KICK ASS and follow your PASSION
Or simply how to work less and live more

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INTRODUCTION

I closed the book I was reading and looked up. I was lying on a beach in Thailand under a beach umbrella and got out my bottle of water that was now rather hot even though it had been in the protective shadow under the beach chair.

After 12 days in the land of smiles my girlfriend and I soon had to leave this paradise on earth. The vacation was just a couple of weeks away from our jobs and we had to go back to work the day after we got home. Talk about a splash of cold water in the face. Coming from the 30 something degrees (Celsius), cold drinks and happy faces everywhere to piss-cold Denmark where everybody seems to wander around in a state of despair just waiting for the winter to end.

But as I got up and out of the chair to go take a short dip to cool me down, I smiled to myself even though I had to fly home the next day. But something inside me had changed.
I turned my head and smiled to my girlfriend, who had her head buried in one of those women’s magazines that we men have absolutely no way of understanding. She looked up and smiled back at me.

I had made my mind up. And as I stood there I knew that my life would change; it would just be a matter of time and hard work. This boost of energy shot through my body as I threw myself into the waves.

I had decided that I would no longer be a 9-5 slave but instead be my own boss and work less and live more. No longer just settle for a few weeks of vacation time each year where I could allow myself to do whatever I wanted, but have the time to do all the things that I was truly passionate about before I needed hip replacement surgery and dentures.

While I certainly had no idea at that point how this was going to happen, I knew that I didn’t want to work in a normal job with just a few weeks of vacation time each year. The life I wanted was a different one.

That was in the beginning of 2008. This is now...
I ♥ MY WORK

Love your job? Sure you do, most people I know do as well. Actually, I also loved... well... liked my old job. I was good at it and I got a lot of respect from my peers. Well, that and it paid well and it was as secure as a 9-5 can be. However, as much as you love your job, having a job is based on the premise that you "must have" a job or "need" a job.

Have you ever had some of the following thoughts?

- I don't have time to do what I truly want
- Is this what I'm gonna be doing until I die?
- If I could only spend more time with my family
- I would like to travel and see the world while I'm still young
- If I work hard and more will I get that promotion? And is this what I really want in life?

Our whole life we have been told the same story about how your life should be played out.
• You should go to school
• You should get good grades
• You should get a good job
• You should work your ass off and then maybe
• You would get a promotion paying more but requiring you work even more
• Once you hit 70ish you should retire and live the life you truly want

Did you notice how many "you should"s were in there? **Who the hell is the person who set up these "should" rules?**

You have probably heard them from your parents, but I mean who told them about the rules? Their parents?

**Is this a chicken and egg scenario?** I mean, someone has to have made these "rules" up in the first place, right?

And is it safe to assume that the world has changed since your grandparents or great grandparents were young?
Now I know that not all people follow this pattern. Someone breaks out and decides to start his or her own business and perhaps hires people who will abide by the above plan. But most of the time, they've also gone through most of the steps and worked for “the man” a number of years before breaking out of cubicle life.

**This could sound provocative**, and I certainly don't tell people that they shouldn't go to school or shouldn't put any effort in when they're there. Not at all. But I am advocating that we question things here in life and that we all pursue the life that we really want and not what the society expects of us.

No one ever got happy by living someone else's life.

(Timothy Ferriss called this "The Deferred Lifeplan" in his book "The 4-Hour Workweek".)

The last time you were at a social gathering and someone asked you the famous question, **"So what do you do?"**, did you answer with what you do at work? Isn't this a symptom of something? I mean what we DO is our work? **Is that our identity?** Is our job function what best describes us as a human being on planet earth?

I hate it when this question comes up, basically because I’m not entirely sure on how to answer it. Also I hate that it pops up as the first question after we've established our names because the other party expect me to agree on the premise that our identity is chained to our work.
So when people ask me what I do, I usually just answer "as little as possible." It usually leaves them a little puzzled, and I move on to talking about the weather or what kind of alcohol is in the punch bowl or me bragging about my kids (this last thing happens a lot :)).

Are we just another small cog in the greater machine that is the company we work for (or brick in the wall as Pink Floyd put it - Ok, Pink Floyd mainly focused on education in their 1979 classic) - and isn't it better to own the machine instead?
SO WHO THE HELL AM I?

And why should you care?

I should probably introduce myself and my story because chances are that you haven't heard of me before.

My name is Rasmus Lindgren and up until that day on the beach in Thailand in 2008, I had worked as an IT consultant. I have a degree in computer science and I have worked in a number of small and big consultancy companies in Denmark, where I've always lived.

Actually, I liked my job because I got the responsibility I wanted, worked with incredibly clever people, got respect from my boss (well, at least most of the time) and did some amazing projects. I also feel in all humility that I was rather good at what I did. The money was decent although you probably always think that you should have a higher paycheck.

Now if you know anybody in the IT business, you probably also know that you can always work more hours and spend more time in front of the computer. The projects always seem big and a little behind schedule.
So as I approached the water on that beach in Thailand, I knew that something had to change.

Even though I had co-founded a small consultancy company in 2007, I was still working too much on everybody else's projects. Although I had an okay life and had a girlfriend that I loved and who would later become the mother of my children, I had the clear thought that there should be more to life and I didn't want to wait for that to happen until I would retire at an age where I might need hip surgery.

