
LIGHTWORKER'S

GUIDE TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT

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INTRODUCTION

“DO THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT COME FROM YOUR HEART. When you do, you won’t be dissatisfied, you won’t be envious, you won’t be longing for somebody else’s things. On the contrary, you’ll be overwhelmed with what comes back.”

--Morrie Schwarts (from Tuesdays With Morrie)

My intention of writing this eBook (and sharing it for free) is to help other lightworkers in their journey to successful self-employment. I think more and more people will be self-employed in the New World, so better start sooner than later.

I finally made the jump in my forties. Looking back, I wish I did it earlier. I had opportunities. Like when I was let go from my corporate trainer position. I could have utilized the job loss as an opportunity to be on my own. Instead, however, I just looked for another job.

For many years, I knew something was calling me, but I ignored it and stayed in the cushy position in the corporate world. I didn’t hate my corporate job -- I think all the positions I held were great educational ground. For instance, my last “job” as executive assistant gave me the chance to see all aspects of a mid-size business and the opportunity to work with various personnel, from housekeepers to CEO of a billion-dollar multinational corporation. All those years, however, the internal tension was growing, until one day I finally admitted it was time.

I wish I had a mentor or at least a book that would have helped me navigate my way to self-employment. Someone who could help me see that I already overgrew my role in the company. Some books that showed me how to get started as an aspiring entrepreneur.

So this is why I’m writing this eBook -- I guess there are people out there who are in the same place I was before. If this little eBook can shed some light to them, I am honored.

But wait, who are “lightworkers?”

On the soul level, a lightworker, or a positive soul, is a soul that is evolving toward Light Source. It’s a slightly misleading term because it implies it’s about “work” whereas the truth is it’s about being, the way you are. If you are receiving the vital life energy from Light Source, if your fundamental driving force is love, you are a lightworker no matter what you are doing. (Negative souls, by contrast, have refused to evolve toward Light Source and take vital life energy from people around them. It’s a sad fact that, at this point of our evolution, such negative souls exist and we need to be mindful not to get sucked up by them.)

So there is no specific “lightworker” professions. You may be aspiring to do things like healing, environmental work, teaching, coaching, art of various kinds, and other works that are typically associated with lightworkers. Or you may be more “practical” and thinking of starting a restaurant or manufacturing a product you invented and engineered. Or maybe something else yet that I haven’t even thought about. That doesn’t matter. This eBook is about the internal work of a self-employed person, and it is applicable regardless of the industry and business type you are interested in.

If someone can start a business without spirituality, you surely can with spirituality

You may be wondering if spirituality and entrepreneurship are compatible. There is a myth about business and making money, that you have to do dirty un-spiritual things to succeed in this world. You may have been told that it’s a dog-eat-dog world out there, and you have to lie, trick, manipulate, push, and so on to be successful.

Be assured -- nothing can be further from the truth. Such dark approach may bring temporary success, but if you want sustainable long-term success, you need to be in the light. Whatever your business may be, you are ultimately serving people, so gaining and living up to their trust and love is essential to your ongoing business success. **Part I** of this eBook investigates the various myths about successful business and entrepreneurship. I will be discussing the elements I think are essential for successful entrepreneurship in Part I. Further, throughout this eBook, I will show you how spirituality can help you in your endeavor to start your business.

Considering the challenges of starting a business, I wonder how anyone can do it without spirituality. If someone can start a business without spirituality, you surely can with spirituality. As a lightworker, you are at an advantage, not a disadvantage.

The scope of this eBook

By now, I hope you have figured out that **this eBook is not about making money quickly**. So if your main question is “What is the best business idea to make money fast?,” you might want to check somewhere else. In this eBook, the business idea will be discussed from the perspective of life purpose.

And while I believe the same principles I will discuss would apply to big businesses, the focus here is micro business, like self-employment. In **Part II** of this eBook, I will discuss self-employment from the embryonic stage to the point you actually take the leap of faith. (I’m also deeply involved in developing the business further by building systems, rather than spending extra time out of our day, but that will be a topic of another eBook.)

Part III of this eBook is about success. It incorporates the success stories of business owners I have had the honor to be acquainted with, and aims to help you define your version of success.

In addition, there is a **Resources** section at the end of this eBook for the books and websites I find helpful.

One last note: I will be talking about my own business from time to time because I love it and I've learned a lot about entrepreneurship through this, but please be assured that you have no obligation to purchase anything. This eBook is one of my gifts to this world.

I hope you enjoy this eBook. To your success and prosperity,

Love, Light & Truth,

Akemi Gaines

PART I: MYTHS & REALITY

Myths of entrepreneurship

The amount of myths that surround entrepreneurship is so much that, if you take them seriously, there is just no way you would ever go into business on your own. They are often extreme and contradictory:

- You must be young to start a business.
- You must be old enough to have plenty of experience to succeed in business. People trust older business owners.
- You must be a man. The world is still dominated by men.
- You must be a woman -- women have unique perspective that ensures entrepreneurial success.
- You must be single and flexible to start a business.
- You must have kids -- for the same reason you must be a woman to succeed as entrepreneur.
- You must have high education and official credentials, like MBA.
- You must be streetwise. Formal education is no good for entrepreneurship.
- You must be an extrovert. Networking and marketing are critical in business success.
- You must be an introvert. Focused attention and persistent effort is what leads to success.

- You must be rich. It takes a lot of capital to start a business.
- You must be hungry to be motivated for success.
- (And more. Add your own myth here.)

I wonder how all these myths start. Is it the failed entrepreneurs who start them in their bitterness? Or is it the employers who don't want to lose competent employees and therefore resort to fear tactics?

These are all myths. The truth is there are successful entrepreneurs at every age group, both men and women, whether they are single or partnered, whether they have children or not, of various educational and social backgrounds, and of various personality types.

Real life entrepreneurs

- In 1975, a homeless named Alex Smith found 2 GBP (about US \$3) in the gutter. Instead of spending it on foods, he used the money to start his business -- please read the whole story at [Alara Wholefoods](#), which now sells organic muesli. You can even personalize the muesli -- yummy idea!
- Rachel Ashwell dropped out of school at age 16. She left England and came to California, got married, had kids, then got divorced. Rather than getting a job, she started selling refinished furniture that she bought at flea markets. The store was called Shabby Chic -- eventually she started designing and manufacturing her own line, part of which are now sold at Target stores.
- Did you watch the movie The Pursuit of Happyness? That was based on a real life story of Chris Gardner. Chris didn't know his biological father as a child, his stepfather was abusive, and his mother was incarcerated when he was eight. And it's not hard to imagine how he was discriminated as a black when he was growing up. As you

saw in the movie, he was poor and even went through homelessness while struggling to raise his son. The movie ended when he landed a permanent job at the brokerage firm, but he didn't stop there. Only five years after getting his license, he founded his own stock brokerage firm, Gardner Rich & Co., from his apartment room.

- James Dyson was an engineer. At home, he did house chores like everyone else. The difference was that he took his frustrations seriously -- like the frustration to work with a vacuum cleaner that loses suction with usage. So he invented a new type of vacuum (which took 5127 prototypes) and founded a company to sell them. Please read the story [here](#).
- Did you know quite a few entrepreneurs have learning disabilities like dyslexia? Richard Branson of Virgin Records and Paul Orfalea, Kinko's founder, are just two famous examples.

So no matter who you are, you can start your own business. Your success relies not on your age, gender, etc. but on other factors.

What you really need

This is the list of elements that I think are critical for any business success:

1. Strong and sustainable motivation
2. Self-knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses
3. Ability to connect with other people
4. Knowledge of your business and its appropriate marketing
5. Persistence & risk management skill
6. Money

Now before we dive in to examine each element -- I can almost hear you saying, "But what about talent? Isn't that a critical component?"

0. Talent

Ah, the talent. I have two points to make:

1. If you have absolutely no talent about that thing you are interested in doing (whatever that is), you are not interested in it to begin with. In other words, the fact that you love it shows you have talent for it. This is true at least with lightworkers. (Unfortunately, negative souls tend to have lopsided ideas about themselves because they are not in touch with their own souls. Repairing this issue, however, is outside the scope of this eBook.)
2. Even with the talent you have, if you don't take it seriously and develop it, it's just there. Like a diamond mine that is not dug out. It's diamond, but it's of no use.

So you need to dig out your diamond, your God given talent, and polish it, too. You need to get up and start using it. The discussion of talent is completely meaningless until you do this, and once you do it, you don't need discussion about it. You are busy polishing it.

I am yet to meet an entrepreneur whose talent was shining super clear when he or she started their first business. Remember the aforementioned entrepreneurs? Do you notice they just started around the approximate area of their brilliance, not exactly with their super hits? Also, check out the first book or first blog post of well-known writers and leaders of any field. You'll be amazed how rough they are. You may be able to see the light of their talent, but it's far from well-polished.

So regarding talent, all I have to say is know yourself, take whatever talent you have seriously and lovingly, and get going.

Okay, now let's talk about the six elements that I listed ^_^

1. Strong and sustainable motivation

I hope your motivation to become your own boss is not just about escapism.

