

THE
RV
ENTREPRENEUR



Build a Business Anywhere

HEATH PADGETT

THE RV ENTREPRENEUR

Heath Padgett

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Author's Note

I don't recommend quitting your job without a plan on how you'll make money. And I really don't recommend you do this two months before your wedding at age 23. But that's how my entrepreneurial career started out.

Like 70% of Americans, I hated my job. The boss was fine and my co-workers were cool and all, but when I got home at the end of each day, I realized there wasn't a single moment that stuck out. Each minute blended together in a sea of monotonous emails and cold calls.

I wasn't even a year out of college and I already felt like I was stuck in a career I didn't like.

It wasn't like I had a lot of options at the time. I was 23-years-old with a growing pile of student debt. No job prospects were banging on my door, offering to take me away from the company I was working for.

What happened next can best be summed up in this statistic by my friend, Paul Angone, author of *All Groan Up*.

“It’s a scientific fact that 87.3% of all confused twenty somethings believe a road trip will fix everything.”

My thoughts exactly, Paul.

To solve my career issues, my fiancée, Alyssa, and I started conspiring with the idea of an extended honeymoon—one that would allow us to travel across the country for a few months and escape from our desk jobs.

But like all people, once we got a taste for the RV lifestyle, our 3 month honeymoon road trip grew into full-time RVing with no end in sight.

PART 1

Chapter One

The RV Entrepreneur

*Written from Grand Teton National Park near Jackson, Wyoming:
June 2016*

It's a brisk 42 degrees outside this morning in the Grand Teton National Park, even though it's the middle of June. Alyssa and I have our RV set up at Gros Ventre campground for our second night this week.

Yesterday morning after the sun warmed the air a bit, I went outside and worked at our make-shift stand-up desk. I felt the judgmental glances of everyone walking by—and not just because our stand-up desk is an old keyboard stand with a cutting board on top (I'm classy like that).

I could almost hear them thinking, “Look at that guy—working—while in a national park.”

We get these glances a lot. And while I sometimes feel guilty for working on a beautiful day in my favorite national park, I know this is the lifestyle we’ve worked so hard to create for ourselves.

A lifestyle where we can travel wherever we want, work whenever we want, and keep our home with us at all times. And yes, sometimes that means cranking away on a project while in a national park. But hey, there are plenty of worse places to be working.

My wife, Alyssa, and I are part of a growing trend of RV entrepreneurs. We are people who live in an RV and run a business from the road.

Side note: I had no idea this was an actual category of people. As it turns out, there are more of us than I realized.

Over the past two years we’ve met a handful of other RV entrepreneurs while driving our RV all over America, all of whom built businesses and income around their nomadic lifestyle.

These are people who value travel, adventure, simplicity, and breaking against the status quo that says

we should all work 9-5 in an office before retiring at 65 to buy an RV to see the world.

How This Book Came About

I kept hearing the same two questions about hitting the road.

1. How can I make enough money to travel full-time?
2. How can I travel cheap?

The answer to second question was relatively easy to answer.

We spent the first year of our marriage traveling to all 50 states, 49 of them in our RV, so we had a bit of experience on finding free places to camp, joining RV membership clubs, and a few other tips for people on how to travel full-time on a tight budget.

We weren't experts, but we were able to provide a lot of helpful resources for people who were just getting started.

To share tips on traveling cheap, I developed a free seven day course called [How to Travel on \\$2k/month](#) on my blog that shared what we'd learned during our first year of full-time travel. As a result, it's been downloaded over 4,000 times in the past year.

But a solution to the first question was more difficult to

come up with. Income is obviously the biggest barrier for people who want to travel. *How can I build a remote income? What kind of business could I start? Should I freelance?* These were the same questions I asked before we hit the road.

However, I didn't feel qualified to offer advice on how to start a remote or online business. After all, in our first year of full-timing, we made money through donations, sponsorship, freelance writing, and a little consulting work. We barely made enough to cover our bills, so how could I teach others how to work on the road?

Instead of offering up advice on things I was still learning myself, I decided to leverage the internet and crowd source knowledge.

I started a private Facebook group called "Make Money and RV." I invited together all of the people we'd met during that first year of travel who running their own business on the road. Then, I invited all of the people who enrolled in my free Travel on \$2k/month course.

The hope was to bring together people who were planning a transition to hitting the road with those who had been on the road for several years.

Over the past year I've seen thousands of new people

enroll in this group. It's a great place for wannabe travelers or newbie full-timers to share a business idea they want to take on the road. The group has been invaluable for people who just need a little encouragement or advice before they hit the road. (If you're reading this book, I'd love to have you join the group [here](#)).

To create more intentional learning from the group, I launched a podcast where I interviewed RV entrepreneurs (aka people running a business while traveling full-time in their RV).

The goal of this podcast was to learn more on how different people handled the transition from living in a home or apartment to hitting the road full-time in an RV.

Why did they decide to hit the road? Were they running a business for a long time, prior to buying an RV? What obstacles did they face while transitioning to a full-time travel lifestyle? How much money did they save before departure?

These are just a few of the questions that I ask during The RV Entrepreneur Podcast. Shortly after launching the show, it hit the #1 spot in iTunes New & Noteworthy for Travel related podcasts. It stayed in that spot for several months as thousands of people were listening to each

episode.

The quick success of the show validated that this subject was bigger than just me and the first few guests I'd had on the show. It proved there are more crazy people like us who want to get out and see the world without sacrificing our work or finances.

For me, the best part of The RV Entrepreneur podcast is hearing all the different kinds of stories and ways people have made an income for themselves on the road. People who launched Etsy shops, created apps, or found sponsors to travel to all 59 national parks.

While the podcast serves as a great way to share these kinds of stories, it doesn't always yield itself to the most actionable advice. This is the reason why I created this eBook, to document what I believe are the most valuable and actionable takeaways from the 30+ RV Entrepreneurs who I've brought on the podcast at the time of writing this book. I'll also share everything I've learned up until this point while building our business from the road.

In addition to the blog, podcast, and Facebook group, over the past two years Alyssa and I have built a video production company where we work with clients all over

the country, spoken at various Fortune 500 Companies, premiered our documentary, Hourly America, in multiple cities, and I recently co-founded a software start up called CampgroundBooking (an easy way for campgrounds to accept online reservations).

Through personal experience of finding our work on the road and interviews I've done with other RV entrepreneurs, my hope is for this book to be a resource for you as you plan your own transition to living and working on the road.

Chapter Two

The First Money I Made While Traveling

I had no idea what I was doing when I bought my first RV. In addition to not exactly understanding the difference between a grey tank and a black tank, I had to find a way to make money on the road and while I had plenty of ideas, they were all terrible.

Surprisingly, despite my lack of experience and the fact that I was a typical college grad from Austin, Texas, my first on-the-road paycheck came in the form of a sponsorship.

A lot of images come to mind when you say the word sponsor. Perhaps you imagine Peyton Manning making jokes about some insurance company or you think of those

giant billboards in sports stadiums. But real sponsorships these days are a little more low key. (I'll get into more details on the logistics of how you can find a sponsorship for your next project in chapter 13).

My first sponsorship, with a hourly job board called Snagajob, happened quite accidentally. Like I said, I quit my job without a plan. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. A mentor—okay, actually just this guy I met on Twitter—suggested that if I planned on taking a few months to road trip across the country, I should work a different job in each state. Crazy, I know. But I *loved* this idea.

What better way to learn about what work I wanted to do than to try a different job in each state? Plus, what an easy solution for making money on the road!

My soon-to-be wife did not share my excitement. In retrospect, I'm still not sure why she was so upset at my proposition to work during our entire honeymoon road trip. We could travel to all fifty states and enjoy this awesome project along the way!

But like any guy, her disapproval only made me want it even more.

That's how I stumbled upon Snagajob's name online. I'd never heard of them before, but I knew an hourly job board would be key in helping me finding work on the road.

I reached out to the head of marketing and a couple weeks later, we signed a contract for a \$1,000 monthly stipend, plus Snagajob's assistance finding jobs. (Alyssa loved me again once I told her I found a sponsor for our road trip, don't worry.) All we had to do for our end of the sponsorship was write a blog about each job and film each day of work for a documentary called Hourly America.

Did I know anything about blogging for a major company?

Nope.

Did I know how to film...anything at all?

Nope.

Was \$1,000 enough to cover our travel expenses?

Nope.

Did I even know how to drive an RV?

Nope.

All logical thought would assume that we would never finish this project. I wouldn't be able to find fifty jobs in

less than a year. I wouldn't make enough money on the road to cover our expenses. My wife—who ended up filming *every single* job I worked on the road—had no film experience before we started traveling, so making a full-length documentary seemed like a long shot.

There's really only one reason we finished our fifty-state journey and still continue to travel: **perseverance**.

Once I tasted the freedom of traveling full-time, I didn't want to stop. I remember the first moment Alyssa and I exchanged that look that said we were going to keep traveling for as long as we could.

It was late June in Manhattan Beach, California and I had just worked my fifth job in LA. Our work day started at 4:30 AM and now that we conquered the congestion of traffic to get back to the RV, we were exhausted. We spent nearly a month driving across the deserts of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, and now we were walking along the beach in our sweaty work clothes watching the sunset. For the first time since before my office job, I felt fully alive, like the work I was doing was feeding my life, rather than crushing it.

It was in that moment that we knew we wanted to keep

traveling in our RV beyond our fifty state road trip. We wanted to learn how we could make this lifestyle last.