I was working my ass off and my identity was in my job. When I went around at parties I always answered the famous question with "I'm a IT consultant." Actually, this statement could also shut people up as they still didn't know if I was repairing old outdated computers or doing complex missile algorithms for the military (the right answer probably lies in between the two :)).

Sure, I was making a little more money because I was now partner in a company, but I didn't feel any fulfilment about this.

I had all these crazy ideas and projects I wanted to try out. But I was realistic enough to acknowledge that I needed time and money in order to get this off the ground. So as long as I was working the best hours of my life away, these ideas had to stay in the drawer.
So after having made the decision to change my life and work less in 2008, I started doing a couple of experiments, and to be honest I was really running around in the dark trying different things.

The idea was to try different business models that would make me some money without me having to spend a lot of time on them. This way I would have some cash flow to pay the bills and time to focus on what I really wanted to do.

While I did manage to make a few bucks on a couple of projects, my break came when I started a business in 2009 that created e-commerce sites for small Danish companies. Now this wasn't a project I made tons of money on, but I quickly made approximately $2000 per month without having to do much. I had automated as much of the delivery process as I could and I had a team in Eastern Europe doing the actual sites for my clients.

So the natural next step for me was to sell my shares in the company that I helped start. I did this in the beginning of 2010.

Because my online businesses was still not bringing in enough money to pay the bills, I continued to work as an IT consultant. But instead of working the entire year, I now had the control to choose only to work some of it.

So in 2011 I only worked six months as a freelance IT consultant (down to three months in 2012). The rest of the year I could spend however I wanted.
Another thing that changed the way we lived was in December 2010 when my girlfriend and I gave birth to our first child (our little princess Cecilie) and we also bought a house in Hua Hin, Thailand where we could spend our winters when the weather was less desirable in Denmark.

Now I'm not writing this in order to brag, but living some months in Thailand each year was a dream that I had had since we left Thailand the last time, in 2008. To come back but to live there for months instead of weeks. To be able to spend time with my family in a country with great weather, fantastic food and ever-smiling people.

In the beginning of 2012 we were blessed with a little baby boy (Oliver), and having children has just made me want to focus on changing my life even more.

my two princesses
My Dream Life Is Not Your Dream Life

Now I still work a little I typically work 3-5 months each year, but I truly feel blessed. I have been able to spend more time with my kids and girlfriend than anybody I know, we have been able to spend months in Thailand when the weather has been crappy in Denmark, I have had the time to focus on some more crazy projects, like writing a book or my blog, and I have been able to help other people follow their dreams.

I enjoy inspiring other people to take action and live the life that they want.

Now this is probably not your dream life. This is just what I love to do. But the thing is that you can shape your life the way you want, too.

I'm the lazy bum who tells you that life is not just work; you don't have to be that cog in the machine; you, too, can work less and enjoy life more; you, too, can kick ass and follow your passion.
Sure, now we take the Internet for granted. It has made communication much easier, it provides a plethora of information and we cannot really remember life without sites like Google, Facebook and Wikipedia.

But it has introduced another thing as well, something that is often overlooked and ignored by most people: The Internet has radically lowered the barriers for creating a business that can be run anywhere in the world for just about everyone!

In the past, starting a business usually required a lot of money and time. You had to invest and take huge financial risks in order to get off the ground. If you weren't born into a family with pile of cash lying around, chances were that you had to go looking for an investor or sell your soul (and deed to your home) to the bank in order to secure the financial means to start up.

Because you needed other people's money, this would require you to write elaborate business plans that detailed everything about the business you wanted to start. This also made it really hard for someone
without a good education to get anywhere as an entrepreneur because you had to know how to write for
investors and banks. It wasn't enough to simply have a passion for cocktail dresses or South American
parrots.

Now, with the Internet, this has totally changed! You can now build online assets in weeks instead of years.
You can start selling without money to invest in stock or a physical store, and you can do this from a beach chair in Southeast Asia or from your home office with one of your kids on your lap.

This is a game changer!

A lot of people have been jumping on this train, substituting the "old" physical, resource-intensive business with the online world. These online businesses hold the same potential as their physical counterparts, but with many more benefits.

Now this might not sound new to you; surely, Amazon has been around since 1995. But in the last couple of years something new has happened.

Technology has become much more accessible!

really accessible technology, heck even my mother can use it!
In the past, starting an online business required that you either knew about technology or you started the company with your 16 year old nephew who was a coke-drinking, chips-eating, pizza-ordering, basement-living, thick-glasses-wearing, pimpled-faced, non-understandable speaking, introverted, unwashed for days, underpants flipping, socially handicapped, computer programming, pale-skinned, overweight, online-living, black clothes-wearing, pierced, Mensa IQ super geek.

**Not anymore.** Creating a professional-looking website with e-commerce capability can now be done by even the most computer illiterate.

While I might make this sound easy, you might not have the first clue regarding how to go about creating a website. But the point is that you can learn this as easily as you can learn how to operate your food processor.

To continue with the food processor analogy, this means that in the past you would have to build the food processor before you could use it. Well, no longer.
So if you want to leave your 9-5 and start living in congruence with what truly matters to you, then allow me to present you with a framework that will help you do exactly this. Later I will also get into some common pitfalls I often see people fall into.