There is a big difference between moving toward your dreams and moving away from what you loathe. If you want to escape from your mean boss, annoying colleagues, office rules, and long commute, your goal is achieved the minute you submit your resignation.

If you have been tied to your job for many years, and you have been brainwashed in years of education prior to employment, you may find this hard to believe, but it really is so easy to escape the workplace. Too easy, in fact. You step out, and the escape is done. Then you are left with no real motivation to build your business other than financial need.

Further, because we are all creating our own reality, we can say you created your own misery. It may look like there are horrible people and situations at work and you are just a powerless victim, but no way. So I suggest cultivating the power to create first -- the power to create love and fulfillment -- rather than escaping from what you hate. Otherwise, you may just become a very victimized business owner -- with horrible clients and vendors.

Be sure you are moving toward something positive rather than running away from something negative. Again, these are not the same thing. Creating something of value, something that is good both for you and the world, is a work of an empowered and free soul. Running away is something a frustrated slave would do.

What is your true motivation?

What can work as strong and sustainable motivation? This is a personal question, but I find that, for many lightworkers, one is the **love and passion** for your business, for what you do. Another is the **sense of service**.

Love and passion for what you do is a critical basis for self-employment for many of us. It's a simple thing. Do you like what you do, be it web design, coaching, making sandwiches, or whatever? Would you do it even if it doesn't make any money -- just for the joy of it?

As naive as this may sound, your genuine love will carry you through many of the ups and downs of the business. Moreover, people have a way to tell -- and if all other factors are the same, we definitely prefer to do business with people whose genuine love shows through. Well, even if other factors are not the same, many would prefer to do business with those they like -- and people like those who are emitting love.

In Part II, we will study how you can turn your love to a business niche. For now, let me encourage you to embrace your love seriously.

Beyond love and passion for your business

Love and passion is a strong motivation. However, in order for this to be a truly sustainable motivation, I think the love needs to grow beyond self-satisfaction.

Let me explain by example. Let's say you like singing. You love your singing voice and the way it mingles with the music. This is great. Do enjoy it a lot. But it may not be enough to get you up on the stage when you are not feeling very well. Well, when you are a professional singer, you do have to go on stage even when you are not at your best. This is the limitation of the kind of love that is based on self-satisfaction.

However, if you also love the way you connect and uplift the audience with your singing, it gives you the power and motivation to overcome your fear and personal downs. This is the kind of love that goes beyond the small self you see as "you". It's a stable, quiet love. Some people may call it the sense of service.

James Dyson probably loves engineering and innovation, but I'm not sure if he particularly loves vacuum cleaners. But he wants people to have good vacuum cleaners that work for them for a long time. That got him going and even motivated him to make and run a company. (And I'm sure the business administration drives him crazy often.)

Again the question of motivation is a personal one. It may have little to do with your niche, or what you do. For Chris Gardner, it was his love for his child and the sense of mission to be

a good father. I don't think he particularly loves stocks or trading, but it was a good way to make something of himself.

2. Self-knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses

When you are employed, there is an external system of evaluation. And if the employer is a good one, they use this system not just as a way to determine pay raises but as a tool for training. To some extent, you could rely on their system to understand your strengths and weaknesses and to find how to utilize / cover them.

When you are self-employed, few will be so kind to point out your strengths and weaknesses. You just see their effects -- as sales figures. Therefore fair and unbiased self-knowledge is critical.

Remember that **many of your strengths and weaknesses are like flip sides of a coin**. It's more important to utilize the positive side and get appropriate help for the weak side than trying to change yourself.

For instance, we briefly touched on the introvert / extrovert issue earlier. Is one better than the other in business? Is being an introvert a definitive weakness in sales and marketing? Well, if your business requires you to talk to many strangers (like in a retail store), yes. But then, I don't see an introvert wanting to start this kind of business. If you are introverted and shy about talking to new people, but like to focus on doing things on your own, you can build that kind of business -- perhaps a business that deals with a relatively small number of clients, hopefully repeat clients that you can build a long term relationship with. Your stability will attract exactly the right kind of clients who don't like showy, catchy marketing. And maybe you can get help from professional marketing specialists.

Sometimes perceived weaknesses may well be your assets that set you apart from the rest. I was reminded of this point by [Stephen Hopson](#) (the link takes you to the interview I did with him, which includes links to his own website), who carved out a unique niche few can imitate. He is a deaf motivational speaker. Yes, he takes advantage of his disability. When

you hear him say adversities are opportunities in disguise, in his slightly-accented speech, you understand it not just on the intellectual level but also on the emotional level.

Assessment exercise

So let's take a good long look at yourself. Take out a large piece of paper. Make four columns: My Strengths, My Weaknesses, Can I turn this weakness into my asset?, Help to cover this weakness.

The strength column is the first column for a reason. It's a lot easier and more effective to utilize your strengths than fixing your weaknesses. Your business is based on your strengths, not on the retraining of your weaknesses.

Write down whatever comes to your mind. Stick it on the wall and add more as the ideas (especially for the last two columns) hit you. Ask your friends and family what they think of you.

Self love in entrepreneurship

The foundation of this self-assessment exercise is self love. We are all growing toward the bigger love (or may I say Divine Love), meaning most of us are not quite there yet, so if you feel a bit bad about looking at your "weaknesses" column, that's no big deal. But if you feel bad to the point you are petrified, you may want to step back and nurture your self love before jumping to entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a real test of self love. "Am I doing it right?" "Am I good enough to make it?" "Who am I to believe in my crazy idea?" are common questions that rise in the new entrepreneur's mind. Are you ready to move forward with all these conditioned doubts?

And even if you are a confident type as an individual, we have this myth that we, as one person, are too small, too petty, to be taken seriously. The world is full of established big businesses. Even they are struggling. Is there a room for little me? Possibly?

The answer is a big yes, **the world is waiting for your unique contribution, but it's only yes if you can see the value of yourself first.** In terms of business, it's primarily the value of your products and services, but the underlying premise is the value of yourself.

And because you know not just your pretty side but also your weaknesses, this means you love yourself as a whole person, as you are.

Again, this is a process. You don't need to wait until you are so much of self love before you start your business. We can grow further in love as we learn more about ourselves through self-employment. But we do need to start from the place of self love.

Self love as a moving and connecting force

Self love, when it grows strong, can also be the moving force in starting a business. You love and value yourself to the point that you take your (business) ideas seriously and take action.

As lightworkers, we need to be aware of the common myth of "We need to sacrifice ourselves to serve others." This is a myth often used to manipulate lightworkers. Don't buy into it. On the contrary, healthy self love and sense of service go hand in hand to build a successful and sustainable business.

We cannot connect with others from the heart when we don't love ourselves. When we don't love ourselves, we set up a fake facade that we hope would please others. But people somehow sense the lack of authenticity and stay several steps away from you.

Don't let this happen. Be yourself and love it.

When you do this, by the way, a strange thing can happen. People come to you because you are a small business. I think people fundamentally like to do business with another person, rather than with a faceless business entity. It's all about human connections. So this again goes back to the discussion that your perceived weakness may be your asset in disguise. Find that out with love.

3. Ability to connect with other people

Whether your business serves individuals or businesses, and whether its sales is face to face or online, business is really about connecting with another human. It's about getting their trust and love.

This takes a lot more than being nice or clever marketing. This takes a lot more than intellectual understanding of human behavior. And it's not about killing yourself and being a yes person -- we already learned that self love is the foundation of making connection with others.

How can we, as business owners, connect with others effectively in an honest, trustworthy way? It takes emotional intelligence. It's about fostering positive energy exchange.

Ask yourself which businesses you really like and why. Recall how you felt when you last bought something from them. Ask yourself why you want to go there (or their website) again when you need it again (or even when you don't need it).

Chances are, it's not just about the low price. You feel good being there or talking with the people there or reading their websites. The place is comfortable / interesting / inspiring.

Now can you recreate something like that, with your own unique flavor?

Your way to connect with other people is unique to you, so I cannot teach it to you. Some people have a natural hunch about it, and some may need practice and experience. But I can say this: Never think of customers as slot machines that give you money when you figure out the right combination of sales pitches and product lines. Customers are fellow humans. This is so elemental, but I still can't emphasize it enough. Often, lightworkers start their business with the aspiration to serve others, but get mesmerized while they learn various marketing and sales techniques.

I also want to emphasize that, whatever your style of connecting with others, let it be based on the actual good work. Do your honest good work -- that will make your customers happy

and get them to come back. Do your honest good work always and address any problems with respect and fairness -- this will eventually earn their trust.

And once you build good relationships, keep them fresh. Don't let your hard-earned customers' trust slip because you are obsessed with getting more customers. Existing customers already like and trust you. They are likely to become repeat customers if you stay in contact. They can also be the wonderful source of referrals. (More on this in Part II when we talk about marketing.)

The ability to connect with others of course helps you in the back office, too, when you deal with your suppliers, vendors, and other professionals who help you.

4. Knowledge of your business and its appropriate marketing

When you know yourself, your customers, and your business, your business is strong. Thorough knowledge of your business, its industry, and its appropriate marketing is essential for the success of your business. This is a big topic that we will explore further in **Part II**.

