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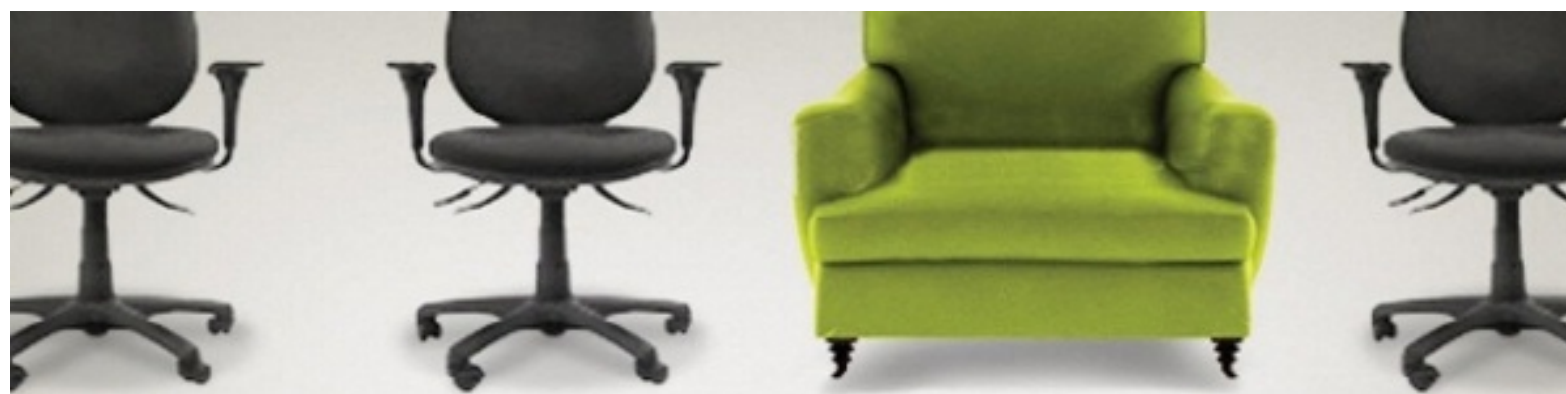
# **BAREFOOT EXECUTIVE**

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*The* **ULTIMATE MANUAL** *for*  
**Being Your Own Boss**  
**& Achieving Financial Freedom**

**CARRIE WILKERSON**

*Host of BarefootExecutive.TV*



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# Praise for *The Barefoot Executive*

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“There has never been a better time to turn your passions into income. But just having an idea doesn’t mean you’re ready to order business cards just yet. Carrie Wilkerson’s *The Barefoot Executive* walks you through the process of developing your idea, finding your audience, and setting yourself up for a lifetime of success doing the work you love for the hardest boss you’ll ever have—yourself!”

— Dave Ramsey, host of *The Dave Ramsey Show* and best-selling author of *The Total Money Makeover*

“A lot of books can fire up an entrepreneur. But a lot of those books leave readers high and dry when it comes to practical application. Enthusiasm isn’t enough. You need a plan and the tools to build with it. Carrie Wilkerson’s guidance provides just that. Combine that with her enthusiasm, warmth, and core values, and you have someone very real to learn from. As my dad says, ‘a great book needs to cover the Why and the How.’ This *is* a great book. I know that when Carrie advises Ziglar, Inc., on marketing ideas, we get results.”

— Tom Ziglar, CEO, and proud son of Zig Ziglar.

“One of the best ways to achieve success is to learn from someone who has already done it. If you are looking to build a viable, sustainable, and lucrative business from home—or anywhere else—Carrie Wilkerson is your example, and her new book will show you the way.”

— Tim Sanders, author of *Today We Are Rich* and former CSO at Yahoo!

“If I’d had this book in hand a few years ago, it would have saved me countless hours of valuable time. Do yourself a favor and absorb the lessons learned here.”

— Chris Brogan, president, Human Business Works, and publisher of [chrisbrogan.com](http://chrisbrogan.com)

“Packed with real-world case-studies, action items, business models and links to free coaching videos, *The Barefoot Executive* isn’t just a book, it’s a multimedia roadmap that takes you by the hand and walks you down the road to earning a living on your terms and reclaiming ownership of your life.”

— Jonathan Fields, author of *Career Renegade*

“If you’re dreaming of building a business on your terms, then you’ll absolutely love Carrie Wilkerson.”