**Lifestyle Business Creation Framework**

- Deciding and Committing
- Designing Your Own Path
- Building the Business
- Automating the Business
- Scaling and Ramping Up

The rest of this book is dedicated to describing this simple framework. If you want additional resources I also provide free video training over at: http://LifestyleBusinessMastermind.com
Deciding and Committing

The title of this chapter might sound easy enough. I mean, how long a time does it take one to decide on something? And commitment? Sure, we're all committed to living the sweet life. But is it as easy as this?

Well, yes and no!

Think back on the last time you were out shopping for groceries. How long did it take you to decide on choosing any given product? 1 second? 10 seconds? Probably no longer than 30 seconds for any given product.

But then think back on the last time you had to buy something bigger, like a car or a new home. How long did it take you make these kinds of decisions? A week? A month? Years?

So why is this? A decision happens in an instant, in the split second when you make your mind up to take action. So basically what is taking so long is actually not making the decision, it's delaying making the decision.

You could decide tomorrow that you wanted to quit your job. Or you could wait a year or more to come to the same decision. Notice that I don't write that you decide to quit your job tomorrow, just that you decide that you WANT to quit and change your life.
So why is it that we stall difficult decisions? Well, it's due to our number one motivator here in life: FEAR

Remember that our brains were basically created millennia ago, and back then we really had something to fear. That's why the "fight or flight" decision is coded into the absolute base of our brain, known broadly as our Reptilian Brain.

While it's good to fear a Sabre-toothed tiger lurking behind a bush, we need a little more analytical approach in this day and age.

Typically we fear the unknown simply as a protection mechanism and not always from a rational standpoint.

So this chapter is probably the most important one. This chapter will be the key differentiator to whether you succeed or not. Actually, it will determine whether you get started at
all. Because let's face it: just because we read or hear something that we would like to take action on, doesn't mean that we actually do it. I mean, I also want to go to the gym more, but up until now I have not been very successful in this desire.

So therefore it's vital that you play your cards right in this phase. In order to make a lasting decision and stick to it even when you encounter opposition, I suggest working strategically with it instead of just telling yourself "sure I'll do this."

You need to decide on this route and you need to commit to doing it.

**Therefore I suggest the following process.**

- Risk Analysis (basically in order to see that there is no risk - Disney Model?)
- Ecology Check (is this possible - how many resources do you currently have available, family situation, work situation)
- Expectation Management
- Accountability Commitment (public commitment)
- Consistent Action

**RISK ANALYSIS**

What's the worst thing that can happen?
The objective of the risk analysis phase is to find the actual risks of the project instead of the fears we are having. The problem is that without proper analysis of the risks, our brain is really ruled by the most likely unwarranted fear of what might happen. The fear of the unknown.

One way of working strategically with risks and fears is to use the Walt Disney Model. And no, I’m not going to suggest that you dress up in a full Mickey Mouse costume here. Instead it's a model used by Disney to find practical solutions to problems that they face, and it works wonders.

According to the model, you can view a problem from three different mental perspectives. Disney named them:

- The Dreamer
- The Realist
- The Spoiler

You move mentally from one perspective to the other, but you can only have one perspective at a time. If you are having a hard time staying in just one role at a time, you can use something physical such as three different hats to represent the different perspectives. It often helps to anchor the roles into something physical. You can also move physically to three different locations in the room for each perspective.
So you start out being the **Dreamer**. This perspective is represented by unrestrained creativity: anything is possible.

You can ask yourself the question, "If I/we had no constraints, what would I love to do next?"

Once you feel that you have come up with several good ideas, you can choose to move on to the **Realist** perspective.

This is where you ask yourself "How, in practice, could I/we make this work?"

And then when you feel that you have a good idea of how a given idea could be made possible, you move on to the **Spoiler** perspective or role. This is the critic in the group, and here you look for faults in the plan.

You can ask yourself questions like, "There is something wrong with this. What is wrong with this?"
After you identify a given problem with the plan, you can take that problem back to the Dreamer and ask the role how they would solve it. You can then iterate over the three perspectives until the Spoiler perspective is satisfied and can no longer see any (or at least only minor) issues with the plan.

**By now you should probably see that the risks might not be as big as you initially thought.** You probably also have a good idea of what you should do next.

**ECOLOGY CHECK**

Now is the time to check the ecology of the decision. What impacts will this have once you start to pursue it? How does it influence those around you, the family and friends?

Are the resources you need available? Now I've already written that building an online business won't cost you much, **so in this case resources usually means TIME.**

One objection I hear again and again is people telling me that they "don't have time" to follow this dream. I totally understand that objection. Life is full of stuff we would like to do.

This all comes down to priorities. Is building a lifestyle business that will make you able to spend more time on what you want high enough on your ladder of priorities?

- Is it for instance more important to you to **watch your favorite series/news shows** on the TV each evening?
Is it more important to **go to the gym 3 times each week**?

And what about family priorities such as your kids? Would you **accept to work on a lifestyle business** in your spare time instead of spending more time with them?

There are no right or wrong answers on this list.