5. Persistence & risk management skill

You do need to persist until you succeed in order to succeed. James Dyson made more than 5000 prototypes. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen took their manuscript of the first Chicken Soup book to more than 100 publishers. If you get discouraged with every failure and rejection, you are not going to survive in business. Persistence, backed with solid self love, is essential.

But then, the question is "Aren't there dead-ends in business endeavors? If I'm in one of those dead-ends, isn't it better to quit early to minimize the loss?" This is true. So what we really need is the skill to tell when to go and when to stop, when to persist and when to retreat early -- the risk management skill.

It's risk management skill, not risk avoidance skill. There is no way to avoid risks when you start your business. No matter how well you prepare, no matter how good your business idea is, there is a degree of risk. Starting a business means taking the responsibility to undertake unknown risks.

Risk of inaction

We want to be aware of the risk of not taking action. Many people have the illusion that, if they don't do anything, if they stay where they are, there are no risks. They are like an ostrich who sticks their head in the sand and pretends a storm is not coming. The reality is there is a huge risk in inaction.

You may want to think of what your risks are if you stay in the corporate world. Some possibilities are:

- The risk of being let go -- Losing a job unexpected can mess up your life and finance. It's especially hard when it happens when you are over the age fifty when re-employment becomes harder and harder.
- The risk of limited income -- Most employees are paid fixed wages. Even if you have remarkable talent and you work hard, it doesn't necessarily bring in more income.
- The risk of missed opportunities -- The market may be ready for your products and services, and if you don't get there, someone else will, building their market presence.
- The risk of undermined confidence -- There is a point when you know you are ready. But if you ignore this inner knowing, you undermine all your intuitive knowing. This can affect not only your potential business but also your life in general.
- The risk of continued stress and its effects on your physical and emotional health -- It's frustrating not to do what you want to do. You may think you can handle it, but it may be affecting your health, self image, and your relationships.

Calculating risks

To some extent, we can calculate risks. For instance, if you already wrote the book, sending the manuscript to many publishers doesn't involve much investment -- just postage and some of your time. So it's low risk, and all you need to deal with is your ego when you get rejection.

Making 5000 prototypes of vacuum cleaners and then starting to manufacture and sell the new type of vacuum involves far more risks. It takes a lot of time and money. I'm sure James Dyson plugged in numbers and pondered the risks carefully.

So what is your risk in starting your business? We'll be talking about the financial issue in a minute, but are there other risks in your case? Write them down.

Also review your current risk tolerance level and risk management skill. Ask yourself how much of your money and yourself you are willing to put into this new business you are thinking about. Additionally, think of a situation in which something valuable to you was at a risk and how you handled the situation. This can give you an idea of your risk management skill.

6. The issue of money

We do need some money to start a business. How much depends on the kind of business you are starting, and it may be a lot less than what you imagine.

For instance, my business had very low startup costs. I sell my specialized service, so I have no inventory. All my clients come to my website -- no rent for a store space nor need for furniture and appliances. Still, I did pay for the registration of my domain (a few dollars), web hosting service (less than \$10 per month) and the design of my business cards. Eventually, I invested some money for the improvement of my website, too. I already had a reasonable computer. Does this sound manageable to you?

Financial assessment

So the first step is assessment. Itemize the things and services that you need to start your business. Do some research and put some numbers to them. Also, review your finance and make your balance sheet and the last few months' operational statement. It means to figure out how many expenses you have each month -- then add the seasonal and occasional expenses so you know how much money you need. This gives you an idea how much money you need to make to get by at least, and with the information of your savings, you know how long you can last before your business starts making money.

Don't hide your numbers. Bring them all to the broad daylight and to your consciousness. (If you are not in the habit of managing your personal finances yet, invest in personal finance software like Microsoft Money. Mint.com is also fast and handy -- and it's free.)

Also, if you can rely on someone (like your spouse or parent), go ahead. We are meant to help each other. I think many of us are in the illusion that, if we rely on someone else, we are no good. We do need to respect everyone's boundaries, but if your loved one is happy to support you, have no shame. You can pay back when your business gets on track.

Additionally, I'd like to point out that the lack of money can be motivational, another blessing in disguise. Many of us are hesitant to learn and do marketing and put it off until very late -- until you realize your business is not making sales. The sheer lack of money can push you over this self-imposed apprehension of marketing. I'm talking from experience ... and in Part II, I will share what I finally learned about marketing... it's not all scary and horrible...

Moonlighting or "going into the cocoon"?

There are two ways to transition from employee status to self-employed status. One is the gradual step-by-step work of keeping your day job while you work on your business development on the side, perhaps at night and weekends -- moonlighting. Another is (after you do some business development work while you have your job) to make a clean cut at

one point, quit your job, and become self-employed full-time. Because the latter approach leaves you in the transitional phase when not much is clear, I call it “going into the cocoon.”

In other words, moonlighters wait until their business starts making sufficient money to replace their day job income while cocooners quit before this happens and work full-time in their new business that is not yet making much money. Cocooners may do some preliminary research and preparation work while they have their job, but they don’t wait until their business starts making as much money as their paycheck -- they make their ends meet in whatever way possible in the meantime.

There are pros and cons to both approaches:

Benefits and problems of moonlighting

The gradual transition of moonlighting may reduce the stress of start-up. You are forced to take a step by step approach due to the time restraint and this may work out well for you. And you have the assurance of a regular paycheck to rely on. Depending on your financial situation, this may be a preferred way of transition.

The problem of moonlighting is that “I can always rely on my paycheck” mentality. You may never become a full-time entrepreneur if you can’t shake off your dependency on paychecks. This is especially true for those who have nice, high-paying jobs. Your big paycheck may become the golden handcuffs that keep you in your employment.

Another issue is the lack of time. One full-time job consumes the majority of your day -- can you really squeeze the time to do your “side business” into your schedule?

Although moonlighting may seem like an easy option in which you can make gradual small changes toward entrepreneurship, it has a risk of intrinsic contradiction that might reduce your chances of becoming fully self-employed. I’m not saying you won’t make it -- I know plenty of people who have done it this way. A so-called “hobby business” is usually developed this way -- you get serious with your hobby, it starts making money, and eventually grows to the point that you don’t need the day job any longer.

Benefits and problems of cocooning

The big challenge of this “burn your bridge -- quit the day job” approach is the money. How can you pay for your living and for the new business if you don’t have the paycheck and the business is not making much money?

Well, be creative. Save up money while you have the paycheck by drastically simplifying your lifestyle. Sell your car (especially if your business is home-based) or sell your house and move to an apartment. If you have a spouse or parents who can support you, accept their help. It’s okay to be helped, to take their support and love. There are probably other ways ... see how you can get by (of course legally and safely) for awhile.

You may want to set a time limit of how long you want to do this full-time work for your new business development. Like, “Okay, I will quit my job and work on this business idea for six months. If, at the end of six months, it makes \$ (fill in the blank), I will keep going, but if not, I will look for another job.”

Another problem of this approach is the stress. Starting a business in any way involves uncertainty, and by letting go of your paychecks, you will be facing the uncertainty right in its face.

However, if you have a clear sense of purpose, this stress can be turned to motivation. You don’t have the assurance of regular paychecks, so it’s either you make it or else. Don’t be playing the “I’m so scared” game, get to work!

The clear benefit of this approach is the time and focus. You have all the time of the day to work on your business development. This can cause the immersion effect that is often discussed in foreign language education.

Going into the cocoon for full immersion

In foreign language education, such as teaching Japanese to Americans or teaching English as a second language (which, by the way, my college major is about), it is well known that immersion is more effective than learning the same material in a longer span of time. Listen, speak, read, and write nothing but the target language, all day long, for several months, and you are likely to master that language.

Let's do the math. If you spend 8 hours a day in immersion program (which is just half of your waking hours) seven days a week, in 20 weeks, you spend 1120 hours. And with the right immersion environment and study material, you are very likely to reach the point where you can speak the target language with fluency. (It doesn't mean you have mastered the language at this point, but you are well in that direction. From here on, you can loosen up and spend much less time in "using" the language, and you will reach your desired level of competency.)

By contrast, if you spend one hour a day three days a week studying, you spend 156 hours per year, so in less than eight years you'd be spending more time than the immersion program person. But at this point, you probably won't reach the same level of fluency you could reach with the immersion program. In fact, even if you study for 20 years at the same pace, you may not reach the fluency level that is possible with immersion. And you most likely give up long before this because it's not fun to spend such a long span of time just "studying" the language.

By the way, 1000 hours seems to be the minimal amount of time to see some results of your effort in business development as well. It's the first tipping point. If you don't see any results, any light that gives you hope to keep going, after 1000 hours, you may want a serious review. It may not mean you are in the wrong path, but something is off -- in business, it may be your marketing or basic system of the business.

The third approach

I know I sound partial to cocooning. Well, maybe, because this is what I did. I knew I didn't have the mental dexterity to do both the day job and my new business concurrently.

I also understand cocooning is not for everyone. So I'm thinking there may be some middle way. In language education, there is. If you put in the 1000 hours in the first year (less than three hours a day), instead of the several months in an immersion program, that still leads to competency. In your path to self-employment, this may look like taking a reduced work time at your day job or limiting your overtime work. (If you are not interested in climbing the corporate ladder, you probably don't have to do so much overtime to please your boss.)