— Tory Johnson, CEO, Women For Hire, and *New York Times* best-selling author

“*The Barefoot Executive* is the kind of book every entrepreneur or hopeful small business owner should read, regardless of their gender or age. It’s packed with practical wisdom and advice to help you turn ideas into actions and actions into results.”

— Jon Gordon, international best selling author of *The Energy Bus*

“If you’re dreaming of a life beyond the nine-to-five grind, if you want real financial security, if you want to be the CEO of your own life, read *The Barefoot Executive*. Author Carrie Wilkerson offers real-life advice on finding or creating a *profitable* business model that works for you.”

— Erin K. Casey, books editor, *SUCCESS* magazine

“The powerful connection Carrie makes with her audience members from stage is duplicated in this terrific book. You feel like you’re sitting one-on-one with your trusted friend and mentor, and she is simply sharing with you everything she knows about building a hugely successful business. The cool thing is, not only has she done it but also she will show you how to do the same!”

— Bob Burg, coauthor of *The Go-Giver* and *Endless Referrals*

“Forget getting a job—go out and make one! That’s right, your best chance for long-standing financial security lies in running your own business—one where your unique strengths meet the needs of the marketplace. *The Barefoot Executive* shows you how to make that happen. Not only a great business example, Carrie’s model of keeping her priorities in order while creating an amazing life is an inspiration to anyone who feels like they need to choose between a life or a business. She shows you how to succeed in the business we are all in—the Business of Life! A giver who is passionate about helping those in need, Carrie is truly fueled by how much she can give and do for others. Read this, be inspired, then take action.”

— Frank McKinney, bestselling author of *The Tap*; [www.The-Tap.com](http://www.The-Tap.com)

“Few people in the world would I consider True Leaders, and ever fewer would I consider to have genius for what they do. Carrie Wilkerson does. Her new book, *The Barefoot Executive*, is one of the most amazing works of business literature I have ever read, and if you are in the marketplace working, you need to read this amazing book. It is so powerful they are going to have to issue WARNING labels with it as it is deadly to your mediocrity. Brilliant. Powerful. Genius.”

— Doug Firebaugh, CEO, PassionFire International

“If you read nothing but Part 2 of *The Barefoot Executive*, you will save yourself years of frustration and countless dollars.”

— John Jantsch, author of *Duct Tape Marketing* and *The Referral Engine*

“In true Carrie Wilkerson style, she explains the importance of the ‘how’ and the steps of the ‘how’ through the filter of your ‘why.’ I believe this is what sets Carrie apart from all others and why she is number 1. I was in the middle of a 3.5 million dollar product launch and got stuck . . . I knew exactly who to call for the answers: Carrie Wilkerson. Asked, answered, success.”

— Paul Martinelli, [PaulMartinelli.net](http://PaulMartinelli.net)

“In an age where so many claim to be experts, Carrie Wilkerson is a breath of fresh air. She doesn’t just talk the talk, she has actually walked the walk! She has built successful businesses while raising a young family, overcoming extreme debt, and generating funds and awareness of orphan and adoption issues. She has experienced firsthand the difficulties entrepreneurs face on a daily basis and shares openly the strategies, tactics, and tools she uses to overcome those challenges and generate executive income businesses. With her energetic spirit and passion for helping others, Carrie has rapidly become the go-to person for anyone wanting to grow—and sustain—their business in today’s volatile marketplace.”

— Wendy Kurtz, APR, CPRC

“*The Barefoot Executive* is a must-read for aspiring entrepreneurs or established business owners who want to take their business to the next level. Carrie shares the proven strategies she has used for years

to create several six-figure businesses. If you're serious about creating and growing a business, you need this book."

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— Lisa Kanarek, author and founder of [WorkingNaked.com](http://WorkingNaked.com)

"In a world of questionable work-from-home advice, Carrie Wilkerson brings a breath of fresh air with integrity, solid tools, and valuable business savvy. She has created enormous personal and financial success by following her own advice. If you want to step off the corporate treadmill, be present for your family, and earn a great living, you need to read this book."

— Pamela Slim, author of *Escape from Cubicle Nation*

"At a time when pseudo-experts are overwhelming us with unproven theories and regurgitated ideas, Carrie Wilkerson shines like a beacon in the night. Not only has she built a successful business of her own, but she's proven that she can teach others to do the same. In *The Barefoot Executive*, Carrie offers a clear roadmap to defining and building an amazing life on your own terms. I particularly liked the practical exercises throughout the book. Read it . . . and then go do it."

