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Chapter 1

What's Holding You Back?

Why *aren't* you your own boss?

In the more than two decades since Paul and Sarah pioneered the field of home-based business, we have interviewed, spoken to, worked with, and had the privilege of meeting thousands of men and women across the nation, each one of whom shared something in common: a burning desire to be his or her own boss. The facts bear this out. Seven in ten Americans at some time in their lives want to be their own boss, to own their own business—taking control of their lives and their futures.

And, for many of these thousands of people, that's exactly what has happened. They have quit their jobs to follow their dreams—leaving behind the security of a regular paycheck and a cushy benefits package with an established company. They are among the more than twenty-two million small businesses in the United States responsible for creating two out of three new jobs in the economy —most by people just like you who decided to become their own boss.

But, for every person we've met who has become his or her own boss, there are many more who, for one reason or another, never make the desired leap to independence. Research studies report that, while one in every 25 American adults is making an effort to start their own business in any given year—some 7 million efforts a year—but fewer than half get underway. That leaves a lot of people who get stuck on the way to achieving their dreams.

You'd like to be one of those at least, right? But...there's a "but," isn't there? Maybe a whole lot of buts. What if you could get past those buts, and really make something happen? That's what this book is all about—it's about getting past the "buts," without your having to change who you are or your values or intentions, turning your dreams into reality.

We have long been fascinated by the question of what it is that causes so many people—people who have a very strong desire to be their own boss—to falter on the path to an independent career. Is there something within successful entrepreneurs that others lack—some trait, some skill, or simply some good fortune?

We don't think so. We've known people who are successfully self-employed with all types of personalities, including shyness, introversion, and modesty. We've met people whose voices are so soft they're difficult to hear over the telephone. We've even known individuals who have created businesses confined to a bed, flat on their backs. We're not referring to superstar motivational speakers who have overcome such great handicaps that it makes all of us wonder what they have that we don't. We mean everyday, ordinary individuals with a desire and commitment to a better way of life. Before the 20th century, most Americans were self-employed—as farmers, craftsmen and trades people.

So what's the missing piece to your puzzle? What barriers are preventing you from being your own boss? What are the obvious ones as well as the less obvious ones? Most importantly, what can *you* do to overcome them? We believe you can find the answers and the strategies you need in the chapters that follow.

What's Holding You Back?

There are many reasons why people put their dreams on the back burner, but from the thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs we've encountered—listening to or reading about their dreams, their successes, and their failures—we've narrowed these reasons down into seven key categories:

- **I don't know the first step to take.** Many people know that they want to be their own boss, but they literally do not have the first clue about how to get started. Many of these same people don't even know what kind of business they want to start, or if a particular business really makes financial sense for them or not.

I want so badly to start my own business. The problem is that I have no idea what it is I want to do. How do I find my niche? I want to do something that is flexible and will not exclude my children. I have an associate's degree in office management and have been working in a nursing home. I work very well with people. I am full of information. People are always asking me where they go for this or that. If I don't know, I always know how to find out. For example, if someone is having trouble with their landlord, I know where to go for help. If someone is having financial problems, I know who can help. In staff meetings at work, people always come to me afterward and ask questions, even though they heard the exact same thing I did and I don't know any more than they do. They just know that I know how to find the answers. I also love to read. I love computers. I'm not looking to get rich. I would never want to put the time in that Bill Gates does to get his money. I only want to make enough money to live comfortably and be happy. I just don't know where to go from here.

- **I know what I need to do, but just can't get myself going.**

Of course, many people with dreams to become their own boss know exactly what kind of business they want to start and what they should do. They have been dreaming and planning for a long time—waiting for an opportunity to break loose. The problem is, they keep waiting, and waiting, and the opportunity they so long for never does come along.

I've been mulling over a home business for three (count 'em, three) years. Currently I am a stay at home mom. I've done some market research, written an informal business plan, named my business...but I'm stalled. I haven't gotten a business license or done any advertising. I have most of the equipment I need, but I balk when it comes to plunking down the money needed to officially start up the business. I want to incorporate so that my business and personal finances will remain completely separate and personal liability reduced, which will cost about \$1000 initially, with maintenance fees every year thereafter. Does there come a point where you just have to jump in with two feet and say, "Okay, this is it! I am starting!"?