The lesson of becoming a butterfly

Whether you leave your job or keep it and work on your business development on the side, I'd like to point out that becoming an entrepreneur is very much like the metamorphosis a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. Employees and business owners think and act differently. And to make this transition, you need to shut out external chatter for a while. You either totally or at least mentally go into the cocoon.

When you are in the cocoon, you are going through rapid change. However, to the outside observer, it may look like you are not doing much, or it may even look like you are regressing to a chunk of goo. Don't worry -- they just don't know.

In fact, you don't 100% know either, how you will turn out to be. This is both good and scary. Good because you may not make the transition if you get to know everything in advance. Do you think a caterpillar would make its cocoon if it knew its body would melt inside that cocoon? I guess not. I think it would say, "OMG, I sure dream to be a butterfly, but if I have to melt down first to become one, I'm not going to do that. I'm quite content as a caterpillar."

That bit of fear you are feeling about the uncertainty of your upcoming endeavor to be self-employed is... well, when you look back, you realize it was nothing compared to what it

really is. But the good news is, once you start, you gain momentum. Have faith that you will fly out as a beautiful butterfly.

To those of you who are already out of work

You may already be out of work, but not because you submitted your resignation -- because you were let go, downsized, laid off. I've been there, and I feel for you. But again, this can be a blessing in disguise -- for those of you who couldn't quit on your own.

Use your time to think about how you want to live going forward. Do you really want to get another job and go back to the corporate world? Or is there something you've been interested in but haven't had the time to try out? If so, isn't this the perfect time?

There are quite a lot of "accidental entrepreneurs."

Starting a new business takes a lot of self-reflection. I once interviewed a lady who started a jewelry making business after a one-year sabbatical from her corporate job. Physically being away from the day-to-day workings of corporate life and therefore having to face yourself is incredibly helpful. If you are let go, it may be a sign that you need that kind of quiet time for yourself.

So use your time and resources well. Don't write off your dream.

PART II: 5 STEPS TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT

I know this is over-simplified, but here are my 5 steps to successful self-employment:

- STEP 1. Find your niche
- STEP 2. Learn about the business and its marketing
- STEP 3. Start marketing
- STEP 4. Deal with your self-sabotaging pattern
- STEP 5. Jump

Step 1. Find your niche

First, **be sure you are going into business to do what you love, not just something you can do.** If you go into business with what you can do but you hardly care about it, even if you can do it well, you are setting yourself up for misery. You could be buried in money and feeling lonely and unfulfilled. Why would you want to do that? Is it any better than your current job?

Your love and passion is the key. Your love and passion leads you to the path of your life purpose, the path that is fulfilling to you and is the best service you can do to the world.

About going solo doing the same thing you are currently doing

You can do the same thing you've been doing as an employee. For example, you may be a graphic artist working for a design company and thinking about going solo. This is fine if you like what you do. Just know there is a lot to business management beyond the work you've been doing to fill orders. So be sure to check Step 2.

You may also want to keep reading this Step 1 to have a focused niche in your industry. For instance, being a graphic designer is one thing -- you might want to narrow down your niche to differentiate yourself.

Some people take the clients with them when they go solo. I'm not going to say this is wrong, but keep in mind these three points:

1. Even if many of your clients choose you rather than your current employer, that would probably not be enough clients for your business to thrive. So you still need to learn marketing.
2. And why are they choosing you rather than your employer? Is it because you can offer better service? Or is it because you are cheaper? If it's the latter, know that you will lose them the minute they find an even cheaper option.
3. Your current employer can be a great source of referrals. Obviously you need to keep a good professional relationship for this to happen, so stealing their clients may not be a good idea.

5 secret approaches to your unique niche

If you are open to exploring a new niche or want to sharpen your niche by looking within yourself, here are some "secrets"

Secret 1: Don't worry about making money

Set aside the "How can I make money?" thinking for now. Rather, think, "How can I help?" or "What do I have to offer to this world?" When you answer these questions, which focus on value rather than money, you can then develop it to a revenue-producing idea.

Work is a form of service. You are born with a set of gifts and strengths, and you've been developing these gifts through your unique life experiences. How can you utilize these gifts to help someone in need?

Secret 2: Delight with problems

Essentially, **business is about solving people's problems**. People have some problems that they can't solve on their own, or they're too busy to work on them themselves, so they pay you to do it. So be delighted when you see problems, whether they are your own, or your friends', or something you heard about. Can you solve that problem?

By the way, this same attitude of delighting with problems works well even after you start your business. You will have problems. With some customers, vendors, suppliers, etc. Don't just be frustrated. Look to see if you can expand your product line to solve the new problems. Or, see if you can build a system to solve the problem in an organized (read: close to automatic) manner rather than dealing with them one by one.

Secret 3: Embrace your crazy idea

Yes, I said it. If you have a crazy idea that you are afraid to tell even your close friends and family about, you are in luck. No, I didn't say just run with it. You may need to modify certain aspects of that idea.

The thing is that your crazy idea says something important about you.

And remember, a lot of businesses that have proven to be successful started with crazy ideas. Many early-day "green" and "organic" businesses started this way, for instance. Before that, many computer and internet related businesses were once crazy. Few people believed Bill Gates when he said, "One computer on every desk and in every home." These are visionaries, who believed not just in organic foods or computers but in the concepts behind them. And while some similar visionaries failed, some succeeded. Wildly.

Dare to do something new. Or something highly unusual. Or give a radical twist to something old and familiar.

A bonus to this approach is you can be the leader in your industry. Like Eden Foods (founded in 1968) in the organic foods industry.

Secret 4: Remember your heroes

We have heroes in our mind. It may be a historical figure, or someone you know in your life, or even a fictional figure. Ask yourself why you are attracted to him or her. Most likely, they have done (or are doing) something you dream of doing yourself. You like them because you resonate with them.

Say your hero is Captain Kirk of Star Trek. Is it his intelligence or leadership that you admire? Or do you like him because he has command of this great fun spacecraft? Now think if you can bring in some elements of him to your business.

Randy Pausch, author of [The Last Lecture](#), was a fan of Star Trek as a child. As a professor of computer science, he developed a revolutionary program of making virtual reality that lets you experience something like Star Trek and much more. (He didn't become an entrepreneur, but if he did, I bet he would have been super successful. From what I gather, Disneyland uses his program.)

So nurture your inner child and go into business with him/her.

Secret 5: Get going and polish your niche further

Don't just sit down and explore your ultimate niche. When you get an idea you like, talk about it and think of ways to **try it out**.

Thinking out loud is important. Talk about your new business and its niche with your friends, business coaches, and others in your target industry. Brainstorm. I know this takes some guts to do, but if you are feeling insecure just talking about your business, how are you going to be doing your business?

When you are talking, pay attention how you are feeling. Are there certain areas you are trying to avoid? Any areas that you feel defensive about? They are cues that you need to work more on these areas.

Then, see if you can try out your idea on a small scale.

If your business is the online kind, you can set up your website or blog really cheap using free templates. (I do recommend getting your domain at your earliest convenience, however. Free blog sites don't look very professional. And one domain registration costs only a few dollars.) If it's the physical kind, think of ways to set up a trial shop, like a cart or stall in a mall or at a farmers market before you rent out a store. Or maybe you can work from your car like some skilled tradesmen do.

You may need to modify and polish your niche several times before you hit your sweet spot. For instance, I first got trained as a life coach before I started offering Akashic Record Reading. They are both in the personal and spiritual development line, but Akashic Record Reading is the weird, wild, psychic stuff -- which proved to be far more popular than my "standard" coaching, so I quit offering life coaching and focused on the soul reading. Then I started offering Spirit Guides Coaching in relation to Akashic Record Reading. Even though my main function in this program is just to be a medium, my life coach training has been very helpful.

So don't be afraid to tweak things as you go. Analysis paralysis does far more harm.

Dare to dream big

As you work on your niche, please keep this in mind. Many people fail not because they follow their dreams but because they are caught up in limiting beliefs and fail to dream big enough.

Dreaming big is about thinking in terms of possibilities, not probabilities. There is no real reason why you and the rest of the world should stay the way you are. No reason why you should develop your business in a "slow and steady" manner or in the way that is supposed to be the traditional, conventional way.

When you scale up your dream, **your uniqueness gets magnified** as well. So this helps to define your unique niche.

In my case, my big dream is to be published and sell my books on Akashic Records on Amazon.com. I want to empower people all over the world. This big dream has added a focused niche to my already pretty unique niche of Akashic Record Reading -- my service emphasizes empowerment rather than problem solving and healing. I work not to get my clients to become reliant on me. This may sound like a bad business idea at first glance, but I think it has helped new clients trust me better and expand my business by referrals.

And my dream to become a published author comes from my love of writing. Indeed, writing has been a critical part of my marketing.

The world is big and there are so many opportunities.

Step 2. Learn about the business and its marketing

In a sense, developing a business is simple: **You turn your niche, your love and passion, into products and services that people are happy to pay for.** It doesn't have to be something that everyone wants. The world is big and a long tail market may be plenty for you and your family to make a good living.