Chapter Three

Workamping vs. The RV Entrepreneur

Traveling and working on the road isn't anything new. Since RVs first became popular in the early 20th century, people have found creative ways to work on the road.

When most people hear that we're working in an RV, they assume we joined Amazon's Camperforce (where you work seasonally in their warehouses) or maybe we're workamping at a campground in exchange for cheap rent.

In this type of situation you have a boss and hours and a reasonable pay rate.

But this is not the kind of traveling work this book is about. It's also not about finding hourly jobs in different places like I did during Hourly America.

This book is about a new generation of nomadic entrepreneurs who have created unique lifestyles that allow them to travel and build a business from anywhere.

All thanks to this little thing we call the internet.

The fact that we can constantly stay connected allows us to not only travel full-time while we work, but it allows us to actually create our own remote teams, build products, and make an impact in our work without having to be in a centralized location.

We can jump on Skype calls with clients while dry camping in remote areas of Colorado (did that a few days ago). We can create apps that are downloaded millions of times and run on autopilot while we travel full-time. We can become freelance Wordpress developers, photographers, designers, authors, bloggers, and the list goes on and on.

Thirty years ago if you wanted to hit the road for an extended period of time, you would have to either give up your work or find some type of job that allowed you to travel, like a traveling salesman or workamper. But in those cases, you probably couldn't bring along your family or control your schedule enough to thoroughly

enjoy your travel.

Now, we don't have to choose between travel and a meaningful career — we can have both.

We aren't all hippies and gypsies.

Back in the seventies when RVing started to grow in popularity, nomadic people earned a pretty weird reputation. From an outsider's perspective, if you traveled full-time in an RV or van, you were irresponsible, reckless, and probably dirty.

It was assumed that anyone traveling full-time was neglecting their career and their future. They were called bums or hippies or perhaps fugitives running from the law.

But today's full-timers are nothing like this.

Full-timers, noun. A full-timer--abbreviated from full-time RVer--is someone who travels year-round. They may or may not own a house or land, but spend most months of the year traveling.

Most of the people we've met in this lifestyle aren't bumming it around the country to escape a bad life or

neglect their future. They are doing it because they love traveling and realized their skills can be profitable from anywhere.

They value freedom and the chance to wake up everyday and do something they enjoy.

The chance to own your day.

Imagine a day where you own every second.

You don't have to spend countless hours in pointless meetings. You don't have to act busy all the time because your boss is looking at you. You can wake up and go for a hike in a national forest, read a book while you drink your coffee, and then get to your work when you feel like it.

Some days, you might not work at all. Other mornings you might do what I'm doing right now, skip a morning hike in the Teton Mountains so you can work on a creative project.

But the biggest draw to the RV entrepreneur life is freedom. Plain and simple. Last year I did an interview with an RV entrepreneur named Michael Boyink from DitchingSuburbia.com.

Boyink has been traveling full-time with his family of four for the past six years. Here's what he said when I

asked him about the best part about being able to travel with his family and work on the road:

“It’s just that total freedom, that phrase, ‘own your day’ has become really important to us. It’s just three simple words, ya know? But you string ‘em together and you think about that.

Being self employed I can choose the work I want to do. I can choose the clients that I want. Sometimes you gotta take what’s there because you need the money, but most of the time that’s not the case, so that’s pretty cool. With homeschooling we can choose how we teach our kids, what resources we use, not beholden to a school system or common core.

Don’t have to worry about what Bill Gates is funding for a curriculum. Then you throw in location independence on top of that and I don’t know if there’s any other greater freedom currently available in the country. We choose where we want to be, what we want to do for work, and how we want to teach our kids.

Literally, for the first 8 weeks [on the road] I kept expecting a knock on the door with some guy in a hat going, ‘Okay, you’ve had your fun man. It’s time to go home.’

I don’t even think having a bunch more money would give you greater freedom cause that would always come up with

greater responsibility.”

Michael nailed it. The best part about being an RV Entrepreneur is having that total freedom to own your day, your work, and ultimately— your life.

Why You’re Here

There’s a number of reasons why you probably picked up this book. Maybe you want to travel more, work remotely, or just take some time off to explore the country. This is the stage of life I was at a few years ago. Planning, dreaming, and scheming of one day.

I remember sitting at my desk and clicking through Instagram, looking at photos of a guy in a truck camper who was traveling full-time and thinking to myself, “How the heck does this guy travel full-time? He’s barely older than me. What’s he doing for work? I bet his parents are wealthy. Jerk.”

I may or may not have been a tiny bit jealous. But the truth was, until I started noticing people who were so-called digital nomads, I had never considered the idea of traveling full-time. The prospect of traveling and being paid to work from anywhere was a foreign concept to me,

but it sounded exhilarating.

Something I didn't realize at the time was that it was not only possible to earn an income while traveling, but you could actually build a meaningful career or business.

In addition to building up a base of video production clients, Alyssa and I have been able to create our first film together in Hourly America, a documentary about work and our 50 state road trip. It's always been a dream of mine to make a documentary and traveling across the country enabled us to make that a reality.

Addressing the Elephant in the Room

Starting any business is hard. I just would like to point out that we're adding another complexity on top of starting something of your own — full-time travel.

Whether you start your business before you hit the road or figure it out as you go along, it's likely going to be one of the most challenging things you've ever done. When Alyssa and I decided to leave behind salaried jobs for life on the road, we had no idea what would happen.

And it wasn't just hard when we initially quit our jobs. It was stressful telling our families and friends what we were doing. It was difficult when we were up in the

Adirondack Mountains and trying to enjoy our first real fall outside of Texas, but I was sitting inside the RV writing, too stressed to enjoy myself.

It was difficult after we finished Hourly America and we had to figure out how to keep ourselves afloat. It was frustrating when we decided to stick it out for another year in our 1994 RV with a leaky roof so we could hustle on paying off student debt.

I say these things not to downplay the RV lifestyle, but to share with you a realistic perception that it's not going to be a cakewalk.

There's too much fluff out there on the internet that promises you'll make six figures during your first year of starting your own business. This isn't true for everyone (or most people) and it creates an unrealistic perception for people who are just getting started.

That being said, it's all been 100% worth it. To be able to wake up, work alongside my wife everyday, travel, work from anywhere, and do work that makes me excited is what it's all about for me.

In the beginning I did feel a little bit crazy for leaving behind normal for a 180 square feet of a moving home.

Actually, acknowledging that you're slightly crazy (in a good way) is probably a great place to start.

But here's the kicker: It's possible to succeed in this lifestyle, and that's all you need to know.

I've met way too many people who make it work, couples, families, and solo women who are running their own business from an RV while exploring America.

My attempt at pumping you up before reading any further.

I believe there will always be a million reasons why you shouldn't do something. There will always be more reasons to stay on the conventional and safe path. Nobody will ever yell at you for sticking around in your well-paying job with benefits.

Your family won't ever be upset at you for saving up and buying a nice house where they can come visit. Your coworkers won't question your sanity for only taking the standard two weeks of vacation every year.

It's when you step out of this comfort zone that you start facing friction. It's when you boldly proclaim you want to do something different, that you want to be

someone different—that's when people point at you and start questioning your life decisions.

You want to be an entrepreneur?

You want to travel?

Who are you to do these things?

This is the kind of resistance you'll likely face as soon as you embark on this path.

We faced it. The other people you'll meet in this book have faced it. The good news is, on the other side of that wall is something incredible: The chance to do work you enjoy while living a lifestyle of travel and adventure.

It won't be easy. It will be stressful and unknown and difficult, but it's available for people who want it badly enough. And like with anything else in life, the more you realize something is possible and attainable, the harder it becomes to ignore.

Chapter Four

The 3 Biggest Fears Before Hitting the Road

Before going any further, I want to address three of the biggest fears people have when quitting their job to buy an RV and drive across the country.

Fear #1 People will think of me as being a drain on society.

Cherie and Chris from Technomadia.com have been driving around the country as digital nomads for more than ten years. They've developed software apps, built a successful blog, and played a key role in a couple different start ups in the RVing community.

When talking with them about what their fears were before transitioning to a nomadic lifestyle, this is what

Cherie said:

“There is this perception that if you’re hitting the road as a nomad that you’re doing it because you’re scaling back your life and you’re going to be a drain on society, that you’re going to be mooching everywhere.

I was afraid of being perceived as a moocher (or a taker), because I’m not. I’m a giver. And I was so afraid of being perceived as someone who was dropping out of society and who is trying to work the welfare system or medicaid or social handouts.

I thought I had something to prove that being a nomad you could also be a career person and be successful and be perceived as someone who is still a contributive member of society ... and I think we’ve overdone it.”

From the outside looking in, a lot of people don’t understand the whole tiny house or RV movement. They look at RV’s and can’t understand why a person would want to live in such a small space.

They must be poor or in financial trouble.

This was the common viewpoint ten years ago when Cherie and Chris first made their transition into living in an RV, and it’s still a widespread misconception today.

But the truth about people like Chris and Cherie is this: they aren't poor. They aren't and never were a drain on society. They've contributed a ton of value as tech-centric entrepreneurs within the RV industry.

Technomadia, as they are called on their blog, are savvy entrepreneurs who also enjoy the RV lifestyle. They've also reached hundreds of thousands of people within the RVing community while they travel in their converted bus.

The misconception that you have to be in one centralized location to be successful is a lie too many of us have believed for too long.

Fear #2 What about losing job security?

Michael Boyink has been traveling around the country with his two kids and wife for six years. Mike runs a company called Boyink Interactive on the road. When I asked Michael about leaving behind security for a life on the road, here's what he told me:

"It sorta got forced upon us, the job got taken away and then you realize, gosh that cushy corporate job is really no more secure than anything else. So I can't put my security in that

cushy corporate job anymore.