**It all comes down to the individual person and situation.** I'm just saying, don't say you don't have enough time. If you keep telling yourself this, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Basically what happens if you tell your brain that you cannot do something is that it will stop looking for solutions.

Instead, you should tell your brains that it CAN be done again and again, as it will look for solutions and ideas all over. **So tell yourself that you DO have time instead.**

In the **ecology check** you could also do a quick check of how much money you really need to pay your current bills. This can help make the whole idea more concrete, as you can see immediately how much money you need to bring in each month from your business. This again has some impact on what kind of business model you might choose later on when you design your business.
I would recommend that you spend an hour or two under a blanket with a cup of coffee or tea (or whatever works for you) and write down two things:

- A list of priorities in your life
- A brief description of how your week should look if you should be able to pursue a lifestyle business

It doesn't have to be anything grand, and you don't have to save the result. The important thing is that you get to think this through in a structured manner. However, if you have a spouse, you might need to discuss the result of this small exercise with them.

And this brings me to the next step in the process.
EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT
While you probably have expectations for yourself, this is mainly about managing the expectations of those around you. Now in most literature that describes "lifestyle design," the author is most often in his 20s, has not yet established a family and is basically travelling all around the globe.

While this is of course not a bad thing, it's just easier to implement life changing strategies such as creating a lifestyle business when you are not responsible for anyone.

But unfortunately this scenario doesn't describe everybody. If you have a spouse and children, you need to bring them into the loop as well.

After having done the exercise from the previous step, a good idea is to discuss it with your spouse and your kids, if they are old enough, getting their input on it.

Now this should not turn into an idea-bashing where they basically tell you that they don't believe in the idea. It should be a constructive talk. One way of keeping it constructive is to set the boundaries of the conversation to answering the question "If this idea is something that I/we want to pursue, what would it take for us as a family to get there?" and "What are we prepared to sacrifice in order to get the life that we all dream about?"
There is nothing more demoralizing than when one part of the family is struggling with building a business and the other is trying to set it up for failure.

You might not totally agree on everything, but it's a good idea to at least get support and understanding before going any further.

**ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENT**
Now when was the last time you told yourself to start on a diet, start going to the gym, stop smoking or visit your parents-in-law more? And let me guess... **Nothing happened, right?** You had all the right intentions but you didn't end up actually making any change in your life!

So when you have read this and have made your mind up about actually changing your life and starting one or more lifestyle businesses, will you actually do it?

**Now be honest, will you start working on this tomorrow?**
The problem is mainly related to habits. Even though we want something to change, we have powerful habits that aren't that easy to change. So even if you know it would be better to be working on your business, you end up watching your favorite TV series (this doesn't of course apply to you ;)).

So what we conclude is that a commitment to yourself is not really a real commitment; it's more like a wish, not really something that you are devoted to doing.

But what happens when you tell someone at work that you will do something? Like sending that email to a customer, pulling that report from one of your systems, finishing a project before the deadline, etc.?

You usually come through, right? You will use all your available resources to meet a given deadline, right?

So how is this different? Why is a commitment to yourself of lesser value than a commitment to someone else?

Heck, I'm no brain researcher (although I like reading books on how the brain works, but that's an entirely different story) so I don't know, but it surely has to have something to do with accountability. Someone is expecting something from us other than ourselves.
If we make a promise to ourselves and break it, nothing will usually happen. But if we make a promise to, say, our boss, then something will most likely happen if we repeatedly fail to deliver on those promises.

But really, we don't have to understand why this happens in order to take advantage of it.

So when it comes to changing your life and creating your own lifestyle business, I want you to tell everybody (let me change that: you probably want to be strategic and don't tell your boss that you're planning on building a business and eventually quitting)!

Be as open about it as possible. Tell them your end goal where you want to go or be.

Heck, start a blog documenting the progress; that was one of the things I did. If you see my first blog posts, you can clearly see that I had no clue whatsoever as to what I was doing. :)

Now what happens when you tell everybody about your plans is that people will start asking you about the progress. Also, when you're repeatedly telling people about the path you are taking, it also helps with convincing your brain that the path is actually something that can work and will work (hey - little brain anecdotes are always great, right? :)).
Besides telling everyone around you what you're planning on doing, I would also recommend that you work a little more strategically with this. This means getting an accountability partner. Someone who will be there for you and who will keep you accountable in the process.

You can consider finding someone who is in the same situation as you are and wants to build a business and better life for themselves, or you could find someone who is simply ready to tear you a new a**hole if you don't come through. It's really up to you to find someone you don't want to let down. Just don't settle on someone who says "that's okay" when you again and again don't come through on your promises.

I recommend meeting or talking (could be over Skype) at least once per week and discussing the following three things.

1. What did I do since the last time we talked
2. What will I do by the next time we will talk (in say a week’s time)
3. Are there any issues currently holding me back
By discussing what you actually did, your accountability partner has the opportunity to hold that against what you said you would be doing during your last talk. If there are any issues holding your back, you could try to get some sparring or help from your accountability partner, but remember, in the end, it's you who has to do it, and if you are letting something hold you back, you are in reality stopping your project. If something is holding you back, don't wait, work over or around the problem and move on.

CONSISTENT ACTION
If there is one recommendation that I've heard again and again from other entrepreneurs and that all of them can agree on, it is that the most important thing about starting a business is **taking consistent action**.

