

# Unshackled

How to become a lifestyle entrepreneur?



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written by Nick Hilderson

Writer: Nick Hilderson  
Cover design by: Nick Hilderson  
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# Introduction

As you open this book, you may be sitting in an office building, gazing out at the cityscape through a window, or perhaps reading this in the comfort of your home. Regardless of where you find yourself physically, you're here because you're seeking something more – more freedom, more passion, more balance, and ultimately, a lifestyle that isn't confined to the rigid boundaries of traditional work paradigms.

*Welcome to the journey into the world of lifestyle  
entrepreneurship.*

In our rapidly evolving society, the norms of work and success have begun to shift. Once, the ladder to success seemed straightforward: education, a well-paying job, promotions, and then, after years of hard work, a comfortable retirement. But this path leaves little room for individual passions, personal freedom, and the unique lifestyles we might dream of. This is where the concept of breaking the mold is.

Lifestyle entrepreneurs aren't in the game just for financial profit. They play for the highest stake– crafting a life worth living, filled with passion, freedom, and the ability to dictate their course. These entrepreneurs build businesses to accumulate wealth and create a lifestyle that resonates with their values, interests, and aspirations.

This book is an exploration of this new entrepreneurial terrain. It's a guide to understanding the mindset, strategies, triumphs, and challenges of those who venture to intertwine their personal life goals with their entrepreneurial journey. We'll delve into the lives of digital nomads who traverse the globe while running their businesses, solopreneurs who relish their autonomy, parentpreneurs who find the balance between their business and family life, and hobbyist entrepreneurs who've turned their passions into their livelihood.

As you turn the pages of this book, you'll find that being a lifestyle entrepreneur is not about choosing an easy path – because it's far from easy. It is about selecting an authentic way that aligns with your innermost desires.

So, whether you're an aspiring entrepreneur yearning to bring your dreams to life, a seasoned business owner looking to pivot your approach, or simply someone curious about alternative paths to success, this book aims to inspire, guide, and ignite the lifestyle entrepreneur in you. Let's embark on this journey together, breaking boundaries and redefining what success means.

# **Chapter 1: Shackled – The Traditional Work Paradigm**

As you begin this journey into lifestyle entrepreneurship, it's vital first to understand the traditional work paradigm that has shaped our societal definitions of work and success. This part of the book will examine the conventional path and its inherent limitations, paving a better understanding of the need for and rise of life entrepreneurship.

## **The Conventional Path to Success**

### **Understanding the Traditional Route**

Most of us have heard this advice at least once: “Work hard at school, get good grades, secure a job, perform well to get promoted, save money, buy a house, and eventually retire.” This advice was the path I tread in my early years, striving to excel at school because it was what I was raised to believe. The Industrial Age crafted this narrative for most people, and many stick to it, thinking it offers security.

Indeed, this has become the conventional blueprint for success – a path well-trodden. It offers predictability and a sense of security, deeply ingrained in our societal consciousness. It begins with formal education, leads to the acquisition of a stable job, progresses with an ascent up the corporate ladder, and culminates in a comfortable retirement. The milestones are clearly defined, and societal approval is an unerring compass guiding the journey. But what exactly does this path entail? Let's explore.

### **Education: The First Step**

Think back to your earliest years. Remember when we all started believing education was the secret passageway to success? We were led to think that stellar grades would unlock the gates to prestigious colleges, which would pave the way to prosperous careers and a comfortable life.

However, let's step back and look at what education also implies. It's not just about acing exams. It's about sticking to a prescribed structure – punctuality, following rules, hitting deadlines. Doesn't this system reward memorization and regurgitation more than fosters creativity and critical thinking? While no one can deny the importance of education, isn't it high time we question if this one-size-

fits-all approach readies us all for the unpredictable, dynamic nature of the world beyond classrooms?

If we were to be honest, could we say it does? The present-day educational model has remained stagnant for over a century, mirroring a factory-like environment more than a learning sanctuary for curious minds. Remember the school bell ringing, signaling the start and end of work, echoing the clanging bell of a factory? And let's not forget how many essential life skills were absent from our educational journey. How many of us learned about financial literacy – like filing taxes – in school? For many of us, isn't it true that the skills we apply most today didn't come from textbooks but from real-life experiences? For many of us, school has provided only a broad base, a basic foundation.

### **Employment: Stepping into the Corporate World**

Can you recall that pivotal transition from academia to the professional realm? How were we drawn by the promise that diligence and dedication would lead to promotions, salary increments, and job security? The lure of a steady paycheck and enticing benefits has often been a compelling reason for many of us to navigate toward stable employment.