Then the housing market tanked, so gosh the confidence I had in the equity of my house, well that can be taken away outside of my control too.

So all those things you try to get confidence in that you got a stable life, you learn those can be taken away from you, or at least we learned that. I think there was about a decade in there where we were kind of sleepwalking through life and I wish we would have woken up sooner.”

Michael lost his job after 9/11 and instead of choosing to go find another job as a web developer, he started his own business, one new web client at a time.

He realized something that other RV Entrepreneurs in this book have realized as well: **Just because you have a salaried job doesn't mean you have security.**

The truth about job security.

When we left Austin a couple years ago and I walked away from my job at a startup selling software, I felt naked and exposed. I had never done any kind of freelance work and the business I had started in college never really took off.

I had one core belief that I held onto: I was going to bet on us.

I was betting on us to figure out how to do work we wanted to do, wherever we wanted to do it.

I know that sounds trite and doesn't give any practical ways you can do the same, but we'll get to that.

First, let's address the lie that so many people believe — the lie that says because you have a job you are secure. Once you decide to quit your job and work for yourself on the road, everyone will start questioning how you could give up your job security for something so risky.

However, I believe job security is actually something else entirely. Job security doesn't mean you have health benefits and a 401K. True job security is knowing that no matter what happens, you will have people who want to pay you for the value you can provide for them (whether it's clients or a company who wants to hire you full-time).

Most people, when they lose their job, have trouble finding another one. It takes months of searching to find a new gig that might be the same or better or even worse than the job they had before. How in the world is this job security? You have all your eggs in one basket and if that

basket falls apart, you have no contingency plan?

Job security means that 10 people will send you an offer letter the moment you announce that you're looking for a new position.

Instead of putting our life and security in the hands of any one company, Alyssa and I have taken it into own hands. We have film clients, sponsors, affiliate income on our blog, and we're constantly working on diversifying our income so if one project doesn't pan out, we have other options for our income.

The point is this: having a job and being in one place doesn't mean you have security, it means you have a job. Security is knowing that no matter what happens, you will have options.

If you lost your job today, how many people would be lining up to hire you or your services?

Fear #3 What if I fail?

One of the more challenging parts of the hitting the road was getting over my fear of what if I fail at this new life?

Of course, I was also excited.

After all, we were going to be traveling America for a

year.

But I still was afraid of all the unknown factors. Would we run out of money? Would our RV break down? Would I be able to find a job in all 50 states? What if I fail and have to come home with my tail between my legs.

There were a lot of fears bouncing around in the back of my head.

One of the best things I did during this time was writing down my best and worst case scenario.

The Best and Worst Case Scenarios

While sorting through potential doubts and weighing the pros and cons of hitting the road, I asked myself, “What’s the worst case scenario if we quit our jobs, buy an RV, and go travel America?”

This was my answer:

Worst case scenario: (other than our RV going up in a blaze of fire or accidentally driving off the rim of the Grand Canyon) Alyssa and I hit the road and go travel across America for several months. We meet people from different walks of life, experience different parts of our country, and have an incredible start to our marriage. We

end up spending a chunk of our savings and have to return home and get jobs again, slightly more broke than we already are. Plus, we have to tell people we live in an RV we bought online.

Best case scenario: We hit the road and go see America for a year. Along the way, we find a way to continue earning money while we travel and continue the lifestyle. We have an incredible start to our marriage and experience more of the country at a young age than we ever thought possible.

Weighing these two different scenarios, I realized that the worst case scenario actually sounded really awesome (minus going down in a fiery blaze at the bottom of the Grand Canyon).

It wasn't like I was rich at the time, so not having a lot of money didn't really scare me. Sure, people might think less of us because we tried and failed, but at least we tried. At least we went for it.

Plus, when I'm 80 years old, would I regret quitting a job I didn't like to travel America with my newlywed wife? Heck no.

Side effects of travel

When I started thinking of best and worst case scenarios, I also realized the personal growth that would come from our travels.

Meeting new people, seeing new parts of the country—these were all variables that would push us outside our comfort zone.

Of course, I didn't know then that during our travels I would meet New York Times best-selling authors, professional film makers, a Buddhist goat farmer, a professional street performer, or even other twenty somethings who want to RV full-time.

But I knew if I left our home in Austin, I would meet people who think, live, and work differently than I do. I knew I could learn from all of them.

Plus, Alyssa and I would see and do all of this together, 24/7. Is there a better way to begin our lives together than traveling and working together? We would explore national parks, small towns, big cities, all together. Learning together, creating memories together.

I quickly realized that any worst case scenario doesn't look bad when you think about all the benefits that come

with full-time travel.

If you're currently trying to figure out whether or not you can hit the road for an extended period of time and travel, I'd challenge you to do this simple exercise.

Write down what your best and worst case scenario look like for whatever travel or business idea you have. You might find out, like I did, the worst case scenario is not all that bad.

Chapter Five

Go Big or Go Home: Start Something You Care About

After Alyssa and I came up with the idea to hit the road post-wedding, we had to start coming up with real plans. Up until this point we'd just been dreaming. Now that we both were going to be leaving our jobs, we had just a few months to figure out how to replace our income while on the road.

And before my meeting with Jia and the idea to pursue Hourly America, I came up with another idea: Alyssa and I could start a social media marketing company.

While neither of us had a ton of marketing experience,

we'd both written on our respective blogs for a few years and ran social media accounts of different companies. Plus, how hard could it be to schedule some Tweets and Facebook posts from the road? I knew how to work Tweetdeck.

We immediately got to work on starting the business. We'd calculated that to stay afloat we'd need to at least be bringing in \$2k/month. If we just brought on 4 clients at \$500/month, we'd be golden.

Within a week we had a business name (Megaphone Social), website, professionally designed logo and our first client (a recently converted wedding venue that was paying us \$100/month to manage their Facebook page).

I wasn't able to convince the 65-year-old owner of the wedding venue why he should pay me \$500/month so his venue could also be on Twitter. So he talked me down to \$100/month to start their Facebook page. He was a tough negotiator.

Either way, we needed a client and an early win. The momentum felt good.

Except for when I quickly realized that I had no desire to manage social media while traveling.

I had literally just left a job where I didn't like being managed by my boss. Why would I want to start a business where I had multiple bosses I was reporting to in the form of clients?

I had been so wrapped up in trying to figure out how we could quickly create an income that I'd forgotten to ask myself the more important question of, "How do I want to be spending my time?"

The whole purpose of hitting the road was to gain more freedom and autonomy. Managing a small agency with multiple clients was unlikely to provide that type of autonomy. Instead of spending my time exploring national parks I'd be tied down to my computer all day.

Shortly after, I spoke with Alyssa and we decided the social media route wasn't for us.

The initial setback with Megaphone Social helped me come up with the idea for Hourly America. Instead of spending time managing a Facebook feed for a newly renovated wedding venue, I'd be working various jobs across the country for our very own documentary project.

The idea of building social clients made us feel like we were creating another job. The idea of Hourly America

made us feel terrified and excited.

Starting Megaphone Social would have provided us an income to travel, but I really believe it would have been a mistake. We were both already risking so much to leave our jobs, buy an RV, and hit the road.

Why would we then start a small business doing something we weren't crazy about?

To aim so small after sacrificing so big would be a travesty.

We looked at our talents and our bucket lists to help us make a plan for Hourly America. We wanted to be paid to write, make videos and do other creative work. We wanted to earn this elusive thing called "passive income" so we could spend more time together as a couple exploring America.

Chapter Six

Part 1 Summary

The period of time where you're still planning and dreaming of hitting the road can be tough. You're trying to figure out if it makes sense to hit the road. On top of your own doubts, you're likely sharing your plans with people who may or may not understand your life choices.

What to do during this stage:

Write down your best and worst case scenarios of hitting the road.

Our fears are typically worse than reality.

Ask yourself, "What kind of travel do I want to be

doing?”

Think about how you want to be spending your time on the road. Do you really want to be managing clients? Or is this the time to finally start crafting that Etsy shop you’ve always wanted?

Give yourself permission to go all in.

This is the time to be a little reckless and go for it.

Plug in to an online community (i.e. our Facebook group) that will support for you during this time.

Most people won’t really understand why you’d want to leave it all behind. Talking with groups of people who have been on the road for quite some time will be extremely encouraging and helpful.

Share some of your big fears about hitting the road with the community.

I’m willing to bet you’re not the only one who has struggled with that particular fear.

Analyze your true job security.

If you left your job and started “x business” serving “y clients”, how many people would potentially be willing to hire you? If you don’t know, start asking them

Don’t let your desire to travel get squashed.

If you're reading this book, my hope is that action will closely follow. So many people think it's a pipe dream to make an income from anywhere and travel, but it's not. You can do this.

Make a "hitting the road to-do list."

Need to pay off debt? Need to bring on five new clients? Need to save up \$10,000? Buy an RV? Make a list of everything you can possibly think of that is holding you back from hitting the road

Create a timeline.

When do you want to hit the road? What is a realistic timeline for you to accomplish everything on your to-do list? Make your departure date on the calendar and make it happen.

Plot out your first trip.

Before Alyssa and I had any of our logistics figured out, we sat down and used Pinterest and Google maps to plan our first road trip (see how to do that [here](#)). This process was inspiring. It made everything feel more real and we had something concrete (and exciting!) to work towards.