- **I don't have enough money.** This is the traditional stumbling block for many people who want to start their own businesses, and it is also one of the most common reasons for the failure of established businesses. As the old saying goes, it takes money to make money and not having the money available to invest in your new business seems like a formidable obstacle on the road to success.

I am in a desperate position. I need a way to make money and be able to stay home. I lost my job in January and my hubby has just started a new job. We were living on the edge for awhile and then got ahead for a little bit, but then I had some medical issues and no insurance to help pay the bills. A week ago my husband got hurt and was out of work for three days and that has put us under, literally. I have ABSOLUTELY NO MONEY to put up for a start up fee or to start a new business. I don't mean to tell you this to feel sorry for me but it is the cold hard truth. Now a little about myself. I have been making my own greeting cards for about 2 1/2 yrs.

- **I don't know anything about business.** While most of us work or have worked for a business at one time or another in our lives, relatively few of us have actually started and run our own businesses from scratch. The fact is, starting up and running a business is a very different proposition than simply working for one, and not knowing the ins and outs of business can make starting one of your own seem quite intimidating.

I have a home business idea...I have a name...I have written out an informal business plan...I have started on a letterhead and on a business card idea. I even had multiple voice mail boxes put on my telephone. However, I have not gone to register with the county and acquire a DBA

("doing business as" or fictitious name registration. Is that necessary before I begin or is it too soon for that? What step do I take next? Am I on the right track?

- **I have hang-ups.** It takes a lot of courage to make the decision to start your own business—especially when doing so means exchanging a comfortable job or career for an uncertain future. Lack of confidence, lack of expertise, fear of success, depression—all of these things and more can hang you up that can turn you away from your dreams, no matter how much you want to achieve them.

*I have to admit—I am a little scared. I enjoy cooking and it is amazing to see peoples' eyes light up when I tell them that I am an aspiring Personal Chef. I would like this to eventually become something I can do into retirement. I have lots of things I enjoy doing, but
Am I being a big chicken? I have this dream that my little business will start out very small and grow neatly in gradual, manageable steps. Is this just silly or is there a way to achieve that? I guess what I want to know is: is it normal to be afraid to take that final step in starting a business? How did you overcome that and go on to be the raging successes that I know you all are? :) Trying to overcome my fears*

- **I have problems.** Okay. So we've all got problems. Only one thing: some people's problems are bigger than other people's problems. Whether it's lack of support from family, friends, and spouse, or physical incapacibilities, or being too old—or too young—or any number of other afflictions, imagined or real, all of these problems can delay or even permanently defer the move to starting your own business.

I need some some advice. Let me fill you in. I am a mother of a four-year-old darling girl. I currently work full time doing something that I do not enjoy. My talents are somewhere along the lines of crafting, selling, and writing. But my husband owns his own business and there are some issues regarding HIS taxes. So I'm afraid that if I quit my job, I am going to sink my family into poverty. I'm not the only one who isn't sure if this is feasible. Most of my relatives, particularly my in-laws and my Dad, think it's crazy for me to quit this job. But I hate it there. HELP.

- **I have a hard time following through.** <Insert Art Image 1-8> This, of course, might very well be the greatest hurdle for anyone who hopes to be his or her own boss. No matter how many of the other obstacles that you face and conquer, if you are unable to follow your quest to completion, then you'll never achieve your dreams of self-employment. The lack of a "completion gene" (you'll find a complete explanation of this critical ingredient for success in business in Chapter 8) can doom even the best ideas or the most sincerely aspiring entrepreneurs.

I have looked at Pampered Chef and other companies. I don't have very good people skills and am scared to death to start something new. Also, I have no friends to start selling to. My hobbies now include crafting and surfing the net for ideas to make money. I have been taken on a few of them but I don't follow through on any one of them.

You know that "buts" like these are very real obstacles in your path—if they weren't, you would already be your own boss. You also know that most things of value in life present certain obstacles to overcome. The big question is this: How do you realistically get past the obstacles you face right now? The first step is to identify and later to develop strategies to deal with and overcome the obstacles that you face. Let's start with you.