In reality, this tends to be a trial and error process. As I mentioned, you are likely to keep modifying and polishing your niche as you go, especially in the beginning phase of your business. You need to figure out how your potential customers perceive your products and services -- if they think your offer is "worth their money." Oh, and you need to reach out to your potential customers -- you need to market your business.

The best advice I have is to seek professional advice. There are three kinds of professional advice you can utilize. **DO NOT** rely on your well-meaning friends and family for this critical business advice. Their advice may be free, but (unless they are entrepreneurs themselves) they don't know what self-employment takes. They have different roles in your life -- appreciate their love for who you are. And seek:

1. Advice from someone who has been in the same kind of business successfully.

Does this sound dumb? You are becoming their new competitor, so would it be crazy to seek help from existing successful business owners in the same field? Not really. First, if your business is naturally local, all you need to do is find an established business in other cities. Choose a city similar to yours in size and culture. Then call them, explain you are aspiring to start your business, and say, "I would really appreciate your advice..." Do that ten times and you may be amazed how willing they are to help. They were in your place before and they know what you are going through.

Even if your business is the online kind, you can still present yourself as someone non-competing and seek advice. I would seek well-established businesses who wouldn't get scared with every newcomer in the industry. I might also let them know that my niche is slightly different and therefore I'm not competing with them. (For instance, I'm not a psychic

-- I'm an Akashic Record Reader. And although one of my programs is called Spirit Guides COACHING, I'm not looking for typical life coaching clients -- this is about developing intuition and being coached by the clients' own spirit guides.)

2. Expertise from marketing coaches, lawyers, CPAs, etc.

If you are not experienced in these special areas, don't be shy to seek help. There are people who spend their whole professional life polishing their knowledge and skills in these areas. Use them.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of professional help in these areas. Marketing is especially tricky. Many people understand the importance of getting proper legal advice and keeping the books according to the rules and regulations. But you may be tempted to do marketing your way. In my opinion, many marketing professionals make it hard, too. There are plenty of bookkeeping services that clearly say they are happy to work with small businesses. When I called some local marketing companies, however, I felt I was shunned away because I'm just a self-employed micro business owner.

There are, however, marketing professionals who understand micro business. There are also good books for this. (Please see the **Resource** section of this eBook for the books.)

3. Business coaching

This is optional, but if you are the kind of person who gets stuck often, you may benefit from their motivational skills.

Staying in the company of self-employed people

In addition, it's a good idea to get to know other small business owners regardless of their industry.

Business owners and employees do think and act differently. The problem is, if you have been a corporate employee all your life, you may not even realize this. Everyone you meet at

work (all the way up to the CEO) is an employee. Perhaps all your friends are employees. Are all your family members and relatives employees? And the only business owner you know (as a real person, not through the news) is the owner of the deli you go to for lunch, with whom you only exchange “Hello”?

If this is the case, seek out friendship with other business owners. See if you can attend your local Chamber of Commerce meetings as a guest. Find out online forums and blogs where many small business owners gather. Get to know them as people. Surround yourself with other self-employed lightworkers who can tell you what it is like to be an entrepreneur and who will trust your potential as they have trusted theirs themselves. Spend as much time as possible with them. Learn how to think as an entrepreneur.

Do this until you feel like entrepreneurship is nothing unusual. This is great prep work to shift from the paycheck mentality to the entrepreneur mentality.

And even after you start your own business, keep doing this. Don't be a lonely island. Seek out opportunities to connect with other entrepreneurs, and do so from the heart.

Networking is often associated with getting leads or business advice, and this may happen, but I see it in a bigger picture. Our power gets amplified when we associate with other like-minded people. Just having a casual chat with other self-employed lightworkers is enormously helpful.

My thoughts on business types, business names, and pricing

Now here are some of the things I've learned about. Hope it gives you some ideas to start with.

1) Logistics affects business type: online, offline, or both?

Your business will be very different depending on your customers' logistics. Does your customer need to come to your office / store? (Examples include doctors, chiropractors, hair dressers, auto repairs, delis.) Or can your customer stay where they are and still get your

service or products, most likely online? (Such as life coaches, distance energy healers, online stores.) Or is it a mix of both, like a specialty store which also sells online?

Physical type businesses typically require more capital and more overhead (rent, upkeep of store, etc). The location is critical. How far do you think a person would drive to get a sandwich even if your sandwich is all organic and tastes great? The physical visibility, volume of traffic on the street, size of parking lot, etc. also make or break your business.

I'm more familiar with online / distant services. Even if your business will be mostly local, I think it would help you to think of ways to add online services. For instance, maybe a chiropractor can learn distant energy healing. Or a pet trainer can sell specialty pet products online.

2) 5 rules of a great business name

The name of your business is a critical part of marketing. The characteristics of a great business name are:

1. Easy to pronounce and remember.
2. Clearly says what your business is about.
3. At the same time, differentiates you from the rest.
4. Preferably, starts with a letter that is early in the alphabet. A number may be even better.
5. If your business will go online, try to match your domain name with your business name.

DO NOT use strange foreign words in your business name. Who are you trying to impress? Unless you are sure your target customers are familiar with such words, stick with English. And include keywords of your business.

You are going to say your business name millions of times, so try saying it many times. Does it flow well? Ask your friends to say it to see how it works.

Most lists, such as phone books, are in alphabetical order. Try to be listed in the beginning of it. But then you may not want to overdo it. How many “AAA (something)” like “AAA Moving” have you seen?

Of course, there are always exceptions. If you are so good at getting blog readers’ attention, a name like “Zen Habits” is fine even if it starts with Z. In the brick-and-mortar world, Walmart has been doing better than Kmart.

I don’t like initials in business names, like “ASG coaching.” Those are my initials, but how can a potential customer, who doesn’t know my full name, remember it? “Was it ASG? AFG? MSG? Aaaaagh!?”

If you are going online, check the availability of the domain you want. Many domains are already taken, and you may need to be creative to come up with a domain that is relevant to your business name. Check out the domain suggestion tool at [Domain Tools](#).

My own trials and errors

When I started my “Yes to Me” blog, I tried to make it easy to remember, while expressing the core of my message -- to be authentic and unique. Well, it is easy to remember. But it starts with Y, the second to last letter in the alphabet. You know the saying, “Do as I say, not as I did”? (Plus, the domain name includes hyphens like “yes-to-me.com,” another no no.)

Okay, lessons learned. My second website is called “Akashic Record Reading” with the domain address of “akashicrecordreading.com”. The domain is a bit long, but no hyphens, and it’s just spelling out the three words together. Easy enough, I hope.

The word “Akashic” may not be a commonly known English word, but it’s becoming more and more known, and it’s simple enough to remember. No silent letters, just pronounced as it is spelled. And it starts with A. ^_^

3) The issue of pricing

One of the common concerns when you start a new business is pricing. How do you determine an appropriate price for your products and services? Do you just check your competitor's rate and price accordingly? Do you calculate the time it takes for your service and charge what you want to make per hour? If it's a product you are selling, you definitely need to calculate the cost of acquiring your materials and processing them so that you won't be losing money, but beyond that, how do you come up with the right price?

Don't sell yourself cheap

"IF SOME PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE PRICE while it is selling well, then it's probably the right price."

I read this somewhere, and although I don't necessarily buy the idea of the "right" price, my experience pretty much supports this theory. When you are in the mid to high end of the price range, there are people who complain, "It's too expensive." Keep in mind they may not buy anyway even if the price is lower.

And you probably don't want to be in the lower end of the price range, not too long anyway. The reason is that making business ends meet at a low price is extremely hard. It requires a larger sales volume. Walmart can do it because it has built a huge system that enables it to manage the giant sales volume. As a self-employed micro entrepreneur, this is a tough path to take. Don't associate low price with easy sale = easy business.

Yet I repeatedly hear concerns from business owners that they have a hard time charging more, charging the kind of price they feel they should be able to ask for.

There are two things to consider here.

1. Abundance awareness

In order to tap into the flow of abundance, you first need to develop your abundance awareness. You need to see the value you are delivering, the wealth of your potential customers, and acknowledge this universe is indeed abundant.

How can you develop your abundance awareness? Well, there are many good books and teachers about abundance, success, and the law of attraction, so what I have to say may sound redundant, but here are a few ideas:

1. Go into nature. Nature is always so abundant. Acknowledge the lush greens, vast expanse of water or dune or sky, fullness and perfection of the ecosystem. Show gratitude. Finding abundance in nature first effectively bypasses the negative idea about money you may have internalized.
2. Examine your money awareness. Do you think money is dirty and rich people are greedy, selfish, and mean? If you keep buying into this kind of negative stereotypes, there is no way you will sincerely desire to become like that. Start seeing money in a more positive, favorable light.
3. Letting go of scarcity thoughts is an ongoing process. As you proceed in your business adventure, the fears surface one by one, and you let them go.
4. Give freely. This acknowledges the boundless abundance of the universe. And if money is really short, you can give other things like your time or loving words -- there are definitely those who would benefit from them.
5. Expand your abundance awareness with fun games. One of the games I played (and shared on my Yes to Me blog in 2008) was Dream Money Project. I received \$100 dream money in the first week, and I wrote how I was going to use it. Next week, it doubled to \$200, and I had to figure out how to spend it in a way I loved. Now if you are good with exponential functions, you see how quickly the money grows when it

doubles every week. I could go on up to week 14, which gave me \$819,200. It took a lot of imagination to spend this much money at once!