— Paul Keetch, author of *Make My Marketing Work*

"This book is really strong. It provides the why and how to be your own boss. The tips and the case studies give actionable steps and examples of how it has worked for others. We deal with so many people that want out of their current job situation due to the work, lack of challenge, desire for more family time, or a passion for something specific. They don't know what to do or how to go about doing their own thing. We have started doing a number of educational programs just to help people gain the knowledge to be in business before we try to help them one on one. This book is a great guide. It provides clear advice and how to make the jump to business ownership from 'how do I decide what to do' to 'how do I do it?' I think you have a winner here!"

— Michael Bowers, Ohio Small Business Development Center

"Starting a business can be intimidating and even a bit frightening. Among other things, Carrie provides four proven (and realistic) online models to get you going. Plus with her stern but loving style you'll get the confidence you need at the right time to create a vision for what's really possible."

— Yanik Silver, author of *Moonlighting on the Internet*

"Once in a while we meet those amazing people who not only reach great heights in their own lives but who also inspire others to achieve greatness. Carrie Wilkerson is one of those people. *The Barefoot Executive* is the ultimate how-to for anybody trying to write their own success story. It gives you the tools, the insights, the wisdom and the heart to have it all—but mostly the tools! That is what you need. The author lays out a roadmap and literally guides the reader through the woods and weeds and out into the sunlight of success . . . This is how you get from here to there!"

— Mary Agnes Antonopoulos, social media strategist

"Carrie's brilliant entrepreneurial strategies will teach you how to identify and develop your ideas and how to promote those ideas to their greatest potential success."

— Sally Hogshead, author of *Fascinate: 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation*

"Carrie Wilkerson knows what it takes to start and grow a successful business, and she generously

shares it ALL in this book. As important, she focuses on helping entrepreneurs craft a plan that supports their values—the secret to meaningful success. You can do it, and Carrie will show you how!”

— Keith Ferrazzi, best-selling author of *Never Eat Alone*

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*The*  
**BAREFOOT  
EXECUTIVE**



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*The* **ULTIMATE GUIDE** *for*  
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& Achieving Financial Freedom

**CARRIE WILKERSON**



NASHVILLE DALLAS MEXICO CITY RIO DE JANEIRO

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To Eddie, Mark, Emily, Catie, and Lily—my reasons “why”

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# Introduction

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On these pages you won't read how I've been a business owner since birth or sold Beanie Babies on eBay, predicting my entrepreneurial destiny.

I have never operated a lemonade stand. I didn't have a paper route. I wasn't required to help my parents put food on the table, and honestly, I never gave going into business for myself a second thought.

After getting a high school education, attending college to study music (which I abandoned for marriage, choosing to finish a degree that took fewer hours and less time away from my beloved), I was still set on a course of traditional employment. More specifically, I was employed in a government-run educational institution.

Yes, I was a teacher. And I loved it. I thought I would be teaching for a long while.

And then I became a mother. The story leading up to it perhaps isn't so important to you, but the end result is that I was a mother of toddler siblings and my priorities shifted more quickly than the ink on the adoption papers dried.

I was a mother. My kids needed me. And for various reasons, I wasn't going to leave them in the care of someone else if I could figure out how to avoid it.

However, I had no financial plan. I had no savings account. We relied on my salary as my husband was still climbing the corporate ladder. But it was what it was, and we had six weeks left of a teacher's summer paycheck to figure something out.

That was in 1998, and I have since rendered myself—and now even my husband—unemployable. We cannot and will not consider working on a schedule, on a time clock, or on a payroll for anyone else.

We now have four children and live a life of financial independence and what I would consider financial security—meaning, we are dependent only on our ability to serve our clients and offer value to the marketplace.

This is what I want for you.

I don't have a business degree. I've never taken a certified business class or been "credentialized" in any formal way. My advice is from real application, practical techniques, and solid experience. From babysitting and bagging groceries for tips to being a barefoot CEO, we really are in a time when we can create our own realities. No longer do we rely on a standard track of education, then apply for a job, stay until we retire, and pray for security and good benefits along the way. We really are in a position to create our own careers, our own paths, and our own incomes, if we dare.

My goal is to give you hope and to take you through the process of investigating your options and your skill sets to create the financial freedom and work life that you've perhaps only dreamed of until now.

Ignore the naysayers and avoid the status quo.