Is BYOBing Really for You?

We're obviously big believers in the power of being your own boss (BYOB)—we believe that being your own boss can be the key to unlocking your full potential and bringing you true happiness and fulfillment. Not only have we met thousands of people who have successfully taken charge of their own work lives—people who now find it difficult to imagine ever working for someone else again—but we have ourselves made the transition to becoming our own bosses.

But just as some people prefer mountains to seashores, some of us are more comfortable in the world of steady paychecks and other people's rules. We're not going to pretend that everyone is cut out for self-employment. Some people are clearly meant to be entrepreneurs—to be their own bosses—and some people are clearly meant to work for someone else. That's okay. The most important thing is finding a career that enables you to feel your time in this life is well-spent—whether you're the boss, or whether you're working for someone else.

Some people think they want to be their own boss, but the closer they get to doing it, they find it's not as attractive as they thought. You might describe this as a "closer-you-get-to-the-sun-the-hotter it is" phenomenon, but the fact is heat—that's a burning passion for being on your own—is one of the most important elements of being successfully self-employed.

How about you? Is this really for you? We offer the following test, adapted from one the Small Business Administration offers on its Web site (www.sba.gov) to help you decide if you would find running your own business as attractive as you think. Take a few minutes right now to see what it says about you.

Independent Career Quotient (EQ) Test

I am persistent.	Yes	Maybe	No
When I'm interested in a project, I need less sleep.	Yes	Maybe	No
When there's something I want, I keep my goal clearly in mind.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like to examine mistakes and I learn from them.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like to make and keep New Year's resolutions.	Yes	Maybe	No
I have a strong personal need to succeed.	Yes	Maybe	No
I have lots of new and different ideas.	Yes	Maybe	No
I am comfortable adapting to changing circumstances.	Yes	Maybe	No
I am curious.	Yes	Maybe	No
I am intuitive.	Yes	Maybe	No
If something can't be done, I find a way.	Yes	Maybe	No
I see problems as challenges.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like taking calculated chances.	Yes	Maybe	No
I'll gamble on a good idea, even if it isn't a sure thing.	Yes	Maybe	No
To learn something new, I will explore unfamiliar subjects.	Yes	Maybe	No
I can recover from emotional setbacks.	Yes	Maybe	No
I feel sure of myself to travel into unfamiliar territory.	Yes	Maybe	No
I'm a positive person, even when things are challenging.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like to experiment with new ways to do things.	Yes	Maybe	No
I don't mind undergoing sacrifices to attain possible long-term rewards.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like to do things my own way.	Yes	Maybe	No
I don't mind having the buck stop with me.	Yes	Maybe	No
I don't mind being alone.	Yes	Maybe	No
I like to be in control.	Yes	Maybe	No
I have a reputation for being stubborn.	Yes	Maybe	No

What do you think? For each “Yes” answer, give yourself three points; for each “Maybe,” give yourself two points. “No” answers get zero points. Total up your score and see what it suggests.

Number of “Yes’s”: _____ x 3 = _____
Number of “Maybe’s”: _____ x 2 = _____
Your total: _____

- If you scored between 60 and 75, being your own boss will probably be as attractive to you as you expect.
- If you scored between 48 and 59, you are attracted to being your own boss but may need to push and nudge yourself along to bring certain aspects of your personality to the fore and develop them more fully. Alternatively, you may want to consider hiring someone to help you with the areas that aren’t suited to you.
- If you scored between 37 and 47, you may not find operating a business on your own as attractive as you thought, so you might want to look for a business partner who can compliment you in the areas you’re not attracted to.
- If you scored below 37, self-employment may not be for you. You may be happier and more successful working for someone else. Of course, only you can make that decision. But before you go any further, look deep within yourself. Do you really want to start your own business? Are you sure that’s who you are? Do you really want to leave the comfort of your job with its benefits and steady paychecks or is this something you think you should do or a pleasant panacea you fantasize about after a rough day?