6. Pay your due. Are you holding on to the money that you are meant to spend? See, it's a flow of abundance that you want to tap into. A flow has an inflow and outflow. When you close up your outflow, you become constipated -- the flow stagnates, and there will be less inflow. It's not about spending on a whim or wasting money. But do pay what is due, like the training you need to start your business or the professional advice on marketing. Don't be that person who complains something is too expensive when the benefit of it is worth it.

7. Say thank you every time you pay. Yes, you heard me right. Every time you pay the bills, every time you go to the cashier at a store. You are paying because you want the products and services, because you prefer to have the products and services rather than holding onto your greens. Do you see how many ways there are to deliver value? That's called business, and you are joining the club. Wonderful. Be aware of the outflow of money, clean up the flow with gratitude, and you are expanding your abundance awareness naturally.

These are all tried and true methods of expanding abundance awareness. Do them for yourself and see how differently you feel.

Now there is another issue related to the lightworkers' hesitation to charge a good price, and it has nothing to do with negativity ...

2. Non-essential nature of trading value and money

Trading value and money is a dumb idea to begin with.

Huh? Yes, I said so. The whole idea of delivering value (in the form of a product or service) and asking for money in exchange is dumb. Right now, we live in an economic system that is based on this dumb idea so we need to make use of it. But as lightworkers, we know deep inside this is dumb.

Think for a moment. Let's say you see someone stranded and injured in the deserted part of an interstate highway, like in the Rockies or in the middle of nowhere in the Midwest. Would you help this person? Yes. Depending on who you are, the service you'd offer may differ -- I might just call emergency on my cell phone, while someone with first aid knowledge would be able to do more. But in any case, I'm assuming you'd help this person.

So you are delivering value. Great value. Would you charge this person for it?

See, we are meant to freely offer our expertise, our gifts and strengths. And you already do so in many ways in your life -- when you attend to the little ones or the aging ones in your family, when you listen to your friend attentively, when you make someone laugh with your lighthearted humor ... you are helping them and delivering value. (It's value and many professionals offer the same service for a price.)

In the New World, we will be sharing our gifts freely. Your needs will also be satisfied freely, too. Value has no inherent price. This is what I mean that trading value and money is fundamentally dumb and it is natural for lightworkers to feel resistance to this dumb practice.

Again, at this time, we live in an economic system that requires the exchange of money. It's all about convenience. We need to live with this, while we work on bringing in the New World that is better aligned with Divine Truth. So don't criticize yourself for the resistance you feel -- just make peace in a way that makes the best sense to you.

What I did when I was starting up

I started my rate low. In my first year, I wasn't aiming to make a full living from my business. Rather, I wanted to polish my expertise while building my client base and spreading the word about my service.

As my Akashic Record Reading service became more popular and my wait list got longer, I gradually raised my rate. This helped to keep my wait list at a reasonable length so the new

clients didn't have to wait so long. (I mean waiting for three weeks is a lot better than six weeks.)

This is just one way that worked for me. I hope you come up with a pricing strategy that resonates with you.

Step 3. Start marketing



Kim & Jason by Jason Kotecki

<http://www.KimandJason.com>

Ah, the ambition to be your own boss... It's great when it works. But first things first -- we need to make sales to stay in business. (Kim and Jason were my interview guests [here](#).)

Another simple way of defining business is: **You make sales**. Again, at this point of our evolution, we live in a money-based economy. We need to make sales to stay in business. Let's make it a good sale. **Sell to those who really benefit from your products and services**. This means you want to define your ideal customers, and we will talk about that in a minute.

But first, do you like marketing? Are you excited about marketing your business? I'm afraid your answer may be a big no...

Marketing love & hate

The world is divided into two groups. One group thinks marketing is an evil necessity of a business. Another delights in marketing and therefore effectively markets their businesses.

The good news is this is not a set-in-stone divide. I used to be in the first camp. Well, I didn't think marketing was particularly evil, but I cringed at the idea of going out and talking to strangers about what I do, either physically or online. I felt shallow and manipulative. And I'm shy.

If you feel the same, please consider this. You are starting a business to help others with your unique gifts. There are people out there who could really benefit from your business, but they don't know about you. So they are just praying.

Don't you want to help them learn about what you can do for them? Isn't that part of your calling? Well, that activity of reaching out is called marketing.

Marketing is about introducing and educating people about the thing you love so much. You love it, you firmly believe it has a lot of value, so you want to talk about it. Just like you want to talk about the great movie you saw or the wonderful restaurant you went to.

At this time, I don't care all that much if my "marketing" results in immediate sales. If it does, it's great, and I know my service has more value than the money my clients pay, so I feel good. If it doesn't, I still feel good because I know I gave them valuable info.

Natural & organic marketing

Also, if advertising is the first thing you think about when it comes to marketing, you are in for a pleasant surprise. Ads are expensive and not so effective. There are better, "natural & organic" ways of marketing that feels good for you and everyone involved.

One is sharing your expertise. When you love your business, you naturally want to talk about it and share your expertise. Do so openly for free. Give free seminars and workshops, write articles, free booklets and eBooks. People will be impressed with your expertise and the word of mouth spreads.

When you do this, the experience is so different from the old-fashioned hard selling that you would be amazed what happens. In the old “selling,” the salesperson pushes their products. Often to those who don’t really need the products. When you openly share your expertise, on the other hand, you are attracting the very people who love and want your products. They are so grateful to you.

Another great “natural & organic” marketing strategy is referrals. If your customer is happy with your products or services, they want to talk about it to their friends and family. This happens naturally, but it’s also a good idea to give them a gentle nudge. I always ask my clients, at the end of the phone session, “If you know someone who may find this service helpful, please talk to them. I appreciate your referral very much.” You wouldn’t believe how many referral clients I get by this.

Any referral is great, but the most effective referral marketing is to find businesses who deal with the same ideal customers you want and team up with them. Your service needs to complement theirs for this to work well.

I have some wonderful life coaches, psychotherapists, and ministers who regularly send me their clients because they think my service enhances theirs. One of my business goals is to expand this circle of referral partners, perhaps including meditation teachers, yoga teachers, massage therapists, and so on.

Identifying your ideal customers

An important step in marketing is to identify your ideal customers. The customers you will actually have don’t all have to match your ideal customer criteria, but it’s helpful to have a clear image of who you are reaching out to.

The basics are the demographics -- age, gender, marital status, educational background, income level, etc. Then you may want to go further and visualize your ideal customers more clearly.

What else are your ideal customers interested in (buying) other than your products and services? What do they do in their spare time? What are their aspirations in life? What are their concerns?

In my case, my target customers are women and men in their thirties to fifties, with reasonably good educational and career background (my service is not cheap) and who are open-minded enough to try out a new approach, like Akashic Record Reading. The so-called New Age crowd is included, but that is not all. I think of my target clients more as people who are serious about personal development. Their motivation in life is to live well and to make a difference in this world. Their fear is getting stuck forever in their status quo.

(Again, the age, etc. criteria don't apply to all the actual clients who come to me. This is just to help me in my marketing, not to limit my clients.)

I also wrote a description of my imaginary clients, Jane and Mike, to get a clear picture. The marketing coach I hired at the time of startup thought it was hilarious:

JANE IS FORTY-THREE AND HAS HER BUSINESS OF A BEADS SHOP AND JEWELRY DESIGN. Her partner Mike is an IT manager of a local mid-size company. They are spiritual, but not necessarily religious -- they go to church twice a year mostly for the memory of their childhood and out of habit.

Jane loves gemstones and wants to learn more about their healing properties, partly to boost her sales, but really because she feels there is something more to be explored. She is also interested in meditation and yoga. She bought a CD for guided meditation recently and has been practicing at home. She also took yoga classes for a while. Her business is two years old. There are always

challenges, but the craziness of the startup is behind her, so she has a little time for herself now.

Mike is a no nonsense tech type, but he enjoyed the movie *What The Bleep Do We Know?* He likes hiking and camping, to be in nature. Recently, his father had a stroke, so he tries to visit him as often as possible. As he makes the one hour drive there, he can't help wondering about life and death.

In addition to their family and career, they are concerned about the environment and try to recycle. Some shops they frequent include Whole Foods, a local farmers market, and a Barnes & Noble bookstore (this is where Jane bought the meditation CD).

Does this provide a better picture of a potential customer? If you like, try one for your own business.

One last note on ideal customers: In order for your business to work, they need to be able to afford what you offer. So the issue of ideal customers is best considered along with the issue of pricing.

Step 4. Deal with your self-sabotaging patterns

This is a little-discussed area of entrepreneurship, but I think it's critical. After all, **if you have no resistance, you are living the life of your dreams already, including having your business.**

So you have self-sabotaging thoughts, beliefs, and behavior patterns. Digging them out one by one and letting them go is a long ongoing process.