You will never make a single dollar if you just sit around and plot grand ideas. Guess what, everybody gets ideas, and it's not the idea that will make it or break it for you. The old saying "Success is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent perspiration" holds very true. I know several people who have spent years in "brainstorming phase" and they will most likely be there forever.

At some point you need to take action on your idea, and better sooner than later.

Basically you need to considering the producing vs. consuming ratio.
Are you creating stuff or are you consuming stuff someone else produced?

No, I'm not telling you to stop reading books, buying silly toys (hey, there was an Apple logo on it and I needed it so bad!) or stop watching movies.

You should just consider that each time you pay someone for a service or a product, it is because THEY have produced something in the first place.

So you need to make up your mind if you want to be a producer or a consumer.

And if you decide that you want to be a producer (and I certainly hope so or you probably shouldn’t be reading this), then you need to take consistent action. It's not enough to just work on your business an hour or two each month. It's okay that it’s just an hour or two per day, but it should be close to every day. Remember, each time you are working on your business and producing something you are getting one step closer to your goal. There might be a lot of steps to take, but you are making progress.
One thing to keep in mind is that "researching" isn't producing. So if you fall into the trap of wanting to research a lot, remember that you consuming what others have produced and not creating any value for yourself.

So does this sound like hard work? **Of course it is.** Do you think that this book you are currently reading is a quick weekend project? Think again. English is my second language (as you might have guessed from reading this) and it takes a long time for me to express myself in English. Would I have preferred to simply watch my favorite series on Netflix instead of writing it? Most likely so.

Don't get me wrong, I also watch television. I'm not some kind of **new age guru robot** in 100% producing mode. I'm generally a lazy bum and like doing nothing for hours. But the point still remains. If you want to take action and change your life, it does require you actually doing something. You cannot simply sit in your favorite chair "thinking" for 30 minutes. **It takes sweat and hard work.**

But the good news is that what you are building is something that will pay you money with little maintenance once it's set up. Unlike your day job that requires you to be there each and every day in order for you to make money.
Designing Your Own Path

Hopefully I have by now convinced you that you should create a lifestyle business and I have given you some tools that will help you focus on this. In this chapter we will look at how you can design a path to the actual business.

So where should you start? People often tell me that they don't know what idea they should build a business around, and this tends to stop a lot of people.

**Generally there are two main challenges:**

4. You are getting **too many ideas** and don't know which one to choose
5. You are having a **hard time finding something** you believe someone will pay you money for

Too many ideas? I always tell people that "it doesn't really matter which one."

**Just select one to work on FIRST!**
The other ideas are not going anywhere and you can always take them up again. **So it's only a choice of what you want to work on first**, not an "either/or" choice.

Other people will have a hard time finding something they believe that they can turn into a business, but right now we're not even talking business models. We are only selecting the niche or the market we want to be in.

I guess that there are some things that you enjoy doing more than other stuff. And I assume that there are also things that you do better than your peers, right? We are often really good at stuff we enjoy doing.

**This means that it could be some obscure hobby that you've had for the past years that you really enjoy doing**; it could be that you make killer deserts, it could be that you are super clever at setting your friends up with dates or it could be that you are super good at always finding the perfect location for your holidays without other tourists to screw everything up.

I guess that you get the idea by now.

**Something that you enjoy doing.**

Now a lot of people will tell you that there are very analytical
approaches to selecting a "niche" or market to be in. I totally agree. There are certain things that will
determine if it's a viable market. One good indicator is going to Amazon.com and seeing if there are books
being written about the subject. If there are more than one book, chances are that someone is making
money in that market.

But the problem with this analytical approach is that we tend to select
a market based on financial potential instead of selecting something
we are really passionate about. And guess what, if you select to go
into a market just because there is money to be made and not
because you are passionate about it, then you will quit much
more easily.

If you're passionate about something, it doesn't matter if you
don't make any money the first year, because you enjoy
working with it. On the other hand, if you selected a niche based on
the financial potential and you are not seeing any income within a
short timeframe, you will most likely write the idea off and move on to the
next thing.

Now, I’ve got some hard news for you. Your first idea will
probably fail.
And you know what? That's a good thing. **Because there is no such thing as failure, only feedback.**
This means that you learn from that experience. I'm not saying that the niche itself will fail, just the business you've built on top of it will. This just means that you probably need to try something else.

One of the first things I tried was to get an e-book written in a niche I would like to get into, but didn't know too much about. I didn't write it myself but got someone else to write it. I felt that it was a good product, but as I really didn't know my potential customers really well, the product flunked. To this day I only remember selling one e-book. While I liked the niche (it had to do with meditation, something that there really is a market for), I didn't know enough about how to reach my potential customers and how to speak to them: I had only just taken up meditation myself.

The e-book targeted beginners like myself, and I thought that other people would be like me and wanted help to get started.

I still feel that the idea is good and could work, but I'm not passionate enough about it to spend another six months trying to get it off the ground.

"There is no failure. Only feedback"
- Robert Allen
So my point is that you should choose a niche you're passionate about, and then of course it doesn't hurt to make a check of the market to see if people are spending money on products.