You Know Yourself Better than We Do

The fact is, you know yourself better than anyone else. You know what you can and can’t do, you know your personal limits—from the heights of your greatest dreams, to the depths of your darkest insecurities—and you know the boundaries of your own personal zone of comfort. It’s up to you to decide *when* you should make the move to becoming your own boss. Our job is to help you identify the obstacles that may have gotten in your way—obstacles that you may not be aware of or not know what to do about—and to provide you with strategies for moving them out of the way.

So let’s get started!

The Why Aren’t You Your Own Boss Obstacle Quiz

As we have seen, there are many different reasons that prevent people from becoming their own boss. The problem is (1) where you are stuck, and (2) exactly why? The answers to the 24 simple “yes-or-no” questions that follow will help you pinpoint just how stuck or unstuck you really are and where. Give yourself one point for every

“Yes” answer, and zero points for every “No” answer. After you finish the quiz, total up the results and check them against the scoring guide below.

1. Do you spend more time planning than you spend doing? Yes No
2. Do you often find yourself daydreaming when you are at work? Yes No
3. Are you worrying more than taking action? Yes No
4. Are you afraid that you're too young (or too old) to be a success? Yes No
5. Do you put off dealing with important issues that threaten to derail your career, finances, or relationships? Yes No
6. Do you feel that it's necessary to learn as much as possible about starting and running a business before you actually dive in? Yes No
7. Are you only a paycheck or two away from financial disaster? Yes No
8. Do you have a hard time following through on projects and bringing them to completion? Yes No
9. Do you feel certain that you want to start your own business, but you are totally lost when it comes to figuring out what kind of business to start, and how you'll go about starting it? Yes No
10. Are you uncomfortably nervous that you know very little about running a business? Yes No
11. Do you have problems working with people? Yes No
12. Do you put off doing what you need to do until a crisis develops? Yes No
13. Do you put off doing tasks until you feel that you can do them perfectly? Yes No
14. Does the fear of change paralyze your efforts to achieve your dreams? Yes No
15. Do you obsess about things you would like to do but rarely get around to doing? Yes No
16. Are you overwhelmed by all the possibilities when you think about the kind of business to start? Yes No
17. Do you commit yourself to doing so many things that you can't find time to do a thorough job on any one of them? Yes No
18. Is doing something prestigious that commands respect more important to you than possible higher earnings or doing things your own way? Yes No
19. Do other priorities keep getting in the way of your plans for success? Yes No
20. Do the hurdles to making a positive change in your life seem increasingly insurmountable the closer you get to them? Yes No
21. Is it hard for you to make decisions and then to stick with them once you do? Yes No
22. Are your plans to start your own business on hold because you lack the funds necessary to make a go of it? Yes No
23. Are you worried that you might pick a business and fail or that you might pick the wrong business and it might succeed? Yes No
24. Do key people in your life (spouse, family, friends) pooh-pooh your desire to start your own boss or even oppose you? Yes No

Scoring: How Stuck Are You?

As we said above, give yourself one point for every “Yes” answer, and zero points for every “No” answer. Now add up all your answers to get your total for this quiz, and let's see how you did.

Number of “Yes’s”:	_____	x 1 =	_____
Number of “No’s”:	_____	x 0 =	_____
Your total:	_____		

0-8 points: Not So Stuck! This may surprise you, but you’re actually not very stuck at all. Sure, you might have a couple of minor obstacles, but with some ideas about the particulars and a slight nudge in the right direction, you’ll be on your way.

9-16 points: A Little Stuck! It looks like you’re conflicted about the changes you’ll need to make in your life to achieve your dreams. While there are as many good reasons in your mind for making a major change in your life, there are reasons against it, too. With a little help, you can focus on the positive—on the success you know you can achieve if you put your mind to it—and worry less about the negatives. Use this book to help you do your research, deal with the obstacles on your path in a concerted and methodical way.

17-24 points: Pretty Stuck! As you have probably already noticed, you often become overwhelmed by the many different issues going on your own presents. Unfortunately, you are also feeling resistant—even afraid—to change. Use this book to begin, taking small steps—one-by-one—around the obstacles to your dreams. As you achieve smaller goals, you can build on your success.