Recognizing your self-sabotaging patterns

Do you keep doing things that you know won't serve you? Do you feel like you are banging your head against an invisible wall while you try so hard to move forward?

Every time you feel this way, take note rather than ignoring it. Bringing awareness is the first step of healing even though this is the hardest, most painful step.

Some of the common negative patterns include:

- Saying yes when you mean no. If you keep saying yes to all the demands your boss, coworkers, and your family make, you sure won't have time and energy to build your business. You know this, but somehow you feel so guilty about saying no.
- Writing off your ideas with excessive self-criticism. You don't really know if your idea works or not until you give it a chance, but self-criticism kills any great ideas prematurely.
- Another way not to follow through with your idea is distraction. You can distract yourself with so many ways, such as hobbies and social activities that you honestly don't care about, over-eating or drinking, etc.

- Comparing yourself with larger-than-life figures. If you compare yourself with someone who has already succeeded, you get discouraged and anxious, too discouraged to start your business probably.
- Thinking in terms of “should.” When you use the word “should,” you are giving away your power to some external authority. You believe there is someone who knows the right answer, so you think you need to find this authority rather than following your own internal lead.
- Allowing others to manipulate you or reacting to manipulation. The latter may surprise you, but reaction, like reasoning things out, only encourages the manipulators. They are getting exactly what they want -- your energy is diverted from action to reaction. After “dealing with” manipulation, you have no energy left to build your enterprise.
- Negative beliefs about money, business, and success. We discussed abundance awareness when we talked about pricing. As long as we think success will bring problems, we will not let ourselves succeed. (Who volunteers to have problems, you know?)

These are just some of the typical patterns. There are more, and they surface to your awareness as you move forward in your journey.

How to overcome the self-sabotaging patterns

The challenge in dealing with these nasty negative patterns is that they are rooted deeper than the conscious level. If they were on the conscious level, you could have gotten rid of them long ago -- you are intelligent. But their roots hide in your subconscious mind, making it tricky to even understand them.

The good news is there are effective methods to uncover these self-sabotaging patterns and clear them. EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) is an easy yet effective approach. (And

you can try it out free by visiting their [website](#).) I also heard good things about [Psych-K](#). There are probably other good approaches.

(Covering this topic of self-sabotaging patterns and healing in its entirety is far beyond the scope of this eBook. Again, there are many good approaches. And just so you know, I offer clearing on the soul level in my Akashic Record Reading service.)

Purging your old lifestyle

Holding on to what you have now is also a typical self-sabotaging pattern. Before you add something new (like your own business), you need to let go of the old and make room for the new. This works both physically and mentally.

So physically purging your old stuff is a good way to overcome this negative pattern. Go through your closets, bookcases, desk drawers, garage, and so on and see if each of your possessions resonates with who you are now and who you aspire to be. Purge all the unnecessary items. Sell, donate, and dump.

Now it's easy to purge old clothes that you don't like any more. The challenge is to purge something that you once cherished but now you don't resonate with any longer. For instance, something that signifies a milestone in corporate life, like the stuff you got to celebrate your promotion.

Let them go. Along with them, let go of your reliance on your job title, status quo, and steady paychecks.

When you put yourself in the new environment that represents the new YOU that you want to become, it influences you on a deep level. Just try it -- you will get a clean comfortable living space at the very least.

Seeing “problems” as growing opportunities

As you let go of one negative pattern after another, your life starts to change. At some point, you may notice something strange -- that you are not afraid of the “problems” any more. Because you realize problems are surfacing so that you can uncover their root causes and heal yourself. Problems are learning and healing opportunities.

We have natural healing power. We can see it working on the physical level. When you get a cut, it hurts, and you may put a bandage on it. After a few days, it heals itself. You didn't even have to work on your positive thinking or do affirmations!

If a cut is bigger, you may need medical assistance, but be aware it's not really the medicine (or surgery, etc.) that heals the wound. It's our innate healing power.

The healing power works on the mental and emotional levels as well. So all wounds and traumas are to heal on their own with this healing power sooner or later. However, in reality, we suffer from traumas from years ago. Why?

Hard as it may be to believe, it's because we are holding on to the wound. We (mistakenly) think that, if we let go of this wound and its pain, something horrible, even more horrible than the event that caused this wound, would happen to us. Because of this fear, we hold on to our old familiar pain as if it would protect us. This prevents natural healing.

When we understand this mechanism, we can welcome problems. Because they highlight the hidden fear we have inside. Then we can examine this fear with gentle lovingness, ask ourselves what horrible things we think will happen when we release this problem, ask if that is true (it never is), and let it go.

One of the biggest fears we have is the fear of success. The expectation of wild success causes far more fear than, say, losing your savings because you don't know what it's like. So we choose to stay stuck, or try to stay in small manageable success.

Don't let this happen. Again, examine your idea about success, money, and wealth. You can handle success -- let yourself succeed.

Step 5. Jump

At some point, you have to jump. Maybe multiple times. The first time may be when you announce your new business venture. The next may be when you quit your “day job.” Then you may jump more times, like when you decide to expand your business (hiring can be a huge deal) or when you change aspects of your business and its offerings.

And no one, absolutely no one, can guarantee your success. Please take this as *my disclaimer*. I’m only sharing my thoughts and experiences. You own your thoughts, feelings, actions, and therefore, your success.

Risk tolerance and management

As we discussed in Part I, one of the biggest differences between employee mentality and entrepreneur mentality is risk tolerance and risk management skill. Employees are not educated about risks. You may be afraid to even think about risks. For entrepreneurs, by contrast, risk is an everyday topic. I think most entrepreneurs enjoy talking about risks and weighing things out. Because risk is about new possibilities.

There is nothing that doesn’t come with a level of risk. So another difference between employee mentality and entrepreneur mentality is: Employees ignore the risks while entrepreneurs look at risks in the face, evaluate them against what they may receive in turn, and make decisions.

Are you dealing with risks like an entrepreneur?

Practice making decisions

Here is a neat practice to prepare yourself for this step: Practice making many decisions. And do them fast. **Make a lot of good decisions fast.** From the choice of your lunch to holiday gifts to weekend plans, bring your awareness that you are practicing decision making. Because this is about practice.

You will find that speed of decision-making doesn't compromise the quality of the decision. On the contrary, you may notice you make better decisions when you don't procrastinate on them.

It's not about making impatient decisions -- that is about reaction, and if you are reacting, you need to examine the underlying self-sabotaging patterns. It's about having a clear vision and a set of principles, and making each decisions accordingly.

Becoming an entrepreneur internally before becoming one externally

So how do you know if you are ready to jump despite the risks? After you go through the preparatory works, there is a time when you receive the inner knowing. You. Just. Know.

This is because you become an entrepreneur internally before you become one externally. This is also the secret of a successful launch of the business. Even if you are still receiving paychecks, start thinking, feeling, and acting as an entrepreneur. Be an entrepreneur from inside out.

In other words, **Being must precede Doing**. Be an entrepreneur before you start your business.

The great bonus of this approach is it attracts synchronicities. When you are an entrepreneur in all your mind and spirit, you start seeing opportunities that you wouldn't have noticed before. People and things start to come your way. Then it would be hard not to start your business.

It's like delivering a baby. You would think that would be hard. Well, sure. But when you are pregnant and your baby grows up to the point that it's ready to come out, it's harder not to deliver it.

Caution against perfectionism

It may happen earlier than you think. When you are not caught up in perfectionism, you probably feel ready when you are like 80% ready. This is fine. You can do the other 20% later as you go, or it may not matter after all.

Perfectionism is yet another self-sabotaging pattern. The truth is you don't need to know everything in advance and you don't have to do everything yourself. You don't have to be perfect.

Rather than aiming to be perfect, focus on:

- Figuring out the essence of what you need to know and do
- Determining what you need to do yourself and what you can delegate
- Establishing the way to keep learning and growing

Rather than aiming for the impossible perfection, do your best always, and keep improving things. You and your business are to grow through the challenges. Be flexible, be committed for improvement, and get going.

PART III: YOUR SUCCESS

What does “success” look like to you?

As you set out to start your own business, it's critical to think about what success looks like to you. Otherwise, it's so easy to unconsciously internalize someone else's idea of success -- more money, work efficiency, business expansion ... status (and possessions to show status), fame, power ...

What is your success? You might want to write it down because, again, it is so easy to lose your direction in this busy, distracting world. By remembering what success looks like to you, you will know when you get there.

Also, this may be beyond the focus of this eBook, but you might want to think about what your path will be once you achieve your success. Do you want to keep doing your work in the same way? Or is there going to be a next business, a next success? In other words, what is your exit plan once you achieve your success?

My version of success

My basic idea of success is to be able to do what I'm interested in, to use my time the way I see fit, and to contribute to the well-being of those people who trust me, while maintaining a profitable and sustainable business doing this. Autonomy and time-wealth are as important as financial prosperity.