PART 2

Chapter Seven

How to Build a Financial Runway

One day in college, a venture capitalist came to speak to my entrepreneurship class.

After sharing his investing experiences and what he'd learned about building businesses, he opened it up for Q&A.

I was one of the first to raise my hand. I told him that I had started my own business, a clothing line, and that I knew I wanted to keep working on building up different companies.

I didn't see any need for staying in college to make that happen. Should I stay in school and graduate? Or should I quit wasting money and drop out of school?

What he said next has stuck with me over the years.

He said that launching a new company is all about having enough runway. If you're a plane gearing up for takeoff, you need a certain length of runway in order to build up the speed for liftoff. It's the same when building a company.

If you're bootstrapping a business, you have to make a certain amount of money to support you and your family — otherwise the business will tank.

He said because I was in college, I had an advantage in the large amount of runway that was in front of me. I could fail often and as much as I wanted while still in college and still be ahead of the game. I wasn't sacrificing my overall well-being by starting (and possibly failing) at a small business in college.

On the other side of things, if I were to drop out of college, my runway immediately becomes significantly shorter. In this type of situation, I would need to get a business up and running in a fraction of the time, because I would be supporting myself and have more responsibilities.

Determining your financial runway

This same concept of runway come up in a conversation on The RV Entrepreneur podcast with a guy named Adam Nubern.

Adam and his wife Lindsey have been traveling all over the world for the past two years and recently moved into a Casita trailer.

Adam is a CPA and after three years of saving up, they decided to cash in on their dreams of full-time travel. At first they were living on their savings, but over time, Adam and Lindsey realized they wanted to keep traveling before having kids.

To help them stay on track financially and keep working toward their goal of long-term travel, Adam came up with his own version of their “RV financial runway”.

Essentially, he calculates their daily burn rate (expenses while being on the road) and compares that to their total money on hand.

Then, he’s able to come up with an approximate number of days they will be able to continue traveling, aka their financial runway, based on their current situation.

Financial runway, noun. The number of days you can

continue traveling before running out of money **How to calculate:** Current savings amount ÷ daily expenses = number of travel days remaining before running out of money

Adam's financial runway doesn't factor in their forecasted income. The runway is simple meant to answer the question, "If no additional money is brought in, how long could we travel before running out of funds?"

Adam and Lindsey have a goal of only spending \$50/day while on the road. This means that if they had \$6,000 in their bank account, they'd have approximately a four month runway, if they brought in absolutely no additional income.

Adam and Lindsey's goal is to continuously find new clients and income opportunities so they can continue expanding their financial runway.

Without having such a formal explanation for it, Alyssa and I started our travels with a very similar idea.

We weren't quite sure how we were going to make an income in the beginning, but we knew how much money we were willing to spend before we quit and came home. We gave ourselves a \$10,000 runway for five months of travel. That was the maximum amount of our savings we

were willing to spend on travel. If we exceeded that amount, we would come home. That was our financial runway and no more.

Of course, we hoped we could create enough income-generating opportunities so we wouldn't have to spend our \$10,000 runway.

Note: \$10k was not the total amount in our bank account, but just the total amount we were willing to spend before coming home. We kept an additional safety net so that upon coming home we'd have enough in savings to live on and find a job.

During our first year on the road, we didn't even get close to spending our \$10k limit. Our tour to all fifty states cost roughly \$23,000, of which we paid a little over \$3,000 of our savings during that time. We supplemented the rest of trip's costs through sponsorships, client opportunities, guest blogging, and a small bit of crowdfunding before we left.

In other words, we found ways to hustle and increase our runway so that we continuously expand it.

The best and worst part about runway is that you are in the ultimate control of your future. If you bust your butt to

find additional income opportunities, then your runway increases. If you spend more time playing than working, your runway dries up quickly.

How to increase financial runway

Toward the end of our first month as full-time RVers, we were driving our 1994 motorhome up the Pacific Coast Highway and I remember thinking to myself, “I could do this RV life for a few more years.”

We were beginning to realize how the RV lifestyle offered this crazy amount of freedom. We now had the ability to work from literally anywhere we wanted. I was hooked—we both were hooked.

Through our Snagajob sponsor we had secured for Hourly America, we had roughly \$1,000/month of income.

We knew that over the next seven months we’d have to figure out how to bring in at least double that amount of income if we wanted to be able to finish our 50 state journey.

Here’s how we not only self-funded the majority of our 50 state road trip, but also brought in enough income-

generating opportunities to continue traveling indefinitely.

Nine ways we were able to increase our financial runway

1. Low hanging income opportunities that provided immediate income (i.e. guest blogging).

One of the first things we did after hitting the road was ask companies if we could provide written content for their blogs (and get paid for it).

Both Alyssa and I knew we wanted to eventually write books. The chance to write for other companies gave us an opportunity to hone our craft and make a little bit of extra money at the same time.

Since we were young RVers, we had a unique perspective to provide for RV related websites. We played this up while reaching out to relevant websites like Good Sam, RVShare, DoItYourselfRV, and others who were willing to pay for written content.

This strategy was semi-successful. On some level, we had not secured any income outside of our sponsor, so getting paid for creative work felt like a big win. The

downside was that guest-blogging opportunities didn't pay extremely well.

We were only making \$25-70 per guest blog and each one required a decent time investment.

Note: Once you build up more of an audience, you can charge much more for guest blogs (upwards of \$250-\$1,000 / post), but when starting out it's not a lot of money.

However, guest blogging was a great way to get started down the freelance route.

It taught us how to pitch ourselves to companies and increase our copy writing skills. We also realized that if we could write enough blogs each month to cover our phone bill, that would be a great first step towards becoming financially independent and increasing our runway.

2. Focusing on growing our most profitable skills.

While writing gave us a nice little extra income boost in the beginning, we quickly realized that we could make much more money through our newfound video skills.

In general video production pays much better than writing. However, it also takes more technical skills, equipment and know-how to get started (hence why you

can charge more).

During our first year on the road we were filming 3-4 days per week as I worked various jobs across the country. Within nine months of Youtube tutorials, countless film days, networking at events across the country, and screwing up a bunch — we were able to land our first paying client. \$1,000 for a half day shoot. It felt like so much money!

By continuously honing our film skills, it allowed us to charge more and work less on the road.

Example: A typical day of shooting video for Alyssa and I (at the time of writing this) pays \$1,000. The average guest blog pays roughly \$50-\$150 and takes 3-4 hours per post. This means that on the higher end we could make \$300 for a full day of writing blog or \$1,000 for a full day of shooting video.

3. Building a remote community.

While we were leaving behind most of our friends in Austin, we found ways to constantly network while on the road at conferences or workshops.

If we noticed an event that was happening while we

were going to be in the area, we'd reach out and see if we could drop in.

In addition to in-person events, we've also met a lot of full-time travelers through Instagram. Interacting with travelers on social media has been a great way to cultivate online relationships which eventually lead to a offline relationships (or a stout drink around a campfire in a national park).

Continuing to build up our community while on the road has led to a lot of meaningful projects and business collaborations.

4. Decreasing our spending on the road and buying a used RV.

During our more frugal months of travel, we've spent less than \$2,000 a month while full-time RVing (this is with no RV payment).

Increasing runway also means cutting back on irrelevant costs and travel expenses. One of the biggest perks of the RV lifestyle is that you have more control over how much you spend on a month to month basis. If you need to limit expenditures on month you can find more

free camping opportunities and travel slowly (to use less gas).

This is much more difficult to do when you're locked into some kind of apartment lease or mortgage.

Also, our first RV we bought used for \$11,500. Not having to pay a monthly RV payment for our first year and a half on the road was huge and allowed us to travel extremely inexpensive and not have to worry about additional payments.

5. Producing free work to get experience and build a portfolio.

Since Alyssa and I were newbies to film, we were constantly pitching our film services for free.

While driving the RV through Nashville, Tennessee we noticed that one of our favorite authors was going to be hosting a small two day workshop. We reached out to him and asked if he'd be interested in having us come in and film a free promo for his event. He was thrilled and said, "Absolutely".

While we didn't get paid for the event, we were both able to sit in on his \$1,000 workshop for free. We also were

able to befriend a lot of the attendees and make several new friends.

Months later, one of the workshop attendees hired us for our first paid film gig. Another attendee from the event designed this book cover.

Giving away our services for free while we were still getting our business off the ground helped give us unique opportunities, valuable experience, and meaningful connections that led to our first clients.

6. Creating regular content via our blogs and podcast.

One of the best ways we've been able to attract new video production clients and travel sponsors has been creating consistent content online. Over two years and a half years of travel Alyssa and I have published over 300 blog posts on our personal blogs, 30 podcasts, a feature length documentary, and nearly 100 guest blogs on other websites.

Creating and pushing content has been a big priority for us since we hit the road. Why? Simple. It helps create inbound opportunities for our film business. I'll explain.

A few weeks ago I received an email from a guy named

Craig. Craig was reaching out to me to ask about hiring Alyssa and I to help him film and launch an online educational course (the majority of production work that we do). Naturally, the first thing I did was Google Craig.

As it turns out, Craig is a well established writer for ESPN and is super well known within the NHL community (that's hockey for all you southerners). After a few minutes of research on Craig, I was floored that he would reach out to me to inquire about hiring us for a course.

I called him and we talked for a few minutes. He was interested in launching a course on navigating a career within the sports management industry. "There just aren't a lot of resources out there that teach young professionals how to get started in this industry and I'd like to provide one."

"I'm in," I told him.