But isn't it true that this stability sometimes demands significant trade-offs? Our precious time, our cherished freedom, and sometimes our burning passion might need to take back a seat to our professional obligations. Haven't some of us found that even with stable jobs, there are instances where one income isn't quite enough, leading us to take on additional roles to ensure financial security?

### **Retirement: The Final Chapter of Our Collective Journey**

After years of relentless dedication, do we not all envision reaching the ultimate goal – retirement? The prospect of finally having the freedom to delve into our hobbies, embark on travels, or bask in leisure seems a deserving reward for our years of steadfast commitment.

But retirement, like every stage of life, often comes with unique challenges. For many of us, transitioning from a fast-paced work life to sudden tranquility can be a striking contrast. Moreover, we must acknowledge the realities of aging, which may limit our capabilities compared to our younger selves. Aren't there times when our retirement savings don't stretch quite far enough to support the lifestyle we envisioned throughout our working years?



Furthermore, we must confront a profound truth: the sands of time wait for no one. As we reach the autumn of our lives, we're reminded that time – our most precious resource – is continually ticking away. So, it begs the question – with the cost of living rising, is it wise to hinge our remaining golden years on such uncertain prospects?

This awareness of the irreplaceable nature of time could act as a powerful catalyst, nudging us to rethink the conventional path and consider alternate ways to enrich our lives before and during retirement.

## **The Metrics of Success**

In this book, our journey is about breaking free from the 9-to-5 routine and societal notions of success. This redefinition of success requires deep diving into the conventional metrics we've been conditioned to aim for. Let's dissect these benchmarks and see how they align (or not) with our pursuit of fulfilling an entrepreneurial lifestyle.

### **Academic Achievement: An Unshackled Perspective**

As we unravel the traditional binds of success, let's revisit an age-old metric of success – academic achievement. You know the narrative well: stellar grades, elite universities, advanced degrees. They're woven into the tapestry of success, heralded as beacons lighting the way to our prosperous future.

Yes, let's pause and ask: Are these the only beacons? Does this well-trodden path serve all types of intelligence, all shades of passion? Traditional education has its merits, but it also has its blind spots. It often values compliance and rote learning, sometimes dimming the vibrant spark of creativity, the audacious spirit of innovation, and the rhythmic dance of independent thought – the very lifeblood of entrepreneurship.

In our unshackled journey, it's worth remembering that many successful entrepreneurs did not tether their dreams to the conventional academic path.

Take Richard Branson, the maverick behind the Virgin Group. The school's rigid structure and standardization poorly fit his dyslexic mind. So, he bid it farewell at 16, cradling the seed of his first venture – Student magazine. Fast forward to today, and his entrepreneurial tree has branches reaching out to music, aviation, and even space travel.

Consider Steve Jobs, the visionary co-founder of Apple. He shrugged off the yoke of traditional education, dropping out of Reed College within six months. Yet, he audited classes that stoked his creative flame, like calligraphy. Those lessons later seeped into the design ethos of Apple, transforming our relationship with technology.

Reflect on Oprah Winfrey, the media empress who carved an empire with her emotional intelligence and communication prowess. Born into poverty and wrapped in challenges, she navigated her path without the map of higher education. Today, she is one of the world's most influential women, her name echoing as a synonym for success.

In the digital age we inhabit, the landscape of learning has evolved. Classrooms without walls are sprouting in the virtual world, offering current, relevant, and flexible knowledge. Many digital platforms bring the brilliance of professionals and top universities' reputations to your screen. For example, coding boot camps sculpt successful tech entrepreneurs without the chisel of a traditional computer science degree.

### **Income and Job Title: Beyond the Illusion of Success**

When you step into lifestyle entrepreneurship, you've been given a pair of glasses that allow you to see beyond the illusion of traditional success markers. Suddenly, the shiny trophies of hefty income and prestigious job titles don't glitter as brightly. Why? Because you realize they're merely symbols, not the substance of genuine success.

The chase for higher income brackets and envious job titles can be a dizzying race. While the allure of monetary wealth and professional prestige can be strong, remember that they are not definitive benchmarks of success. Chasing these golden idols can often lead to golden shackles, keeping us locked in a life that might not resonate with our true desires or passions.

Reflect upon the story of Elon Musk, the innovative force behind Tesla and SpaceX. When PayPal, his previous venture, was sold, Musk found himself in possession of considerable wealth. But he chose not to rest. Instead, he reinvested and risked his fortune to create businesses that matched his future vision. It was not about amassing wealth or acquiring an impressive job title but igniting change.