## What Are Your Motives?

Why do you want to start a business? Why are you reading this book?

- 
- Are you looking for a fortune or are you looking for a legacy?
  - Are you looking to make money?
  - Are you chasing cash or are you trying to build a sustainable business?

Money is never enough. The money will never, ever be enough. The “why” behind the money, the “why” behind how you are changing people, the “why” behind what you do is what you are really focused on. And again, that may evolve.

When I started working at home in 1998, it was because we had adopted two toddlers and overnight, literally, I had become a mom. We had twenty-four to thirty-six hours to prepare. I was teaching high school at the time and really loved it, but this adoption adjusted my priorities instantly.

I did not start my business because I had a big passion for what I was doing, because I was chasing a big idea, or because I wanted to make big money. I started my business because I refused to leave my children in the care of someone else. I didn’t want them to question who their mom was and, frankly, they still needed a paycheck. Period.

I didn’t want them to wonder if they were in the right place. I didn’t want them to suffer one moment of neglect in their lives. I purposed in my heart that I would be there, no matter the sacrifice. So, I walked away from a career that I loved and chose to work at home. The work-at-home climate at that point was not as user-friendly as it is now. There were not as many things to do. We were not as technologically connected. But I was determined to make something work.

I was there for all that time with my children and I’m happy to report they are very well-adjusted, amazing children. They have no doubt who loves them and who their momma and daddy are because we have been here with them.

We’ve added two children the old-fashioned way since we have been working at home.

My “why” has evolved over the years. My “why” evolved to getting out of debt. And then it evolved to bringing my husband home from a corporate job because he was traveling so much and missing me so much and missing so much of the kids’ lives.

Now that we are financially stable and the kids are a little older and very secure in who they are and my husband is home working with us, now my “why” is you. You are a huge part of what drives me. I want you to be able to experience what we have experienced. I want you to feel the financial freedom to get out of debt, to not be in bondage to an employer, and to give generously and joyfully to causes you are passionate about, as we do for orphan care and adoption.

The number of dollars I earn does not propel me. The number of children I can help and the number of opportunities for my children and for my family propel me. I have a son with extensive special needs, and to be able to shop for therapies and treatments based on what is best rather than by price tag is—well, it’s priceless. Those are the kinds of choices I want for your family too.

So, when I say the money is never enough, what I mean is you are never going to work really hard just to have a lot of money. Money is intangible and is not really at its very core anything that really motivates us. What motivates us is what the money can do or the cause it can support or the choices that money allows us to have. You want to be rich in what? Rich in blessing, rich in opportunities, rich in choices, rich in freedom, rich in what? I want you to really think about your “why.”

# Your Turn

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What will drive you to get out of bed, to skip that TV show, to push a little harder? Write a few of those why's down before we get any further.

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## A Map

This is how I built several six-figure businesses—and beyond—over and over again, using the same format and formula. We wouldn't start a house without a plan, without a design, without a blueprint, so I wonder why so many of us jump into business without any structure, any plan, or any advisement.

Even if you are established in business, even if you are profitable in business, and even if you have done this before, I know you are going to have an “Aha!” moment or be reminded of something valuable to you that you haven't thought of in a while.

I've overcome more than \$100,000 worth of commercial debt, lost more than one hundred pounds, I'm raising four children at home, and I have done all of this while building businesses—not in a corporate structure, not in an office, not in a storefront, but out of my home.

If I can do that using these formulas, I know that no matter what your business model, your situation, your market, your niche, or whatever you want to do, you can apply this too.

Please be open-minded. Don't say, “That won't work for me because xyz.” Be open, and know that I've been there and done that and I want what is best for you and what is best for your business.

Let's consider the first question, which is always “What can I do?”

“Carrie, what can I do from home?”

- What can I do to earn some extra money part-time?
- What can I do to build a business full-time?
- What can I do that isn't already done to death?
- What can I do and keep my values intact?

We all have to ask ourselves those questions. Sometimes it is a matter of “I'm professional, I'm trained as an attorney or a CPA or a teacher.” Maybe you are a nurse, trained in the medical field, but what else could you do?

We are going to talk about some ways you could think a little differently.

- Maybe you've been at home with your children or taking care of your parents or doing something else, and you have been out of the workforce a really long time.
- Maybe you've never had to work.



- Maybe you are deciding whether or not to go to college or to school or to vocational training.
- 

Even if you have an established business but you are looking for another stream of income, encourage you to ask that question: What can I do?