Before getting off the phone I asked him how he heard about us, because Alyssa and I don't have a dedicated website touting our film services. Up until this point, all of our production work has been referrals from previous customers or a simple "Work with me" page on my blog.

“I have a 35 foot Winnebago and am a fan of your podcast, one that hasn’t been updated in a couple weeks by the way.”

What?!

I was floored that Craig, an established sports journalist, not only listened to my podcast but actually was such an avid listener that he realized I was behind my posting schedule. Oops.

This is an example of how creating consistent content has helped us attract clients for our business. Since I mention the kind of work we do on our blog and my podcast, it has helped attract new clientele like Craig.

7. Learning how to do work that scales.

A tweet is gone in second. The average life of an Instagram post is a little longer, maybe half a day. A Facebook post will last a day or so, depending on how many people engage with it.

However, a well written blog with SEO, podcast episode or Youtube video can live on for years.

One of the best things we’ve done since hitting the road has been learning how to do work that scales.

Last year the free course I created on how to travel America on \$2k/month has been downloaded by over 4,000 people. Someone visits my website, signs up for the course and then receives seven straight days of emails from me.

New readers are becoming acquainted with my content and receiving value while I'm not actively working. This course works for me while I'm not working (and is easy to set up using an email marketing provider like ConvertKit).

Automating parts of our business has helped free up more time to focus on client projects, travel, or spending time with each other.

8. Standing out.

This sounds generic, but standing out against the crowd has greatly helped us generate additional opportunities and expand our financial runway.

When we hit the road in 2014, there were plenty of other young couples traveling full-time in an RV, but none of them working a job in all 50 states during their first year of marriage and making a film.

This attracted media attention from organizations like

CNN, People Magazine, Fox and Friends Morning Show, CBS and many others.

As a result, we had more inbound opportunities come our way during Hourly America. People would see us on a news network and reach out to offer us a job or free place to stay.

This wouldn't have happened if we tried to go down the same path as everyone else.

9. Work ridiculously hard.

It goes without saying, but during our first two years on the road we didn't spend every second in national parks soaking up the sun and going on extensive hikes.

We busted our butts, were constantly seeking new opportunities, writing new blogs, and honing our film skills —sometimes to the point of exhaustion.

I'd like to think that we are learning more of a work-life balance, but I would be delusional if I thought we really had one. We work way more than we play.

However, being on the road we at least try to work in beautiful locations, which makes our days much more enjoyable. Then, when we do take time off we can easily

explore new and exciting places.

One argument against financial runway.

The flip-side of focusing on creating financial runway is staying put in a job for several years, saving up money, and then hitting the road when money is no longer an issue.

In fact, this is the standard route of people you see traveling the country in an RV.

The argument could be made that if you needed to hustle on extending a financial runway, should you even be traveling? Shouldn't you just be saving up your money and then hit the road when you're better off?

This question could go either way depending on your background and work experience, but personally I lean towards no.

Here's why:

By striking out on our own, we've been able to continuously build out a niche of work for ourselves while traveling the country as a newly married couple. No matter what, during our early 20s, we would be working hard to pay the bills and slowly increasing our income.

By choosing to live in an RV and work from the road, we simply leveraged our generation's access to technology and took more control of our future.

The experience we've gathered in over two years of living on the road could be applied to a myriad of jobs and opportunities, should we ever need to get another one (I.e we have some form of job security).

Also, if we somehow ran out of money and had to move back home and start over, we'd be way ahead of the people who graduated from college and stayed in the same entry level job for two years.

During that same period of time, we've self-funded a road trip to all 50 states, learned the skills of filmmaking (and actually made our first one), built a niche client-based film business, spoken to fortune 500 companies, written a book, and learned how to motivate ourselves enough to accomplish work while camping out in the mountains with limited wi-fi.

That's a serious feat.

From the view of Instagram, it might look like we're just driving around the country aimlessly (and that's what plenty of people have probably thought when casually

hearing about our lives). But we're not, we're intentionally finding new and creative ways to continue working from the road.

Growing a financial runway is counter-intuitive advice for many. Most people take the approach of saving up for 30-40 years before hitting the road in an RV.

It seems scary to think about starting with a savings account (aka runway) and then working to build up financial opportunities and freelance work that could eventually go dry.

However, these are the same hurdles every startup company or freelancer faces early on, whether they are in an RV, home, or cowering space in any given city.

Focusing on runway forces you to do the work that matters. Finding new clients, making more sales, and spending less money so you can continue going on new adventures.

Chapter Eight

Why Kevin Holesh Chose a Fifth Wheel

Over Silicon Valley

Twenty years ago people live in an RV for one of two reasons:

1. They were retired and traveling around the country.
2. They couldn't afford anything else.

It was rare—almost impossible—to find anyone who was living in an RV full-time who didn't fit one of the above criteria. As technology and the internet have moved us forward, a new generation of RVers like Kevin Holesh have emerged.

Kevin is an app developer who founded the Moment App.

Moment is an app that tracks how much time you spend on your phone, how many times you pick it up, and how much time you spend staring at the screen (which if you're anything like me, is a shockingly high number). Moment has been downloaded over 3 million times from people all over the world.

Kevin not only earns a full-time income through selling his app, but his Moment app is literally helping millions of people be more intentional about how they spend the time on their phone. We live in a culture of people who are addicted to their iPhone; Kevin's app forces you to realize the exact amount of time you spend on your phone, allows you to create daily limits, and even coaches you on how to spend less time on your phone.

Kevin is tackling a huge need in our country's economy, and people have noticed. The Moment app has been featured on Good Morning America, The New York Times, TechCrunch, BuzzFeed, USA Today, Fast Company, Men's Journal, Huffington Post, and many more.

Freedom over funding

After the success of Kevin's Moment app, he's had numerous opportunities to pitch investors and raise money. He could easily take on several investors and try to reach a billion users, but "What's the point?" He told me.

"[Moment] supports me and my family and I get to work on what I want to do. I didn't like the start up environment—it was too high pressure. I like to be my own boss and not worry about metrics."

Instead of taking on additional funding to grow his user base and monetize more, Kevin doubled down on what he's good at — supporting his current users and making Moment better.

He wakes up each morning and provides his own customer support. In the afternoons when he's not walking his dogs around various campgrounds, he works on improving the app and adding new features. He keeps his current customers happy. And in doing so, has created a life where he and his wife Mandy can travel full-time in their fifth wheel.

In meeting people like Kevin, I can see what the new

generation of nomadic entrepreneurs will look like: tech-savvy individuals who value freedom and flexibility over money.

It's not that Kevin doesn't want to make money—he does—but not at the expense of his freedom. He can provide enough value and solve enough problems from his RV, so he doesn't need the additional funding that would come with strings attached.

But how did he get to this point?

We hear about app developers all the time who “hit it big” with a game like Angry Birds or Candy Crush. How feasible is it to actually launch one of these apps or products that provide a full-time income.

Not incredibly feasible, at least on your first try. However, with each new app you build the chances will likely increase.

Moment was actually Kevin's tenth app he created. All of the ones that came before brought in a little bit of income, but nothing to call home about.

During our interview, Kevin shared with me what he believed helped to set him apart and make Moment successful. He also shared his advice for anyone who is

working towards building something of their own.

1. Grow your skills and get paid at the same time.

While developing the Moment App (and his previous nine apps), Kevin did a lot of freelance development projects. Taking on clients while building out his own apps gave Kevin a chance to grow his skills in development and fail at the same time.

Kevin was extending his financial runway by being able to pay his bills and not giving up on his dream of building a successful app.

Speaking from experience, it's never easy to balance client work and focus on your own projects. This process is more difficult and takes longer than seeking out funding, because you have to split time up between your own work (aka what you're passionate about) and building something for someone else.

The benefit to this approach is that you're growing your skills and portfolio while getting paid at the same time.

Also, this process minimized the risk for Kevin. He didn't need to worry about any of his apps immediately producing income because he still had his client work to fall back on. Once Moment took off, he was able to easily

scale back on his client work and focus on growing his own product.

2. Don't just develop one app (or product) and then quit.

Like most people, Kevin realized that developing iPhone apps is a mix of talent and luck. The more talent he gained by creating various apps, the luckier he would get.

Kevin said that he's seen so many developers develop one app and quit. It's easy to think you're not cut out to be a developer after launching one app and failing.

However, it's also impractical to think that you're going to hit it big with your first app. Give yourself at least 10 (or 20) tries before you call it quits.

3. Focus on solving a real problem.

Some of the best apps and products are from people who decided to solve their own problem. With 6 billion people on the Earth, it's likely that you aren't the only person who is struggling with something.

Kevin realized that he and his wife, Mandy, would spend hours in the same room without ever talking to each other. They'd sit on their phones for hours without having any quality time. This was the problem Kevin

aimed to solve when we started developing Moment.

Kevin installed the app on Mandy's phone without her knowing it (probably a mistake). When Mandy hit her daily limit, a crazy siren went off and it scared her. Kevin then had to explain Moment App and likely ask a bit of forgiveness from Mandy.

However, in the process of solving his and Mandy's excessive iPhone usage, he has also helped millions of people with theirs as well.

Once Moment went live, it immediately took off and became a viral hit being covered by every major news outlet.

Sometimes solving your own pain point can also solve the same issue for others.

4. Don't give a \$%*! about failing.

Kevin said that in the early stages of his development career he was extremely self conscious about his app failures. But then he realized that every failed project was something he could add to his portfolio.

Clients want to see the work you've done. Each new failure added another piece of artwork that he could showcase in the "look what I've done" folder.