**CAREER PATHS**

Now one way of instantly clearing up your schedule and getting more time and flexibility is to become a freelancer. Now I know that this is not for everybody, but on the flipside it is actually relevant to more people than you might think at first.

Of course, if your 9-5 job involves stuffing spam into cans, it can be hard to find freelance jobs, but if you are working in an office chances are rather good. Whether that is working as an accountant, human resource specialist, marketing, etc.

Now you should of course be good at what you do.

When you freelance it's not good enough to be mediocre, so focus on being excellent.
The force of freelancing is that you decide what jobs to take and how much to work. You have just regained control over your time. Most often you are also paid more as a freelancer because there are a lot of costs associated with employees, such as healthcare plans, pension funds, team building events that isn't relevant as a freelancer. Of course your contract can be terminated almost from day to day, but if you're good at what you do that's really not that much of a risk.

You might end up working almost as much as a freelancer as you did in your old job, but you could also choose to spend some time on building your business.

This was the strategy I chose and I have been working less and less as a freelance IT consultant.

I'm not saying that it's easy to make this step, and there are certainly more things that you need to take into account. However, it's not really in the scope of this book, as I could probably write an entire book on how to move into the world of freelancers.

Building Your Business

In this chapter we'll look at how you can actually build a lifestyle business.
PRODUCTS VS. SERVICES VS. CONSULTING
While you can certainly start your newly founded business doing freelance work, I would really advise you at some point to start thinking into developing products.

One thing to notice is that a service also can be a product. When I say product, it’s all about creating something that does not involve you selling your hours.

So you could certainly create a “website service” where you help other small businesses create websites, but it should not all depend on you doing the work. In this case you should outsource the actual production or service to someone else and just take a cut of the full order.

This is one of the ways I myself make my money, so I know it can work wonders.

So a service can be a product, but if it’s just you selling your hours, it’s consulting. And that’s something we want to avoid when looking at the long-term strategy.

DON’T BUILD A PRODUCT, BUILD A BUSINESS
So I just told you to think about creating a product, so what’s up with this headline?
YES! You should definitely think about building products, but it’s important that you don’t just build one product and then think you’re set for life. Instead, you should try to be more business- and market-oriented and see if you can get a feel for the potential buyers’ pains.

And this often involves building multiple products.

So when you build multiple products, try to think in terms of a pricing ladder. Have inexpensive entry products, midrange-priced products and high ticket-priced products.

This is what the author, speaker, and coach Brendon Burchard calls developing a “product suite,” and he uses Apple as an example: having iPods as entry products and moving up to iPhones, iPads and MacBooks in various sizes. There is always an upsell.

So instead of thinking that your business is just selling/pushing one product, you should focus on multiple strands and try to create multiple streams of income.

When you first start out it will probably be easier if you stay within the same niche, but there is nothing holding you back when it comes to types of products.
Say you’re passionate about Yoga. Well, you could write an e-book full of great exercises that you can do in a busy work day, you could develop a membership site with tons of high quality videos of you doing the exercises, and you could even have an iPhone app developed where the same videos you recorded for the membership site (or on another smartphone platform; I’m just an Apple bitch, so for me there’s no other smartphone, sorry ;)).
LIFESTYLE BUSINESS MODELS
Now there are a lot of business models that can be used when we’re talking about lifestyle businesses, and it’s outside the scope of this book to go deep into each of them. So see this section as an inspiration.

There could really be a full book on any of these business models, but if you want to know something specific, you are welcome to contact me and I’ll consider doing a blog post or video on it.

Also notice that I’m discussing these models in my book The Lifestyle Business Rockstar and in even greater details in my private mastermind group the Lifestyle Business Mastermind if you want to know more.

Affiliate Marketing
In affiliate marketing you make money by referring people to a given merchant and they make a sale. You then earn a percentage of the sale. Some affiliate programs often pay per lead.

Often favored by people just starting out online since you don’t need your own product and it doesn’t require many resources to get started.

Amazon Affiliate Program
https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/
Tons of products but is not paying much (typically between 4% and 8%)
**Clickbank**

http://www.clickbank.com/

Sell online information products such as e-books and online courses

A lot of products and because it’s not physical products you can get commissions of up to 70%

**Commission Junction**

http://www.cj.com/

Also a really big affiliate hub where you can sign up as affiliate for all kinds of products and services

**Online Services**

Create an online web agency selling e-commerce sites, WordPress blogs or help your customers get higher rankings in Google.

You can start out doing some of the work yourself, but I will totally recommend that you have some kind of plan for outsourcing the actual production work at some point. So keep it simple and try to productize your services.

**Drop Shipping**

Want to sell physical products through an e-commerce site but don’t want to spend time fulfilling the orders (you know, packaging them and sending them to the customers)? You could think about building a drop shipping business.

Read more on RetireMyAss.com - 43
In a drop ship setup you do not have a warehouse full of products; instead the factory or distributor sends the products directly to your customers. You need to run the e-commerce site and market it, but everything else is handled by someone else while you’re in your hammock in Bali.

You don’t make as much money as you would if you purchased a container full of products, but then you don’t need a large upfront investment and you save a ton of time. It’s not in all industries that drop shipping is a good deal; an example is computer parts. The margins are so low that you wouldn’t be able to earn anything on the products. Clothing on the other hand has a high margin (but also a high competition market).

