know anyone that can help visit www.score.org for access to free retired professionals that give mentorship)

- When you do want to achieve your goal? (Goals without deadlines are fleeting thoughts. Be sure to add your deadline to your calendars, set reminders on your phone, and even make it a screen saver on all your electronic devices to keep your eyes on the prize.)

- What rewards can you give yourself throughout your journey to stay motivated? (Yes! Motivation is what keeps all entrepreneurs going. I cook to relax. I have friends that shop. Others love to travel as a way to disconnect from it all.)

- Make a list of everything that you are good at, enjoy, and have experience in. (This is a great exercise if you are not sure how you will become your own boss.)



Skill #1

Skill #2

Skill #3

- Narrow down the previous to ONE thing and only ONE thing that you will focus on.

Tip: Look for patterns in your list of things you are good at. Do they revolve around marketing, parenting, photography, nutrition, etc? If you see a theme then you likely see a hint as to what niche you should focus on.

- How can you apply your experience and skills to the niche you are interested in? Do you have references that can help you establish credibility?

- If not, what training do you need to become credible? When is such training available? By when do you have to register? How much does it cost? What books can you read? What blogs can you follow?

- What can you do now that will make you money? Keep your job? Start a network marketing business? Become an affiliate? Think about what you want and what you are willing to do to get there. Can you babysit, etc? How can you take on business expenses?
- How are you going to raise money for your business venture? Are you going to save? Are you going to get a second job? Are you going to become an affiliate? Think and plan your next steps so that you can take purposeful action without confusion.

- As you begin to develop a cash flow (or even if NOT) you must begin to develop your brand. The best way to do so is with a blog. Plan to do the following (Links to all these steps can be found at www.ileanharris.com/resources :
- Buy your domain name (make sure it is professional, preferably your full name).
- Get an AutoResponder so that people get an email from you. (Yes, you must collect emails no matter where you are in your entrepreneurial journey).
- Get active in social media. Get your name out there and be your biggest fan until you develop some.
- Be sure to have ways for people to contact you. You can get a google voice phone number for free to increase your privacy. You can also create an email address solely for your website inquiries.
- Post high quality pictures of yourself. Personal branding is key if your business is attached to your name. Present yourself professionally.
- Invest time and effort into your brand. It is your business card during this information era.

- Begin to network with successful people in your industry. Go to events, introduce yourself to people on Facebook, etc. If you do not have the funds to be a socialite at industry events find ways to volunteer at big events. Get your foot in the door one way or the other! (Non-profit events are great for networking not just business conferences.)
- Find an accountability partner. Who will remind you of your goals? Who will keep you on track and motivate you when you are down? Find someone who you can depend on and set up weekly calls with them. Be a friend and hold someone else accountable in return.
- All leaders are readers even if all readers are not leaders. What book will you read to build on your strengths and improve your weaknesses? How many chapters can you commit to a week? When will you read them? Can you go to your local library if you are on a tight budget? Find the time, reading is a great way to learn from experts without paying them a lot of money for consulting!

The Big Picture: Decide what you want and go after it!

Write your goals and strategies. Don't forget to add dates to your goals to hold you accountable. Notice that the arrow leads to endless opportunities. Go for your dreams and remember that you can have it all- faith, family, and business. You just have to set a goal, make a plan to achieve, and take action!