Clients can be weary if you don't have a lot of work to point towards. Sometimes work that isn't wildly successful can still help you land higher paying gigs. Hence, it's not a failure but actually will help you raise your rates.

5. Quit overthinking and just start doing it.

Build your first app. Even if it makes no money. Even if it looks clunky and doesn't solve a huge need. Even if your mom is the only one who downloads it.

Having some type of product, website, or app that you've built, shows potential clients that you're gung-ho about your craft and motivated to accomplish your goals.

Why Kevin Chose a Fifth Wheel Over Silicon Valley

Technically, Kevin is from Pittsburgh, but Silicon Valley sounds much better for the name of this chapter.

Kevin chose a fifth wheel over Silicon Valley for his company because he wanted freedom. He didn't care about the conventional methods of investing money in a start up to reach crazy excessive amounts of users.

That may be 99% of the start-up world's goals, but not his.

His dream is to travel around the country with his wife Mandy, their cat, and two dogs. His dream is to be able to live debt free and be his own boss every day. His dream is being able to build a great product from his fifth wheel because his lifestyle enables him to see America without sacrificing his entrepreneurial dreams.

Chapter Nine

Don't Guess: A Surefire Way to Validate That Customers Will Give You Money (Before Creating Anything)

One reason (amongst many) that new businesses fail is a lack of validation. People create random products, websites, and services that nobody asked for or cared about.

A few years ago, a fellow RVer named Nick made the mistake of not validating his business idea before moving his family's entire life on the road.

Nick and his wife Shae were planning their transition to

living on the road in an Airstream. With a newborn baby and another on the way, they felt the window of travel closing rapidly and had decided to pack up their lives and go see America.

To plan their departure, they sat down and came up with a list of all the barriers that were holding them back from hitting the road. They wrote down everything they could think of -- buying an RV (preferably Airstream), truck to tow it with, paying off student debt, ramping up Nick's online business, etc.

Nick's online business at the time was veggiemealmaker.com. Nick sold vegetarian and vegan meal plans through PDF downloads and shopping lists. At the time, Nick's business was only bringing in a few hundred dollars each month. In order for them to travel full-time, Veggie Meal-Maker had to significantly increase its monthly revenue.

To grow Veggie Meal-Maker, Nick wanted to build a software that automatically generates your meal plans for you. His new software would be similar to the PDF downloads he was already selling, but it would be cleaner, automated, and he could charge a higher premium.

During the time of a year and a half, Nick focused on building out this software while he and Shae paid off debt, bought an Airstream and planned their new adventure. Finally, the time came for Shae to leave her job as a teacher and the family to hit the road.

Shortly after the move into the RV, Nick launched the new software on Veggie Meal-Maker and waited for his business to take off. Except it didn't. The Veggie Meal-Maker software was supposed to be their sole source of income and it was a complete flop.

Nick's mistake was that he assumed his business would grow if he could automate his PDF's and turn them into an interactive software. He didn't ask customers to pre-buy the software or interview them on how many would purchase. He just assumed it would work.

This is one of the biggest mistakes any entrepreneur can make when launching something new. Luckily, there are methods to validate any new business idea before spending a lot of time and money invested.

A \$300k Kickstarter Validation: How to Be 100% Confident People Will Buy Your Future Product or

Service

A few months ago I met a girl named Cathryn who successfully launched a new journal called the Self Journal.

The goal of the journal is to help you align day-to-day tasks with your larger life goals. Cathryn had been shipping journals out for only two months, but already earned over \$300k in sales. What?!

Cathryn wasn't any kind of celebrity figure, so how was she able to have such huge customer base so early?

I probed and asked her about her journal launch.

Also, before we go any further, I have to tell you something about Cathryn.

She's not an RVer. In fact, she lives in a very small apartment in New York City. Since her apartment is likely smaller than the square footage of our Winnebago Brave, I've decided to include her story in this book.

Cathryn is a designer. A year ago she had the idea for creating the self journal. She wanted to create a beautiful journal that helped people accomplish their goals. Instead of going out and immediately building the journal, she started a blog focused on productivity and goal setting.

Over several months Cathryn published blogs around how to achieve your goals using certain organization methods (I.e what she planned on building into her journal). As a driven, well organized, and creative person who had successfully launched several projects of her own, she was a perfect candidate to teach people unique ways to reach their goals.

Several months of guest blogging on relevant blogs, providing free content to new readers, and gaining momentum on her blog, and Cathryn had built up an email list of 3,000 followers.

Everyone who followed her blog had some level of interest in goal setting. Best of all, they looked to Cathryn for guidance on the subject.

Cathryn decided it was time to test the idea for her journal. Using Alibaba, she sourced manufacturers in China, searching for the best candidate to produce her new journal. She wanted something simple and beautiful, something people would be inspired to use each day.

After finding a manufacturer, she ordered one sample journal. A few weeks later, the journal showed up. Using her awesome design skills and knowledge on goal-setting,

Cathryn had created a journal that walked you step-by-step through a large goal.

People could write down a goal in the beginning of their journal and each day would track their progress toward that goal.

It seemed like a great idea and like customers would be interested, but it's hard to be sure until money is exchanged.

Cathryn set up a Kickstarter to launch her journal. She decided that if she could sell \$200k worth of product during the Kickstarter, the Self Journal would be validated as a business worth pursuing.

The Self Journal raised over \$300k during its launch.

While Kathryn's journal received a good deal of press during this time, it was her initial 3,000 email subscribers that helped provide the initial jolt of support. Kathryn had created the ideal journal for the goal setting community she built through her blog.

Most importantly, she was able to validate the Self Journal without spending a significant amount of resources up front.

What we can learn from Cathryn's launch:

1. You don't have to spend a lot of money to validate whether or not people will buy something
2. By leveraging a blog, we can build a community of people who are passionate about a product we want to build.
3. Instead of guessing about which product features would be relevant, we can simply ask prospective customers (I.e Cathryn could ask her followers what they might want in a journal).

Why It's Crucial to Define Validation for Any Project

Without a clear definition for validation, we have no idea whether or not to keep pursuing an idea. Because we're often too over attached to ideas, can end up wasting too much time on ideas that won't work (just like Nick's Veggie-Meal Maker software).

Before I start any new project, I define what validation means for that specific project. For this book, if I could sell 50 pre-orders with one email to my email list, it validated I should release it (it did).

Something I've learned about validating ideas is that

you never feel quite ready before asking a customer for feedback.

I always feel like I'm sharing something while it's in infancy. Most companies' first product is extremely minimal. Most blogs at first launch are ugly. Sometimes validation means asking someone for their feedback and other times it can mean asking for money.

Either way, validating ideas early on can make all the difference.

Here are a few ways to validate ideas early on.

1. Survey your readers.

Have you started your blog? Do you have a few hundred followers? Write a short survey, one that will take less than five minutes to answer, and validate your idea based on their answers.

Example:

Would you buy a book about starting a business in an RV?

A) Yes

B) No

If you answered yes to the question above, how much would you pay for this ebook?

A) \$0

B) \$5

C) \$15

D) Heath, you're so awesome I'd give you all my money.

2. Find other people doing the same thing.

No matter what the business idea is, it's almost guaranteed that someone else has done it too. I know of at least two other people who have worked a job in each state.

When you find other people doing the same thing as you, you don't have to necessarily think of them as competition. Think of them as validating that the market wants what you're offering.

If you're trying to write a book or build a product and there is nothing like it on the market, that's typically not a good sign (unless you're Elon Musk and you're building

an all electric rocket or something, then you can do whatever you want).

3. Ask for pre-orders, pre-subscriptions, or pre-purchase of whatever you're offering.

This is the scariest way to validate your idea.

When I sent my first email promoting this book and asking for pre-orders, I was sweating bullets. However, if people are willing to pay for something they've never seen, you've created enough trust with your audience to sell your product.

With this book, I only allowed 50 pre-orders to validate my book idea. If I didn't hit 50, their money would be refunded and I wouldn't waste my time writing this book.

This is the beauty in validation. It saves you time, money, and the stress of not knowing if your product will make you money or not.

Validation doesn't necessarily mean your first product will succeed. Like any product, there will have to be beta tests, early customer fails, and things that break. But without finding simple ways to validate ideas early on, we're just wasting time.

Chapter Ten

Part 2 Summary

8 Ways to Increase Financial Runway

- Focus on low- hanging income opportunities that provide immediate income.
- Focus on growing most profitable skills.
- Build a remote /online community.
- Decrease spending on the road /buy used.
- Produce free work to get experience and build portfolio.
- Create regular content via our blogs and social channels.
- Learn how to do work that scales.
- Stand out.

Kevin Holesh' Advice On Starting Something of Your Own

- Grow your skills and get paid at the same time.
- Don't just develop one app (or product) and then quit.
- #3 Focus on solving a real problem.
- Don't give a \$%*! about failing.
- Quit overthinking and just start doing it.

Validating a Product or Business Idea

- Survey readers, followers, friends or prospective customers.
- Find other people doing the same thing.
- Ask for pre-orders, pre-subscriptions, or pre-purchase of whatever you're offering.

PART 3

Chapter Eleven

7 Ways to Find Your First Client

One of the most challenging parts of starting any new business is finding the first customer. The first customer is the one willing to bet on you and your business. They are the early adopters who take a risk to bet on what you have to offer.

When Alyssa and I tried to get Megaphone Social, our social media company, off the ground, I remember sitting around and trying to figure out how we could get our first few client.

I was frustrated and at a bit of a loss. I knew I can find small businesses to pay us for this service, but where do I start and what's the right way to pitch them? How do I get

them to actually pay me for my service?