We are going to talk about business models—some idea prompters for you. We are also going to talk about multiple income streams, profit streams, income sources—however you want to label them—in your existing business.

I have heard a lot of people say, “Do what you love and the money will follow.” I don’t necessarily agree. I believe you should be passionate first about profitability and then your skill set will yield profits that fund your passion.

My basic plan starts with some evaluations:

**Evaluate Your Space:** The first thing I always recommend that you do is look at your space. What kind of space do you have available?

**Evaluate Your Skills:** What skill set do you already have?

**Evaluate Your Software:** What kind of software do you have?

What kind of software have you been trained to use? What are you willing to learn?

**Evaluate Your Service:** What are you already being paid for or what have you been paid for in the past? Were you a teacher? Were you a nurse? Did you provide child care? Have you cleaned homes? Were you a secretary? Have you done phone work?

I believe that no matter what you’ve done in the past, no matter what your skill set has been, there is a way to take either what you’ve done in the past or what you are currently doing and translate that into part-time or full-time income.

Many times we get so frustrated with the position we are in that we want to do something radical and different. That is not always the fastest path to profitability. Often the fastest route to profitability is paddling downstream, meaning to go with the flow of what you know. Let’s profit from that first. Then when you are good and profitable and you get it to cash, you can start pursuing some of the things you are passionate about.

I don’t know about you, but I am pretty passionate about paying the bills and making sure we have food and clothing and our necessities covered. Get passionate about getting to the place of profitability. Then you can pursue some things that you are interested in.

Perhaps I’m getting ahead of myself. I have been accused of talking (and typing) faster than I think—so let’s get started with some fairy tales before we get to the happily ever after.

## How to Get the Most out of This Book

I don’t really consider this a textbook or a “how-to” guide in the traditional sense. I’m not sure I recommend reading it start to finish or in one sitting. Perhaps this is a book that you need to keep

handy and refer to again and again as you reach different points in your journey to self-employment freedom.

Are you still working full-time and wanting to transition to working at home? Then you should start at the beginning and read with a high-lighter and pad of sticky notes in your hand for the overview, making note of the pages you want to revisit later as the information sinks in.

Are you already in a business? Then you can flip to the chapters on getting more clients and creating new streams of income within your business model. There's really no need for you to do discovery on what you should be doing if you are already profitable.

## *Barefoot Action Steps*

I've included brief Barefoot Action Steps in chapters 1 through 16. These are brief "diligent devotionals," if you will. In a few minutes I educate you, encourage you, and give you food for thought as you pursue your dreams. Each Barefoot Action Step contains a Web address for a video created just for my readers. Enjoy the video before you read each Action Step.

## *Barefoot Case Studies*

Maybe you are a chronic starter or endless struggler and you just need some encouragement. That's included in these pages too. As a matter of fact, this book is peppered with Barefoot Case Studies of friends, colleagues, and clients who have designed their lives and their businesses on their own terms. They range from five- to seven-figure businesses, from professionals to kitchen-table setups, and from service to information to Internet marketing and everything in between. Let these men and women inspire you. My story may not resonate with you at all. But I guarantee that one of these men or women will have something in common with you and will encourage you to keep on keeping on. Read carefully as they tell their stories in their own words. You will be amazed and motivated, as I always am.

I encourage you to find a way to use this book to your advantage. If you started with the Introduction, return to the Contents page. From there you can decide where you are in the process—and where you want to begin. Use this book to think differently, to work smarter, to develop deeper, and to become the independent soul that you crave to be.

## **BAREFOOT ACTION STEPS**

### **What Are You Waiting For?**

*Waiting is a trap. There will always be reasons to wait. The truth is, there are only two things in life, reasons and results, and reasons simply don't count.*

—Dr. Robert Anthony

**Watch the "What Are You Waiting For?" video  
at <http://barefootexecutivevideos.com/waiting>**

I want to talk to you about something that may or may not seem obvious or intuitive to you, but it is something that I see a lot as a business consultant and strategist and also see a lot in the marketing space. People are so worried about the big idea, the grand idea, the million-dollar idea, that they are overlooking all the hundred-dollar ideas or thousand-dollar ideas or hundred-thousand-dollar ideas.

Quit worrying about getting it perfect, getting it right, and getting rich the first time. You can absolutely build freedom and create wealth ten, twenty, and one hundred dollars at a time. I'm proof of that. I started with a \$35 per month product seven years ago and within two years was completely out of \$100,000 worth of debt and had started a real estate portfolio—\$35 at a time.