Consider the late Tony Hsieh, the humble CEO of Zappos. Despite his elevated position, he didn't ensconce himself in a stately corner office. Instead, he worked from a cubicle alongside his team, valuing connectivity over hierarchy. His yardstick for success wasn't his title but the happiness and satisfaction of his customers and employees.

As we unshackle traditional notions of success in this book, it becomes clear that the conventional race for higher income and prestigious titles often overlooks something crucial: personal fulfillment and freedom. In lifestyle entrepreneurship, we see income not as a validation of our worth but as a tool to support our journey. A job title isn't our identity but a role we perform in our mission to create value.

As you navigate the pages of "Unshackled: How to Become a Lifestyle Entrepreneur," remember that the chase for higher income and job titles is a part of the old paradigm. Here, we value freedom, passion, and personal growth. We measure success not by what we acquire but by what we become and the difference we make.

### **Material Possessions: Beyond the Mirage of Success**

The traditional indicators of success often lead us to a glittering but illusory oasis: material possessions. Luxury vehicles, sprawling homes, high-end clothing - society presents these tantalizing tokens as the epitome of success. But are they indeed the destination or merely enticing illusions that can distract us from finding genuine fulfillment?

The relentless pursuit of material wealth, while enticing, often traps us in a never-ending cycle of desire and dissatisfaction. It confuses having with being, owning with living, and teaching us to quantify life's value in material terms.

Consider the journey of Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia's renowned outdoor clothing company. Despite the formidable success of his business, Chouinard consciously distances himself from extravagant displays of wealth. He leads a simple, nature-bound life, measuring his success by his ability to impact the environment positively, not by what he owns.

Reflect on Warren Buffet, a titan of finance and investment. One of the wealthiest individuals globally, Buffet is known for his surprising modesty. He still lives in the unpretentious house he bought over six decades ago and isn't one to flaunt

his wealth in the form of material possessions. Instead, he leverages his wealth to create further value and opportunity.

As we pivot away from traditional markers of success in our exploration of lifestyle entrepreneurship, we start to see material possessions in a new light. They're no longer the end goal; if anything, they're side effects of the journey. True wealth begins to take on a different form:

- The breadth of our experiences.
- The depth of our connections.
- The harmony between our values and our work.
- The impact we leave on the world.

As we delve deeper into this new paradigm, remember that genuine success isn't about what you own. It's about who you are, what you value, and the positive change you enact. It's about trading the mirage of material success for a life filled with purpose, freedom, and personal fulfillment.

### **Retirement Savings: Beyond the Deferred Life Plan**

Traditional success narratives often push us towards a well-trodden path. We're advised to secure a steady job and save a chunk of our earnings while dreaming of a future where we can finally enjoy the fruits of our labor. This is the conventional idea of retirement: a deferred life plan where joy, freedom, and relaxation await us at the end of decades of toil. But what if we reimagined this concept?

The promise of a comfortable retirement can be a potent motivator. However, it risks turning life into a waiting game, where the present is continuously sacrificed for a future that is neither guaranteed nor always as rosy as it seems.

Let's consider some alternative approaches. First, look at Tim Ferris, author of the bestselling book "The 4-Hour Workweek". Ferris proposes the idea of 'mini-retirements,' where instead of deferring life until old age, he advocates for periods of work balanced with periods of leisure throughout life. He challenges the conventional notion of retirement, encouraging us to enjoy our lives in the present rather than postponing joy for a distant future.

Then, there's Mr. Money Mustache, who retired at age 30 by embracing a lifestyle of frugality and investing wisely. He redefined retirement not as an end-stage of

life but as a state of financial freedom that allowed him to live on his terms far earlier than the traditional retirement age.

We should also look at Alex Morton, a lifestyle entrepreneur and motivational speaker. Morton rejected the conventional idea of working toward retirement from an early age. Instead, he embraced network marketing and built a business that gave him financial freedom and the ability to enjoy life while still young. Morton's journey illuminates a different way of living, where retirement is not a distant goal but an ongoing experience of financial independence.

In the sphere of lifestyle entrepreneurship, retirement transforms. Instead of being a distant dream, the freedom and fulfillment associated with retirement become accessible in the here and now. It's about creating a life where work and play merge, financial stability is achieved without compromising present-day joy, and life isn't deferred but lived fully in each moment.

Remember, you don't have to wait until your twilight years to live your dream life. The goal is not to retire from life but to retire the idea of a deferred life. As a lifestyle entrepreneur, you have the power to make that happen, crafting a life where joy, fulfillment, and financial stability are not distant milestones but your everyday reality.