I thought of sharing my business financials here, but no -- your business will be different from mine and I don't see a point in posting my numbers. Let me just say that, in my second year of self-employment, I'll be making more money than I did in my corporate job. Order level fluctuates, but I'm learning marketing steadily and I'm also thinking of expanding my offerings (one is to write a book on how to access one's own Akashic Records and use them as the ultimate personal development tool. This way, I can reach a larger audience, which I

think will promote my professional Akashic Record Reading service), so I'm quite optimistic financially.

The important part for me is I'm achieving my prosperity by doing what I like in a way I like. And with a much bigger sense of contributing to this world.

I have freedom and autonomy -- recently I relocated to another city because I can work from anywhere with the phone and internet connection. I set my time -- to accommodate my clients' schedule, I sometimes do phone sessions in the evenings and weekends, but I get to go out for a walk during the day to enjoy the sun or go shopping on weekdays when the stores are not so crowded. I love it.

And I have time to pursue my interests. My interests are intertwined with my business, so even though they don't make money immediately, I don't see them as a waste of time. At this time, I've been studying how the well-being of the physical body is related to the well-being of our spirituality, especially in Ascension. I've been experimenting with raw vegan foods, breathing practices, and meditation.

Further, my business has brought me a group of friends, mostly through my Yes to Me blog, who are inspiring and interesting. We discuss spirituality and more, and sometimes do business / marketing gigs to help each other. It's so much fun!

I don't think I'm a special case. Just two years ago, I was an ordinary cubicle dweller. I didn't know so much about starting a business -- I learned as I worked through my path. I didn't have any special connections. In terms of talent -- well, I don't know how I measure up. I just took myself seriously and committed to use whatever talents I have.

So I really think, if I could do it, you can. I may not know you personally, but my best wishes go to you.

What I learned by interviewing successful entrepreneurs

I have had the pleasure of interviewing successful micro business owners for my Yes to Me blog. Many are self-employed. Some are online entrepreneurs while others are in a more traditional business form.

It's very interesting and inspiring to hear their real life stories. In the interviews, I ask about both their challenges and their successes. One of the intriguing findings is that, while they point out a wide range of challenges, they agree on the rewards of entrepreneurship. They may use different words, but they pretty much boil down to three points: **Freedom, Confidence, Contribution.**

Freedom

Most of my interview guests love the freedom to use their time in the way they see best, the freedom to do what they like and do it well. [Tom Volkar](#), a life coach, says:

“TOTAL AUTONOMY IS THE BEST PART OF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR... Having the total freedom to decide what I work on, the projects I create, the self-determination to work when I feel like working and to work in service to who I most want to serve: that is the liberty of entrepreneurship that I hold most dear.”

We are talking about the kind of freedom that comes with responsibility. Sure, you can work just as much, or as little, as you want, and you get the results accordingly. It's about autonomy.

The thing is, we lightworkers work hard anyway. When we are employed, the benefit of that hard work goes to your employer. When you are self-employed, you get all the goods along with the bads. For proud and empowered souls, this feels good ^_^

Confidence

The confidence, the sense of empowerment, comes to us by actually overcoming difficulties. As entrepreneurs, we come to realize we can really do what we envision. [James Chartrand](#), a freelance copywriter who teams up with web designers to help businesses improve their websites, says:

“KNOWING THAT WE ARE ABLE TO REACH ANY GOAL WE WANT and having the confidence to do so is the best feeling in the world.”

We open up to the level of possibilities we didn't know before. [Christine O'Kelly](#), an SEO copywriter, says:

“THE BEST PART ABOUT BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR is that you can see so many more possibilities in business and in life. Suddenly, anything really is possible.”

Contribution

Being able to help others, the sense of contribution to the community through work and beyond, is also essential for many entrepreneurs. Many entrepreneurs start their businesses to help others, and the sense of contribution is by itself one of the biggest rewards for them. [Laura Bennett](#), who offers unique pet health insurances, says:

“IT'S SUCH A CLICHÉ BUT IT COMES DOWN TO BEING ABLE TO BUILD something from nothing that solves people's problems. There's no feeling like it.”

Additionally, having time and money flexibility, we are better prepared to contribute to the community in traditional charities and volunteer work.

What being self-employed means

In the end, self-employment is not just about work. It's certainly not just about money. These are only a few aspects of the whole deal. It's really about freedom, empowerment, and service. It's part of our spiritual evolution.

Of course, freedom and empowerment can be achieved without starting a new business. However, if you are thinking about going with your idea and yet feeling hesitant, I can tell you this: There is nothing like actually seeing my idea work. There is a clarity and brilliance about it. It's so worth it even if that means some sleepless nights. It's truly a spiritual experience.

Shining your light

I really think, if I could do it, you can. It's a matter of your own determination.

I'd like to finish this little eBook with my favorite quote:

OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS NOT THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates
others.

-- *Marianne Williamson*

I love this so much that I made it into a wallpaper on my company computer when I was still there. I read it over and over when I had a spare moment. In two months, I quit that job and moved myself across America from Tennessee to Oregon. In another few months, I started my business.

Please think about your own light. Don't be your worst enemy -- let it shine!

My message to you

Thank you for reading this eBook. I know your time is valuable, and it's my honor that you find this worth your time.

Now it's your turn. Start taking action. Where can you start? Have you done the financial review we discussed in Part I? How about brainstorming your niche? What can you do today to learn more about your business and marketing? (For your convenience, I listed some of the books I find helpful in Resources, at the end of this eBook.)

And if you like this eBook, please forward it to your friends. Let's spread the word that lightworkers can be successful and empowered business owners!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I certainly could not have become the person I am today all by myself. I am part of the Whole. For this reason, I am grateful to all the people who have ever crossed my path and influenced me, both positively and negatively. Yes, I'm grateful even to my previous boss who regularly used derogative words -- he stimulated me to become my own boss. We say positive and negative influences, but these are just our judgment calls -- the truth is they are just the way they are.

Some people not only crossed my path but walked with me. Here are just a few such beautiful souls that I'd like to mention:

My special gratitude to [Hunter Nuttall](#), who proofread this eBook. He has been a source of inspiration for quite some time.

My gratitude to my Yes to Me blog readers, commenters, and fellow bloggers. I love connecting to potential and existing clients (read: everyone) through my writing, and your readership means huge to me.

I'm grateful to my Akashic Record Reading clients who have empowered me through their trust in my service. It's a joy to be of your assistance!

And finally. My never-ending gratitude goes to my God, or Light Source, or whatever we call it, that has guided me and continues to guide me. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Akemi Gaines reads peoples' soul records (called Akashic Records) and clears the energetic issues that affect her clients mentally, emotionally, and even physically. Akashic Records are a set of energetic recordings of all the things that have ever happened and can happen. They are great resources of deep self-knowledge, which is the secret of any success.

She also facilitates an intuition development program called Spirit Guides Coaching -- she teaches her clients how to communicate with their own spirit guides so that they can get to this valuable resource themselves.

For more details on her services, please visit her website [Akashic Record Reading](#).

Akemi also writes for [Yes to Me](#) -- **Lightworkers' Empowerment & Ascension**, where she shares her spiritual insight on various topics in life, including entrepreneurship, money, relationships, health and mortality, and more.

She resides in Oregon, USA, where trees are lush and abundant and the air is moist and gentle. She likes reading, taking a walk, experimenting with vegetarian recipes, and just relaxing in the sun.

You can connect with Akemi on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

RESOURCES

Books:

On business and marketing:

[Get Clients Now!](#) by C.J. Hayden -- A marketing coach in a book. The next best thing to hiring a real coach. And she is good.

[Book Yourself Solid](#) by Michael Port -- Another great read on marketing.

[Made to Stick](#) by Chip Heath & Dan Heath -- How to write to convey your point effectively. Marketing is about persuasion.

[The E-Myth Revisited](#) by Michael Gerber -- A classic in small business. If you are good at what you do but have little experience in business management, please read this.

On abundance awareness, success, and the law of attraction:

[Money, and the Law of Attraction](#) by Esther Hicks -- The Abraham books are classics, and this may be most relevant to aspiring entrepreneurs.

[Chicken Soup for the Soul: Living Your Dreams](#) by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen -- My favorite chicken soup book.

[The Master Key System](#) by Charles Haanel -- I think this book illustrates the Law of Attraction best. Take time to read and do the exercises.

[Think and Grow Rich](#) by Napoleon Hill -- Another classics, and very worth it.

Useful tools:

[AWeber](#) -- If you want to connect with your potential clients through newsletters, this is the way to build your email address list.

[E-junkie](#) -- If you want to sell your eBooks, this company can manage the fulfillment (payment processing and eBook delivery) for you.

Websites:

[Seth Godin's blog](#) -- Seth Godin is not just about marketing. He has brilliant ideas about business in general. Plenty of food for thought here. His books, like [The Dip: A Little Book That Teaches You When to Quit \(and When to Stick\)](#) and [Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us](#), are good, too.

[Startup Nation](#) -- For more practical advice on small business startup, such as writing business plans. Their forum is very educational, too.

[Location Independent](#) -- Some of you may be dreaming of traveling the world while you work for yourself. With modern technology, you can do that. This website teaches you how.

[Millionaire Mommy Next Door](#) -- Solid advice on personal finance and self-employment. Jen is a lot better at math than I am. (I know her personally.)