That's not to say you shouldn't focus on bigger things later, but first build up a series of small products or small successes—small victories if you will—to gain confidence and to pad your bank account.

Some of my favorite products and services that I have right now are \$10, \$17, and \$27 dollars a month. You get enough of those going in different niches or different places—or even in the same market—and it adds up. It gives you room to breathe and it gives you room to create.

It serves your market and it also helps you build wealth and freedom at the same time. So, quit worrying about the million-dollar idea and focus on a million smaller ideas that can help you build wealth and maybe not freeze you with intimidation when you're worried about getting it perfect or competing with the "big boys" or "big girls," as it were.

I believe you can build freedom and wealth in modest amounts.

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**Part One**  
**The Myth Breakers**

## Job Security, Tenure, Retirement, and Other Fairy Tales

*You simply cannot spend your life in fear of losing your job, your health, your life or your wife. I decided that I had to create my own financial reality and job security. Was I afraid of failing? Yes, but I could continue being scared and broke, or I could be afraid and well paid. I chose the latter. At some point, you have to be more afraid of not trying than you are of failing.*

—Carrie Wilkerson

### **Famous Last Words**

“My husband has been working there so long, they will never lay him off.”

“I’m invaluable to the team. My position is absolutely safe.”

“My future is in my retirement funds. Those are secure.”

“Our company is very stable. I don’t have anything to worry about.”

“Credit card debt is just normal; we’re not in real financial trouble.”

“I have a college degree. I won’t have any trouble finding a great job.”

Well, to quote Dr. Phil McGraw, “How’s that working out for you?”

If you’ve picked up this book, you are interested in this topic. You either have a nagging feeling that your career isn’t secure, your future is wobbly, or perhaps you’ve already been shaken to your core with unwelcome change and now you’re just seeking answers. I don’t need to wow you with statistics or convince you that added income and stability would be a good thing. You get that already.

Perhaps you have a great career but you’re maxed out, stressed-out, and desperately want or need a transition. Great. This is for you too.

Okay, so hang with me for a little while and let’s be honest. You may have been laid off. Your spouse maybe has been laid off, or your mom, your dad, your adult child, somebody in your neighborhood. Maybe your hours have been cut. Maybe you’ve been demoted or asked to take a pay cut. Maybe your core business has been slashed like one of my businesses has because of the recession. (Was that too honest? You’ll find that about me. No sugarcoating.) One of my businesses that used to be my primary source of income is now at about 40 percent of the revenue it produced just three years ago—so I’m not immune to what we’re talking about. As a matter of fact, that is why I’

so passionate about it. Because if I were still solely reliant on that one business, I'd be in trouble!

I'm here to give you some hope and to tell you how I recession-insulated myself before I even knew a recession was coming.

I am not a big proponent of the fear factor or panic-driven marketing. I don't want everybody running around like Chicken Little saying, "Oh, the sky is falling, the sky is falling, and it's all the president's fault." "It's all the last administration's fault." "Oh, if only the mortgage companies . . . You know what, we can blame, blame, blame all we want and it's not going to help fix it.

I could blame my weight struggle on any number of factors if I wanted to be rid of that responsibility. The media has made it popular for me to blame genetics, fast-food places, additives in commercially prepared staples, and more. But the fact is, I have to own it and then I have to take the reins and go a different direction.

The recession is real and we're affected. Let's talk about what we can do about it. Okay? I hope you're nodding your head and you're with me.

Why do we need multiple streams of income? Why do we need "self-controlled and self-generated income"? Why? Well, for the primary reasons I told you about a minute ago, you don't want to be too reliant on a job. We all know that at the end of the day, the owner of the company is concerned about the owner of the company. Everybody else is expendable, period. That's true in my company.

At the end of the day, my husband and I are the only two who are guaranteed to have jobs on Friday—every Friday—from now till eternity in my company. That is just how it rolls. It doesn't make employers bad people. It doesn't make them selfish or uncaring. It's just economics; it's how it works.

The owner is in control of how the money is spent, and the owner is in control of who stays or who goes. So, you need to be the owner of a part-time or a full-time business.

Sounds almost too easy, doesn't it?

Kauffman Survey: "Nearly half of businesses started in the business owner's home or garage. Slightly more than 40% operated in rented or leased space, while the remaining operated at the site of a current client, or in a building or location bought by the business.