These were just a couple of the questions that went through my head during this time. I spun my wheels for awhile before finally finding our first client, the recently converted wedding venue that I mentioned earlier in the book.

During this time I reached out to dozens of small businesses in Austin with little to no luck and progress felt incredibly slow. We were working uphill to get this client-based business started.

Ultimately, after fighting tooth and nail for that first check, we decided to not pursue client #2 and opted for spending our first year on the road making a sponsored documentary instead.

Flash forward quite some time and we've now been self-employed for well over two years doing video production work.

We've competed video projects for clients all over the country doing online course videos, live streams, weddings, speaking reels, workshops, and a multitude of others videos.

And, unlike Megaphone Social, we've never put a lot of

effort into marketing or cold outreach to find our production clients. Believe it or not, we don't even have a dedicated website for our company (just a Work With Us page on our blog). After we found our first client, each new client that comes along finds us through referrals, our personal network, or from the blog/podcast.

Before you can start scaling your business, you have to face the insurmountable task of finding the first client.

Here's what I've learned during our second time around of launching a client business.

1. Let prospective clients know you're just getting started.

Since you're trying to land your first client, it's smart to just let them know you're new to the business.

Prospective clients can tell if you're lying to them and even if they don't, it's never a good idea to exaggerate work history. After Hourly America, Alyssa and I produced our first online video course for a client. Since it was our first one, we were paid next to nothing.

However, he was okay with hiring us because we were within his budget and trusted we'd work hard to pull it off. We were also okay with being paid little because we were getting paid to learn a profitable skill. We could learn how to create, film, and launch with him and now provide that service for others.

After getting that initial experience, we've been able to gradually raise the prices with each new client.

2. Offer a free 30 day trial of your services.

Bryanna Royal travels full-time with her four kids, two dogs and husband while she runs a virtual assistant business from the road. Her family has been on the road now for a little over two years. When they initially hit the road, it was supposed to be a one year trial (but we all know how that goes).

Once they fell in love with RVing, they needed to find more ways to increase their income. Bryanna wanted to start a business that was 100% remote and flexible. After all, with four kids she wanted to spend as much time with her family as possible. She did some research and discovered the virtual assistant world. Being a virtual

assistant she could work from anywhere at anytime.

If you don't know, a virtual assistant is a remote assistant that can handle any online tasks. Virtual assistant tasks range from posting on social media, scheduling meetings, sending follow up emails, cold sales outreach, and more. It's a great, inexpensive option for small business or entrepreneurs who need or want an office assistant.

Bryanna enrolled in an online course on how to become a virtual assistant and within a short time she was ready to find her first client. Having zero experience, she reached out to her personal network and found a small business owner who was willing to give her chance.

To sweeten the deal, she offered up her services for free for 30 days. She'd take care of scheduling meetings and social media for the business, and if all went well during the trial the business owner could be an ongoing client.

The 30 day trial was a hit and within a short period of time she was able to get a referral to another business owner and continue growing her business.

3. Invest in your skills (even if that means working for free).

Before Alyssa and I landed our first video production client, we spent nine months learning everything we possibly could about creating good video. We offered up our film services for free on multiple occasions in order to network and grow our portfolio.

This gave us the confidence to be able to pitch prospective clients and know we had the skills to deliver value.

4. Ask yourself the hard questions about your ideal client.

Who exactly is your ideal client and what problem can you solve for them? **Be specific as possible.**

For example, Bryanna's ideal client could be a male software business owner between the age of 35-50 whose company was growing rapidly and could use help getting administrative tasks completed (just making this up). The point is, the more narrow the target client in the beginning, the better.

The problem Bryanna was solving for her client? The business owner is overwhelmed by menial tasks that distract from running the actual business. Bryanna will help off load those tasks so you can focus on the work that

matters.

Be specific. Don't tell people you have good communication skills or you're a people person. Who cares? Show your client how you can give them back their time, sanity, profit margins, or whatever. Solve a real problem and you'll have no trouble bringing on clients.

5. Communicate clearly in your outreach.

One email that I hate receiving more than anything: "I'm looking to start RVing. Any advice is appreciated. Thanks!"

This is the worst email. Why? Because it shows several things. One, you're extremely unthoughtful. Second, I'm not going to sit and try to guess what it is you need. Third, thanks for wasting my time. If you have a specific question, then ask it.

General emails are the worst, followed closely by insanely long emails (sorry, done with tangent).

If you're reaching out to a perspective client, be specific and thoughtful in your outreach. If you send a template email out to a dozen potential clients, you likely won't get any responses. Good communication to potential clients is

personable, clear, and doesn't leave them with too many questions.

Here is an example of an email I sent to a popular RV blogger who I wanted to interview on my podcast. While I wasn't pitching him on being a client, the method is almost identical.

"Hey Mike!

I've been a quiet follower of yours for quite some time. (A sincere compliment goes a long way)

My wife, Alyssa, and I have been on the road now for a little over two-and-a-half years. At 25 years old we are still very much on the young end of RVers but have also had a blast making friends of all walks of life in this lifestyle.

From 2014-15 we actually traveled to all 50 states filming a documentary called Hourly America where I worked an hourly job in all 50 states. We recently premiered that film in Portland and Austin over the past couple weeks. (A nice little social proof that let's Mike know I'm not a crazy person and we have something in common. Also, try to show some

personality here and not be stiff.)

The reason I'm reaching out: I'd love to potentially interview you on a podcast I launched earlier this year called The RV Entrepreneur. (Every time I send a cold email I always put "The reason I'm reaching out is [insert reason here]." I typically will put this on its own line so if the reader is skimming the email, the ask is right there in plain sight.)

RV Entrepreneur is a weekly podcast where I interview people who live in RVs full-time and run some kind of remote business from the road. Essentially, after our first year of traveling full-time in an RV we realized, "Hey, this is pretty fun and we want to continue the lifestyle." So we continued building up our video production business from the road, upgraded RVs, and kept moving along. (Pitch of my "product", aka my podcast)

The reason I started the podcast is to be a resource for other folks who are looking to make the transition into living in an RV but would like some guidance/inspiration from people who are earning incomes while traveling full-time. A few of my recent guests have been the RVGeeks, Technomadia, and Kevin Holesh (Founder of The Moment App). (More social proof. Hey! I'm not a weirdo, other people have been on my podcast as well.)

I think it would be a lot of fun to dive into your transition from journalism into full-time travel and share how you've built up Roadtreking as a really popular blog/resource in this space. (Again, bring it back to the main call to action and I explain WHY I'm reaching out to him. This is super important. Clients always will want to know why you are reaching out to them. Why are they special? Why are they unique? Why is it more about THEM than it is about you. Hint: It's always about them.)

Look forward to meeting you Mike!

Heath"

Again, I wasn't pitching Mike to become a client. However, it's a very similar style of community. I still have to clearly outline the email, make a clear ask, and share why it would be relevant and of value for him to be on my podcast.

If nothing else, make sure you draw a clear line between what you're offering and how it can solve their need.

6. Create a website or work with me page that explains your services.

An easy way for prospective customers to learn more about your services is to have a simple link in your email signature that takes them to your website. On your website, you can write out a more thorough about section and explain more in-depth what problem you solve for clients.

For us, our blog acts as our business card. It shows that we are professionals, that we've written books, filmed a movie, and it even tells them personal stories from our life on the road. In this way, readers can get a feel for our personalities and skills before they even meet us. In 2016, having some sort of blog or website is a necessity for anyone starting a business.

7. Tell EVERYONE you know that you're starting up a business and that you're looking for your first client.

With Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and all the social medias, it's easy to forget who we know and it's *impossible* to know who our friends know.

Don't make the mistake of forgetting to ask your closest friends and network if they know anyone who fits the bill

for your ideal client. This is often the best place to start. My first consulting gig was my college professor's friend. You never know who might be looking for someone just like you until you ask.

There's a few easy ways to do this:

- Post a status or tweet about your new business asking if anyone needs your service.
- Personally email or message 100 people (who you already know) to let them know about your company.
- Tell your mom. Depending on your age, telling your mom that you're starting your own company and moving into an RV is pretty daunting. But your mom will likely be your #1 fan and tell everyone she knows about your new business.

Don't get tripped up in all the details.

It's easy to sit around and overthink during this phase of the business. The key is to get in front of potential customers as early as possible and get the one thing more valuable than money: feedback.

Relentlessly seek out feedback from the first person

willing to take a bet and hire you. Analyze their pain points and learn how they describe their problem.

If there's anything I've learned during the short phase of my life in doing client work, it's to do a damn good job. Nothing much else matters if you don't show up and provide more value than they are expecting.

I always try to provide more value than I'm being paid for and it's consistently lead to the next client. Sometimes, that value is just an unexpected surprise. When we had a client fly across the country to do a shoot with his, we delivered a hand written card to her hotel room with some goodies. Recently on a shoot in Portland, we offered to shoot a free promo video that wasn't in our scope of work. Typically, this is something we'd charge \$1,500-\$2,000 for, but delivering this for free was our way of providing more than the expected amount of value.

As a result, our clients have given us raving testimonials that help us continuously grow our business.

Chapter Twelve

Finding the Perfect Customer: What I Learned After Working 50 Jobs Across the Country

How I Increased My Cold Outreach Success to 50% During Hourly America

One of the most difficult parts of starting any business is finding the right customer.

What do they need? Who are they? Where can you find them online? What kind of forums or websites do they hang out on? What's the best way to contact them and

what do you say?

These are some of the questions I had when we first started Hourly America.

