



BRIEF CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Prelude

A brief perspective on why the book was written and what it can do to improve readers' lives.

PART I SETTING EXPECTATIONS AND CHOOSING YOUR PATH

Lesson 1 Don't Assume Your New Boss Will Be Better than Your Old Boss

A reality check on assumptions about being your own boss. Behaviors to anticipate and be vigilant about, so that you can ultimately be a great boss of yourself. Sets forth a “No Boss self-employment contract” with covenants that the boss and subordinate (the reader is both) can, at the end of the book, agree to if deciding to pursue the independent path.

Lesson 2 Know Your Motives (and Be Honest with Yourself!)

Discusses the importance of confronting the real “why” behind seeking independence, and the difference between running toward something positive vs. running away from something negative (like a bad boss) – as some problems in the workplace may be the reader's fault, and those problems will likely be taken with them wherever they go if they don't change.

Lesson 3 Make a Disciplined Choice among the Many Paths to Independence

Helps readers clarify their needs from work, offering a disciplined way to identify and prioritize “drivers of work satisfaction.” Explains how to use these drivers as criteria on which to evaluate alternatives to current or recent employment (based in part on a patented methodology that the author developed for his clients).

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Lesson 4 Confront Who You Really Are Before Taking the Plunge

Provides a unique “No Boss Quiz,” consisting of 30 carefully considered questions designed to help readers decide if being their own boss is a good fit for them. Also provides context for their score on the quiz, but more importantly challenges them to think deeply about themselves on an array of success factors.

PART II MAKING IT HAPPEN

Lesson 5 See Perfectionism for the Curse That It Is

Addresses perfectionism’s potential to impede independent success, and offers a “Perfectionism Audit” to help readers gauge their ability to modulate perfectionism in ways that are appropriate to the tasks at hand.

Lesson 6 Get the Help You Need Even If You Think You Don’t Need It

Addresses how getting the right kind of help increases the value of the reader’s own time. Discusses the art and merits of delegation and load-sharing without building out staff, and overcoming fear of losing control.

Lesson 7 Choose and Manage Relationships Carefully

Considerations in getting the right kind of help with non-employee (external) relationships, and what to look for in choosing collaborators, alliances and partners. Alerts readers to potholes to avoid in those relationships, and offers eight criteria for screening clients in service businesses.

Lesson 8 Give Yourself Performance Reviews

The importance of periodic self-evaluation, both as boss and subordinate. Offer techniques, based in part on performance review best practices from the corporate world, and for brutally honest self-assessment of effectiveness, goal attainment, risk management, satisfaction, state of mind and self-compassion.

Lesson 9 Know When to End a Marriage (to an Idea)

A balanced view of the exhilaration and perils of being married to a great idea for an independent business. Discusses the three biggest risks of staying with an idea beyond the point of diminishing returns, and helps readers anticipate those risks and avoid them.

PART III SUSTAINING INDEPENDENT SUCCESS

Lesson 10 Making it Work for the Long Haul

Offers four strategies for avoiding independent/entrepreneurial burnout, all in the context of approaching sustainable independent work as a marathon rather than a sprint.

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Lesson 11 Independence as a Gateway to a Larger Life

Discusses how flexibility – one of the great rewards of being your own boss – can be leveraged into a larger life beyond work in ways that may not be practical or possible in traditional employment. Encourages creative and polymathic pursuits, as well as giving back to society, and explores how these activities can productively inform an independent business even when they ostensibly siphon time and energy away from “work.”

Lesson 12 Lessons from Others

Augments the author’s perspective with the perspectives of other successful self-employeds in a variety of fields, based on a survey conducted by the author expressly for this book. Summarizes the themes that emerged on subjects ranging from what precipitated the decision to be your own boss to what has been the best, worst and most surprising things about independent work. Selected verbatim comments from respondents are included.

CODA Your Signing Ceremony for the No Boss Contract

Reprises the No Boss Contract from Lesson 1 for those who decide to pursue the independent path or who may already be on it, and constructs a ritual signing ceremony (with instructions) to cement the reader’s commitment to the success principles set forth in the book. (This ritual may be delayed until the reader has processed the book’s contents and has later made a decision to go forward, as the book is meant to be referred back to at different points along the self-employment journey.)