**Information Products**
Want to earn 100% on your products? Well then you should think about creating information products. The good thing about digital information products is that order fulfillment can be fully automated, not requiring any time on your part and there is no cost associated with the product.

It’s a low-entry product, as it does not require much money, but it can be labor intensive to write a book or shoot hours of video (and having to edit them afterwards).

While “real” books (such as my own) can also be classified as an informational product, I would suggest that you look into digital products such as:

- e-books
- short reports
online courses
online membership sites
audio programs
video training

etc....

VALUE PROPOSITION
I want to briefly discuss value proposition, because value is what makes people buy a product. You in some way provide the customer with value. You help him/her with a problem, you help him/her achieve a goal, and so on.

Therefore it’s vital that you know what problems and pains your potential customers have so you can define a product where you are providing them with value.

So in order to find the value proposition in your market, I would advise you to go and ask your potential customers.

Create a quick survey asking about their pains and problems.
You could use something like Survey Monkey or a similar service to do this completely free.
Below is a list of potential hiding places where you can find your potential customers (and ask them to help you with your survey).

- Forums dedicated to the niche
- Blogs dedicated to the niche (good idea to send the blog owner a friendly email instead of spamming his comments)
- A newsletter list if you have one (and if you don’t have one, start one :))
- Your Facebook friends
- Your Twitter followers
- Friends and family

Find out what truly matters to your potential customers and you will have a much better chance of succeeding.

Try to put this down into a single sentence (or a few of them) regarding how you can help them overcome these obstacles, and you have your value proposition.
Automating your business like a Ninja

Your goal in your lifestyle business should always be to be able to automate as much as possible. The more you automate, the less you have to do once it’s built.

There are basically two ways you can automate your business:

✦ Outsourced automation, and
✦ IT supported automation

When creating a service company you might start out doing the actual work yourself, but you should always have in mind that the work should at some point be outsourcable to someone other than you.

This means that you should prepare process descriptions and checklists for your team. You can just develop this as you go along and get a feel for how the process really is. It’s often really difficult to define a process only on paper without having done it yourself, so you probably want to get hands on yourself to begin with.

Automating your lifestyle business using outsourcing works well if you’re creating a service product or having a lot of customer support.

Read more on RetireMyAss.com - 47
If you want to know more about outsourcing, you should consider my online Life Outsourcing Mastery course where I guide you through all the hurdles of outsourcing your life and business.

Now, outsourcing tasks costs money, so if you can avoid outsourcing altogether, this is most likely what you want to do.

A lot of trivial tasks can be supported by smart software, and let me just give you one small example.

In one of my businesses I’m taking recurring payments through PayPal. Now I have a love/hate relationship with PayPal. I love how easy it is to get started and how anybody can take payments in just minutes, but I pretty much hate everything else. :)

So in my business I need to show taxes on the receipt. It’s a requirement by law here in Denmark, so it’s not something that I can just ignore.

The problem is that for some crazy reason you cannot add VAT to the PayPal receipt (using the button builder) when you’re doing recurring payments, something that works fine if you’re just in need of a single one-off payment.
So I had a small plug-in done for WordPress (that I used for my website) where I could upload an exported list of transactions from PayPal. I can then select all the relevant transactions, click on a button and emails containing correct receipts are then sent to all my customers.

This saves me a ton of time. I could simply have opted to send receipts manually (or from my accounting software), but instead I paid a fantastic guy from China $200 and he developed this small thing of beauty for me.

**It has saved me countless hours and it scales really well, meaning that I don’t have to spend more time if I have 1,000 customers instead of 100.**

**One word of warning though:** it’s not easy to outsource IT development if you’re in no way technical yourself. So either start with software and systems that are already on the market or only have small IT projects done (like my $200 venture).

And again, if you want to know more about how you find these amazing coding ninjas costing you next to nothing, you should consider my [outsourcing course](#).

So what should you automate? Well, use [the 80/20 rule](#) to see where you will get the biggest gain and start there.

Read more on RetireMyAss.com - 49
Most Common Mistakes

So what are the most common mistakes I see and hear about when people are trying to build a lifestyle business? I’ve compiled a short list for you and provided you with some strategies for overcoming them.

Quitting at the first sign of resistance

This is very common. The moment you are pushed outside of your comfort zone, one of two things happen.

1. You quit because you’re afraid of what might happen (failing?!)  
2. You learn something

Guess what I think is the right answer... :)    

That’s it. People tend to spend much more time dreading and worrying about the consequences of a given action than doing the action itself and finding out.

Let’s face it. If you want to do something new, say quitting your 9-5 and kicking ass with your very own lifestyle business, you will run into resistance and obstacles along the way!
You simply need to keep your end goal in mind and realize that resistance - both externally and internally within you - is just part of the process of getting to where you want to be.

“Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever.”
- Lance Armstrong

“If you quit ONCE it becomes a habit. Never quit!!!”
- Michael Jordan

“I never said it would be easy. Giving up is easy.”
- Maria V. Snyder
“I don’t have the time” syndrome

Oh, the times I’ve heard this one. 90% of the time this has nothing to do with time. It’s about priorities. Time is just the excuse that’s really easy to use and lets you convince yourself that “you really want this, but it’s simply not possible.”

