

Want to Spend the 2nd Half of Your Life YOUR Way?

Are you considering self employment in order to live life the way you'd like? Nearly one in five pre-retirees say they want to start their own business after retirement. And many of you are chomping at the bit and want to start now –to heck with waiting for retirement. Although 80% of adults say they would work even if they didn't have to, it's a sad fact that the majority of them can't wait to leave their current jobs and get home.

I knew nearly 2 years before I left my academic job that something was wrong. I, a normally positive, cheerful person, was getting angry at work. Often. In thinking about what the heck was happening, I realized it was nothing "out there" that had changed. It was me. While my career had been extraordinarily satisfying for 15 years, I had outgrown it. Divine discontent was knocking at my door –in the form of anger. I needed to listen!

I worked with a coach for a year, weekly unpeeling all the fears and imagined obstacles that kept me from leaving this work I no longer loved. And then, I took the leap! And survived. More than survived, I thrived. And continue to do so.

One of the questions I asked during that year long soul searching, nail biting process, was "do I have what it takes to be self-employed?" I had no role models in my family to "prove" to me that it was possible –that I was cut from the right cloth for this type of adventure. I did some researching and here's what others told me about what it takes to be self employed. I'll give you my opinion following each point.

1. You must have the ability to believe you can be successful.

I agree with this. Self employed people learn to take risks and become decisive. These qualities are not innate; no person is born an entrepreneur. I believe that your mindset is one of the most important keys to successful self employment.

2. You must love to learn and continue doing so.

Yes! In order to keep growing and to thrive in your business you will need to learn from you mistakes. You will find that there are just some things that don't work –that's fine – try something else!

You will learn from watching others in your line of work that are successful. Learn the best parts of their methods, but beware of trying to imitate. It is your quirky uniqueness that will make you successful.

You will learn from reading and research. Read inspirational material of others who are successful. Read books from people who have information about how to innovate in your work.

3. Here's one I don't agree with. Many checklists of entrepreneurial qualities say that you must be a hardworking person and that you must put in more hours than you did as a person employed by someone else. This is a pervasive, yet faulty mindset that many self employed people operate under. If you are beginning a new business, while you maintain your current employment, yes, you may work more hours for a time.

However, once you take the leap, I encourage you to set an intention that you will work smart and stay focused on what brings you close to the money. If you don't fritter away your hours on actions that are not essential, you can work less hours than you previously did and make equal or more money.

I can speak from experience! I previously had to work hours that didn't suit me in order to accommodate the hours of the busy physicians I worked with –I had to be at early morning and late night meetings. I now start my day more slowly, rarely work more than 30 hours a week and make twice as much as did in my previous job.

Here's an action step to take after reading this article. Take some time to write out a vision of your ideal day in your new, self employed world. Make it as vivid as possible, using as many of your senses as you can. Where are you, what is around you, what sounds, smells, tastes? Who do you work with? What emotions do they have, do you have after your work together? This is a powerful exercise! Just ignore your doubts and "yeah buts" when they raise up to ask you if you are out of your mind. Read that vision each morning. If you decide to put it away after a week or a month, mark your calendar for a date six months from now to remind you to revisit your vision. There's a good chance you will be amazed at the progress you have made toward having that ideal.