### **Societal Recognition: Beyond the Applause**

Societal recognition often serves as a compelling beacon on the traditional path to success. Titles, awards, public commendations – these symbols of approval from society are frequently equated with achievement. But as we forge our unique paths as lifestyle entrepreneurs, our perspectives on societal recognition begin to evolve.

While societal recognition can undoubtedly bring a sense of validation and reward, it harbors a risk: the constant pursuit of external validation can overshadow the cultivation of inner contentment and fulfillment. It can tether us to societal expectations and norms, limiting our authenticity and independent decision-making capacity.

Consider Eric Worre, a leading figure in the network marketing industry. Despite the many accolades Worre has collected throughout his career, these don't define his success. His true motivation lies in empowering others to achieve financial freedom and personal development through network marketing. His

success is measured not by the awards he's garnered but by the lives he's positively impacted.

Then there's Grant Cardone, who has shaped his narrative in entrepreneurship with his inimitable style and unapologetic ambition. Cardone faced his fair share of challenges and criticisms but stayed true to his vision, building a multimillion-dollar real estate empire and becoming an influential motivational speaker. His journey serves as a potent reminder that the changing tides of societal recognition should not dictate our paths.

In lifestyle entrepreneurship, societal recognition shifts from the driver's seat to the backseat. It's no longer about chasing applause but finding purpose and creating value. It's about defining success on your terms, in alignment with your values and passions.

As you continue this exploration, remember that the most resounding applause should come from within. Don't let the echoes of societal recognition control your path or define your worth. In the landscape of lifestyle entrepreneurship, your journey is uniquely yours to craft, your success is yours to gauge, and your fulfillment is yours to discover.

## **The Limits of Traditional Work Structures**

Building on our earlier discussion about success metrics, let's delve into the foundation that supports them: standard work structures. Although these structures sometimes feel limiting, they should never hinder us from achieving our full potential and impede our personal growth.

### **Lack of Flexibility: The 9-to-5 Grind**

When considering the traditional work paradigm, it's impossible to overlook the inherent rigidity that comes with it. This is most evident in the widely accepted 9-to-5 work schedule that has dominated the corporate landscape for decades. This structure, designed to promote consistency and predictability, can often feel like invisible shackles, limiting our freedom and flexibility.

Imagine an ordinary weekday in this framework. The alarm clock rings before sunrise, and the race against time begins. You hurry through breakfast, brave the rush-hour commute, and clock in, only to spend most of your daylight hours in a confined workspace. The freedom to choose when where, and how you work is largely absent.

The 9-to5 schedule isn't just about the hours spent at a desk. It extends its reach into every aspect of your life, often dictating when you can take breaks, how you spend your free time, and even when you can take vacations. Such lack of flexibility can lead to work-life imbalance, reduced productivity, and diminished personal satisfaction.

Let's consider the story of Ray Higdon, who was trapped in the 9-to-5 cycle early in his career. Higdon, now an esteemed figure in network marketing, began his journey in the rigid confines of the real estate sector. The market crash in 2008 left him financially devastated, and the wooden structure of his traditional job left him with little room to maneuver and adapt.

But Higdon's story didn't end there. He sought a change, an escape from the constricting 9-to5 grind, and found it in network marketing. As a lifestyle entrepreneur, he discovered a career that allowed him to control his schedule, choose his working hours, and determine his pace. He was no longer racing against the clock; he was now managing his time.

It's not just the stories of individuals like Ray Higdon that underscore this shift. Consider Tim Ferris, an entrepreneur, and author who has become a poster child for defying traditional work structures. Ferris is best known for his book "The 4-Hour Workweek," where he advocates for ditching the 9-to5 grind in favor of a more flexible, productive, and fulfilling work-life design.

Before Ferris became the lifestyle design guru he is today, he was overworked and underwhelmed in his data storage company, BrainQUICKEN. Realizing that the long hours he was putting in were not equating to a proportionate increase in satisfaction or success, Ferris embarked on a transformative journey that eventually led him to pen his revolutionary ideas about work and life in "The 4-Hour Workweek".

In this book, Ferris lays out strategies for achieving more with less time and effort, creating a lifestyle that prioritizes personal fulfillment over the glorification of busyness. He explores concepts such as outsourcing, time management, and income automation, all aimed at establishing a work-life structure that serves the individual rather than the other way around.

Through his innovative mindset and the resulting change in work paradigm, Ferris has not only been able to live a life filled with remarkable experiences but has also inspired millions worldwide to rethink their relationship with work. His