Using this statement will let you stay inside your cozy and nice comfort zone.

**Everybody can find time;** it’s about prioritizing your life and looking at the long ball… ahem, I mean long term.

Everybody can stop watching television. By the way, the average time spent on watching television in the United States is more than five hours! FIVE HOURS… THAT’S PER DAY!

Man… **Since when did watching television turn into a full time occupation?** Not to mention that 65% of U.S. homes have three or more televisions. WTF?!

I mean, this is perfectly alright if you want to be a consumer, but if you want a lifestyle business **you need to think about becoming a producer.** And that means producing more than you consume (don’t worry, you don’t need to do television :) but you need to produce something of value that others will want to consume).

Read more on RetireMyAss.com - 52
It’s about prioritizing if you want to go out with your friends having beers or you want to stay home and work on your very own ATM that will let you pay for your friends’ beer a year from now.

And if you’re not living alone in your own little bachelor pad and have a family responsibility (or simply just a demanding girlfriend/wife), you could perhaps tell them what you’re trying to do in the long term so they will bear with you.

This basically leads me to one of the other common mistakes I see.

**Expectation management**

Because if you live with someone you really need to let them in on what it is you’re trying to do.

Most of the time your spouse will probably have no idea of what’s going on with you when you’re constantly sitting in front of the computer with a funny little smile. For all she (or he) cares, you could be watching dating site profiles.

So let them in on **what** you’re doing and **why** you’re doing it.
You can also agree on rules on, say, when you’re working on your lifestyle business. It’s really good not to be interrupted when you’re working intensively, so having “working hours” will let your spouse know when not to interrupt you (unless she’s bringing you another cup of coffee and a chocolate chip cookie :)).

“This needs to be 100% perfect before I... ” syndrome

Some people just want stuff to be 100% perfect before they launch a product or service.

Well I’ve got news for you. “Perfect” and 100% don’t exist!
Things can ALWAYS be improved some way or another.

So instead you should be focusing on creating the minimum viable product that will let you launch and then adapt the product accordingly. Most of the time you can’t foresee the stuff that your customers will throw at you anyway.

I’ve got a question for you. If you wanted to send a manned rocket out into space (and it would be you in that rocket), wouldn’t you try to create a 112% perfect rocket?
Well... There are a couple of crazy Danes who are in the process of doing just that, and guess what. They are in no way building the perfect rocket. Actually, they build a minimum viable rocket, send it into space (no one on board!) and see what happens. The first couple of times the rocket failed, but now they launch a new prototype every now and then, get some experiences, learn from their mistakes and then goes on to improve the damn thing.

If you want to be inspired on doing what most people think is impossible, just visit their website here:
http://copenhagensuborbitals.com/
(Try to take a look at their budget, not quite NASA dimensions. :))
First Step Towards a Lifestyle Business

So if you can see the idea of creating your own lifestyle business, working less and living more, where should you start?

Make the decision. Tell yourself (again and again) that this is what you want to do. Paint the picture of where you will be when you succeed with this.

Decide on one niche and one business model to begin with and then tune everything else out. And don’t worry, you can always select another niche or model eventually if it turns out you didn’t score millions on the first thing. I just don’t want you to quit when it gets a little difficult.

Don’t listen to all the well-meaning “advice” you get from the people around you. Most of them won’t have done anything like the thing you’re doing, and they most likely will have no knowledge about it.

Put up a website as quickly as you can where you tell the world about your business and include a link to it everywhere you can (you know, Facebook profile, forum footers, Twitter and so on). This will keep you accountable, and once your product or service is done, you will already have a little traffic to your website.
Find someone to model or learn from. If you feel like you got value from this e-book, you should consider watching my free training videos over at LifestyleBusinessMastermind.com (one of the videos will show you how you can get a professional-looking website up and running in less than one hour and with less than $50!).

So don’t push this ahead of you. Make the decision today! Actually, go out and do something today. Anything. Start telling your spouse, friends and family that you are committed to changing your life and kicking ass!
My name is Rasmus Lindgren and I live most of the year in Denmark with my girlfriend and two small kids.

I work a few months of the year as an IT consultant and spend time with my family, travel, follow crazy-ass ideas and enjoy myself the rest of the time.

Over the past years I’ve built several lifestyle businesses that allow me to have the lifestyle I like.

A couple of months each year (typically during the winter time here in Denmark), my family and I can be found in our second home in Hua Hin, Thailand. So if you’re in the neighborhood shoot me an email and let me buy you a beer.

My dr. Evil pose ;)
(and yes those are buddhist mala beads)
If you want to learn more about how I go about creating lifestyle businesses, you can get free video training here:

**Lifestyle Business Mastermind**

**How to work less and live more...**

I’m also passionate about strategically outsourcing my life and my business, and if you want my model on how to do this you should consider joining:

**Life Outsourcing Mastery**

**How to outsource your life and business**

And you can always see what I’m up to over at my blog:

**Retire My Ass**

Or come say hi here: [Facebook.com/RetireMyAss](http://www.Facebook.com/RetireMyAss) & [Twitter.com/rasmusl](http://www.Twitter.com/rasmusl)