So. How stuck are you? While the above scoring provides you with a general idea of where you stand, your particular answers to the quiz can serve as a compass to how to overcoming the obstacles you need to address before you’ll be able to proceed.

Using This Book as Your Compass

Now that you’ve identified the specifics of what’s getting between you and your dreams of self-employment, you may be wondering if you’ll ever get past these obstacles. They’re probably not a big surprise to you. Right?

It’s our belief that if you truly want to get past these obstacles, you can. So take a look at any questions you answered “Yes”, then on the following chart find the chapter that addresses these issues. Once you find the chapters that address the obstacles that you personally face, you can turn directly to those chapters and start working there.

If you answered “yes” to Questions	Go to Chapter
9	Chapter 2: Not Knowing the First Step to Take
1, 2, 5, 12, 15, 20, or 21.	Chapter 3: I Know What I Need to Do, but Just Can’t Get Myself Going!
7 or 22	Chapter 4: But I Don’t Have the Money!
6, or 10	Chapter 5: I Don’t Know the Nitty Gritty of Starting a Business
3, 13, 11, 14, 16, 18, 19, or 23	Chapters 6 & 7: All Talk, No Action: Is It Me? Do I Have Hang-Ups?
4, or 24	Chapter 8: But My Problems Are Real!
8 or 17	Chapter 9: The Single Most Important Ingredient

As you read through each chapter, check out the resources. Answer the questions the chapters pose and take at least three of the steps outlined for your personal action plan. Then move on one-by-one to the other chapters.

You'll discover resources you didn't know existed, strategies you never thought of, and solutions you wouldn't have imagined—culled from the success stories of thousands of people like yourself, people who were asking the same question you've been asking: Why aren't I my own boss? They faced the same obstacles and found the answers and so can you.

As you work through the chapters, you'll be surprised with the shift in your attitude about your chances for actually becoming your own boss. It will seem less like an impossible dream you must relegate to “maybe someday” and more like a realistic possibility. And that will only be the beginning. You'll actually be on your way to being your own boss. With each chapter, you'll be closer and closer until there are no more “buts.”

What's In the Rest of Why Aren't You Your Own Boss?

Chapter 2: Not Knowing the First Step to Take

What kind of business should I start?
Who will pay me to do what I want to do?
How can I start with what I've got?

Chapter 3: I Know What I Need to Do But I Just Can't Get Myself Going!

Decision-making deadlock: I'm not sure I'm doing it right
A flabby self-motivation muscle: I have trouble getting myself to do
stuff I'd rather not do
Overbooked with no juice: I can't find the time or energy
Flight from flight: The possibility I might scares me

Chapter 4: But, I Don't Have the Money!

How much do I *really* need?
How much do I *really* have?
How can I get more if there's a gap?
How can I start with what I've got?

Chapter 5: I Don't Know the Nitty Gritty of Starting a Business

What do I *really* need to know to start my business?
What *don't* I need to know to start my business?
Where are the best places to get the information I need?
How can I start with what I've got?

Chapter 6: All Talk, No Action: Is It Me? Do I Have Hang-Up's!

Thinking on your own
Making effective decisions
Discovering where you fit
Doing what needs to be done
Taking action on your behalf
Staying ahead of the curves
Commanding respect
Releasing your brakes
Attracting success without distress
Protecting your assets
Being appreciated for who you are

Taking problems in stride
Being up to the challenge
Turning what you've got into what you want
Handling whatever comes along
Having what it takes
Remaining both excited and realistic
Confronting your fears
Creating with others
Keeping the thorns out of your side
Achieving success and avoiding failure

Chapter 7: But My Problems Are Real!

What if I have physical incapacibilities or disabilities?
What if I'm too young or too old or a single mom or a dropout or...?
How can I get more support from friends and family?
But, what if I lose my health insurance and other benefits?

Chapter 8: The Single Most Important Ingredient

What is the *completion gene*?
How can I stop procrastinating?
How can I learn to take risks?

Take-Off Section

Personal Action Plan

Quick Lists

Finding Money
Places to Check Out Health Insurance

For further information or with specific questions about self-employment and working from home, contact Paul and Sarah Edwards at www.workingfromhome.com