

How to Be Happily Self-Employed

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Find the Bliss in Being Your Own Boss

There are countless reasons people decide to go into business. for themselves. They do it because they have ideas they think will make the world a better place. Maybe they want to escape the constraints of 9 to 5, or create legacies that will outlive them.

But no one becomes his or her own own boss to work 24/7, ruin their relationships and make their families miserable. Yet that often happens. Want to avoid it? Here, happy entrepreneurs share their tactics for being your own boss and loving it.

“ I have a one-minute rant timer, and whenever I want to complain or vent to my husband, I flip the timer and go for it for a full minute! Then we can discuss solutions, if needed. But most times, once I’ve gotten things off my chest, I can move on and enjoy family time. Without the timer, the rant sessions used to go on for hours.”

—Jamie Novak, organizing specialist and author of [Keep This, Toss That](#)

“ I plan fun activities the same way I plan business meetings. I will even put things on my calendar like 'Lie in bed and read.' It sounds goofy, I know, but it works. I’ve also returned to hobbies like knitting and baking, which give me creative satisfaction but are not my day job.”

—Nancy Shenker, CEO, [theONswitch](#) marketing company

“ Whenever I feel my life getting out of balance, I sit down and make a list of all the ways I spend my time during my waking hours, everything over and above a standard eight-hour work day. I rank the list in order of the amount of time I spend on each. Next to that list, I write down the five things I consider the most important in my life, in order of their importance. For me, just seeing the discrepancy between those lists is an incredibly powerful motivator for putting things back into perspective.”

—Barry Maher, of Barry Maher and Assoc. ([BarryMaher.com](#)), author of [Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business](#)

“ As a company, we dedicate some of our time and energy to helping homeless children. Through an ongoing initiative, we fill up tote bags with blankets, stuffed animals and books and deliver them to a network of local family shelters. Making this a part of my company feeds my spirit and reminds me of what is important, even when something petty is going on with work.

—Allison Kugel, co-owner, creative director, [Full Scale Media](#) public relations firm

“ Being in the 24/7 travel business, it’s nearly impossible to keep work from running my life. But I’ve found a way to disconnect and get on with being a husband and dad. My wife takes my phone on Friday evenings and returns it to me on Saturday morning. No calls, no e-mails and no texts. It’s difficult for me to separate myself, but my wife’s a psychiatrist, so I figure she knows best on these matters.”

—Greg Geronemus, co-CEO, [smarTours](#)

“ It's easy to fall into a rut when you work for yourself. There are many days when I've found myself attached to my laptop, in my PJs and on the couch at 8 p.m., having barely budged except to open the door for the Chinese food delivery guy.

You have to force yourself to get up, get dressed and go out. Even if it's just taking the dog for a walk, changing up your routine and getting some fresh air is healthy and necessary. Every now and then devote a full day to a field trip; visit a museum or go on a long hike.

Inspiration comes from all places, and you'll find that taking a day off to recuperate and recharge, even in the middle of the week, will do wonders for your productivity and drive.