More than half of all businesses in the U.S. are run out of the home and employ more than venture-funded companies do. The reason for this growth is because of layoffs and a dull labor market."

—Jerry Osteryoung, Director of Outreach at Florida State University's Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship

## BAREFOOT ACTION STEPS

### Sounds Good, But She's . . .

*Winners compare their achievements with their goals, while losers compare their achievements with those of other people.*

—Nido Qubein

Watch the "Sounds Good, But She's . . ." video at <http://barefootexecutivevideos.com/but>

~~Today I want to talk a little bit about mind-set and something that, quite frankly, is tripping you up. We get caught in the “Yeah, but she’s—” or the “Yeah, but he’s—.”~~

Well, sure she’s doing great, but she’s got a CFO, or she’s got a team, or she has money to invest there, or she doesn’t have kids at home, or her kids aren’t in school, or she’s married, or she’s single, or she doesn’t need to lose weight, or she’s blah, blah, blah.

It’s easy to look at the person on the other side of the camera or the other side of the bank account or the other side of the check or the other side of the table and make excuses for why you’re not where he or she is. You need to quit comparing yourself to anyone else. Compare you to you. You be your best you. You are not going to do the same things as I am, or as he is, or as she is. You’re not going to have the same family situation or the same life situation—maybe ever.

The truth is, all of us start at the same spot—zero. We all start with zero experience. Our life experience, our life stories, our work experience, our education, those add up to make us who we are. It’s really easy to look at someone who is doing well and say, “That was easy for him because —.” You are giving yourself permission not to push yourself. You *need* to push yourself. Turn your excuses into the reasons why you must succeed, the reasons why you must take action.

I’ve overcome more than one hundred pounds of extra weight, more than \$100,000 of debt, several business failures, depression, and just obstacle after obstacle. I have four children and several businesses.

Yes, I have a team now. Yes, I have discretionary funding now. Yes, I seem as if I have it all together now. But the truth is, I’ve built step-by-step just as you’re building step-by-step. So I’m qualified to say “Get over yourself, take action, quit comparing yourself to other people. That is suicide on the installment plan.”

Just beat *your* best, do *your* best, and learn *your* best. Then take action, and you cannot help but be profitable and succeed on your terms.

## BAREFOOT CASE STUDY

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Personal Development

**“Be who you are and work based on your strengths and not society’s expectations.”**

My entire life has been built around ADD: bouncing from idea to idea and career to career before finding my place in the middle of chaos. Instead of a single focus, I tend to work on several

projects at once to escape boredom and burnout.

For years I wondered if I was ever going to make it as “me.” A good friend and I were talking one day and he talked about his life as an architect. He said he would have spurts of inspiration for a couple of weeks then collapse into mush for a week. He talked about the difference between a structured job and creative flexibility. For the first time I really “got” that it was fine to be who you are and to work based on your strengths and not society’s expectations.

I’ve been married for seventeen years and now have two sons. My first wife and mother of one son died when he was five weeks old. After her death, my priorities realigned. One of the promises I made was that I would always be home for my family’s events. I never wanted to tell them that I could not be there for them because of work. The only way for me to have that type of flexibility was to work on my own terms and set my own guidelines.

The title *personal development* sounds like a “motivational” market. You know, a bunch of guru types spouting “You can make it!” I’m definitely for a positive approach to life and believe in setting goals, but we need to be more realistic. Not everyone can change the world, but everyone can change *his own* world. Each person should recognize his strength and make it better in order to serve others, so others can become better and so on.

I also work to help orphans—it’s amazing that so many innocents go without the basics. Even worse, that in many countries corrupt systems of government often abuse them. (As cofounder of [100xmissions.org](http://100xmissions.org), I give half my time to fund-raising there.)

A couple of times a month I think, *Have I lost my mind? I need a job with a predictable paycheck*. Of course, I then picture myself in a cubicle, chained to a desk, with the expectation of arriving and leaving at a certain time, and I come back to reality.

The truth is that being an entrepreneur is tough. It’s stressful. Most folks act as if “working for yourself” is the ultimate vacation. But you’re responsible for *everything*. While employees get paid for showing up and doing what they’re told, entrepreneurs get paid for taking risks and even then income is not guaranteed.

I wish someone had said, “This is the hardest thing you’ll ever do in your life. It will be worth it, but put away the magic beans.”



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