How the heck was I going to find 50 different companies to hire me?

Luckily, Snagajob would help us find 30% of our jobs, according to our sponsor agreement, using their job board connections. After we hit the road, Snagajob had no problem in helping me my first couple jobs at a Buffalo Wild Wings and a martial arts dojo.

However, when we arrived in Las Vegas for our third stop, it was time for me to find a job on my own. I freaked out. I had no idea how to approach a company. Should I call or email? What would I say?

“Yes, hi... is there a manager available? Oh, you’re the manager? Okay, my name is Heath and I was wondering if you guys were hiring..mmhmm...Well, I’m doing a project we’re I’m trying to work a different job in every state for one day only... and uh...”

Yes, my first few calls were that painfully awkward. I had no idea what kind of job I was hoping to get and I spent a week calling and emailing businesses in Las Vegas

with no luck.

Several rejections later, I was tired of calling people who clearly didn't understand what we were doing. Snagajob eventually had to come to the rescue and helped me find a job as a lifeguard.

However, after seven months of doing the same kind of outreach to businesses across the country, I figured out a system that left me with only 1-2 rejections per city / town. I actually found a way to narrow down my "customer" (businesses who hire me for the day) into truly the absolute best fit possible.

These "customers" are businesses who I would cold call and ask if I could work for them for one day's shift, film them, and interview their employees. Even with such a crazy request, I was able to get to the point where I only had to make a couple of these phone calls before landing a job (unlike my embarrassing stint in Vegas).

Here was my approach:

- Go to Facebook and search for "Businesses in (insert name of town or city).
- Narrow search results based on Facebook reviews.
- Narrow results even more based on level of activity

and how attractive/hip their brand is (yes, seriously).

- Once I've narrowed the field, I look through and see who is the most active on social media and has a very genuine, fun online voice.
- Eliminate any businesses that look boring or stagnant.
- With remaining choices, I explore their website to look for a core value or business mission that resonates with me.
- Usually only left with a few options at this point.
- Call them before or after hours and leave a voicemail.
- Send follow up email with links and info about our documentary and links to blogs I'd written about previous jobs.

It took me almost all of six months to refine this method enough to where it worked almost every time. In our final few states like Florida and Mississippi, I only made one call and secured a job. Let's break down the reasoning behind my strategy and why I think it was so successful.

Why do a Facebook search for businesses, instead of a Google search?

A couple reasons.

First, Facebook has an infinite scroll when searching for businesses that doesn't force me to click an arrow every ten business names. Believe it or not when you search through hundreds of businesses at a time, this makes a big difference.

Second, the Facebook algorithm brings up more relevant businesses based on reviews and location than I've had luck with on Google (who would have thought?).

What does being active on social media have to do hiring me for a day?

Businesses that have a fun and engaging online presence often have a younger and more open-minded belief system. They not only see the value in connecting with customers online, but are likely see the value in our documentary project because they understand the importance of social media.

Plus, if they are active on social media, chances are they spend time behind the computer a couple times a day. This meant they would be more likely to see my email and make a quick decision.

Why call before or after hours to leave a voicemail?

This isn't necessarily the best tactic for everyone, but for me it proved extremely effective. My message or pitch, if you will, is so unique and "out there" that sometimes it's hard to comprehend in a short phone call. Plus, small business owners (my target audience) are busy during office hours serving their customers and don't often have the time to sit on the phone and talk with a crazy redhead.

By calling after hours, I could leave them a detailed message on the phone and then follow up via email. This way, they don't feel pressure to give me an answer right away (like they would on the phone). They could also have time to look up our website, read all about us, and get to know who we are before agreeing to let us join them for a day.

Why find a core business mission that resonates with me?

I searched for businesses with a message that resonates with me because I want to be real with businesses when I tell them *why* I want to work with them for the day.

For example, the job I worked in Florida was at a

business called New Scooters for Less in Gainesville. They have 12 core values and their most important one is called “Creating the Ultimate Customer Experience.”

They have a goal to blow away new scooter owners through their customer service. They hide balloons in new scooter purchases, take pictures with customers, and sing when someone comes into the store. It’s awesome.

I immediately knew this was something I wanted to be involved in, so I made sure to tell them “The Ultimate Customer Experience” was the reason why I wanted to work for them. It worked and I had an awesome day of work with their team because I chose a business with a mission I believed in, not just any random company.

I never would’ve imagined that working a different hourly wage job in all 50 states would teach me such a valuable lesson about finding the right customer, but it certainly has.

When first getting started, I found myself constantly getting discouraged by all the no’s. However, I was only getting so many no’s because I was reaching out to anybody and everybody. It took a few months of learning what types of businesses were right for me, but I

eventually created a system that helped me land a job with very little rejection. This process saved me hours of time and made me realize the value of finding the perfect customer.

My process may not be the right process for your business, but creating your own system for finding qualified customers is key to developing your business.

Key takeaways from my experience pitching employers across America (as relates to finding the right customer)

- You'll never know your ideal customer until you start pitching them (with each one you gain more understanding).
- The more you pitch, the faster you'll gain understanding of what works and what doesn't.
- The enemy of finding the right customer is blatantly cold calling and mass emailing "anyone and everyone". This doesn't work. You're not a telemarketer. Be strategic.
- Constantly tweak the delivery and pitch until you find what works.

Chapter Thirteen

Developing Emotional Runway: How Much

Do You Want it?

I left a job in software sales because I didn't like sales. But in hindsight, it wasn't really because I didn't like sales. It was really because I didn't like people telling me what to do all day and how to sell. Having to read a scripted message to sell a SaaS product? No thanks.

Anyway, for several months last year I worked alongside one of the most sought after thought leaders on the subject of rejection — Jia Jiang. Jia has a really incredible story that starts with him getting rejected by a venture capitalist for an investment, realizing he is

terrified of rejection, and then creating a 100-day experiment where he intentionally gets rejected so that he can conquer his fear. He recorded the 100 day experiment on Youtube, it of course went viral, he spoke at TedX and has one of the most viewed talks ever. Since, Jia has done numerous studies and collaborations with top minds like Google, Stanford, Yale, and others to conduct more research on rejection.

One of the most valuable things I learned while working alongside Jia (other than how to conquer my own fears of rejection) was something called emotional runway. Emotional runway—as defined by Jia—is the amount of no’s you’re willing endure before giving up on a goal. It’s similar to the financial runway we talked about earlier, but instead of running out of money, you run out of emotional bandwidth.

Example: Jia wanted to launch a podcast interviewing top Fortune 500 executives on their “rejection journey” (aka how and why they were rejected in their business lives). Before beginning his outreach, he asked himself how many no’s he’d be willing to endure from Fortune 500 CEOs before he gave up. In other words, how

many no's would he listen to before calling this project a wash. His answer? 50. If he reached out to 50 CEOs and one said yes, then it would be worth it and he'd keep going. If he reached out to 50 without receiving a single yes, then that was his entire emotional runway. It wasn't worth more than 50 no's.

Guess what? He got 50 no's. Was it easy for him to let go of this project he was so passionate about? No. But he ran out of emotional runway to pursue it and moved onto his next project.

Setting an emotional runway for my projects was eye opening and extremely practical for me. It's become a simple way to gauge how much you want something and how much of your emotional energy its worth.

Emotional runway provides a few key benefits:

- It forces you to focus on effort and not results. Results are out of your control, effort is not. Jia couldn't control how many Fortune 500 CEO's said yes or no. He could control how many he would reach out to.
- It makes rejection feel like a progression, instead of a roadblock. When you create an emotional runway,

each rejection becomes a step closer towards your goal instead of a moment where you silently cry and eat half a package of Oreos.

- It provides the confidence that you gave your all. Did you hit your goal of no's? Did you reach the end of your emotional runway? If you did, then you're good. If not, keep going.
- It reinforces the fact that sales is a numbers game and the more you reach out, the better chance you'll receive a yes.

I learned a lot of "Jia-isms" on rejection that I could spout for days, but the emotional runway has proved the most valuable and practical in my life. I'm constantly asking myself how many no's or hours of effort each individual project is worth.

Before I launched The RV Entrepreneur podcast earlier this year, I asked myself how many episodes I would be willing to produce if nobody listened. The answer? 50. I told myself I'd reach 50 episodes before I decided to give up or not. I wanted it badly and was willing to put in the 300+ hours of work for those 50 episodes before I hit the end of my wall.

The result? I quit worrying about how many people were listening and just worked my butt off to hit 50 episodes.

How to Set Your Own Emotional Runway

Step # 1: Ask yourself, “How many no’s am I willing to go through before I reach a yes?”

Step # 2: Set your number of rejections before you start any project and don’t change it. If you don’t set this number before you start, you’ll likely try to change it once you feel the pain of rejection.

Step # 3: Celebrate no’s. While rejection can be biologically painful, we don’t have to hate it. We can learn to love rejection by celebrating each no we receive. Hey, it’s progress.

Step # 4: Get to work and quit overthinking everything.

Chapter Fourteen

Pricing Client Work and Knowing Your Value

One of the more difficult parts of adding new clients is learning how to price and value work. As someone who didn't come from an agency or service-based business, I've had to make up a lot of it as I go along.

I recently had an interesting conversation with an RV entrepreneur named Rich, who shared with me some valuable insight on how to price client projects.

Rich Charpentier builds, designs, and does search engine optimization (SEO) for RV park websites all over the country. He's lived, worked, and traveled in his Airstream for over a decade and run several different businesses on the road.

If you've ever been on an RV park website, you know that 90% of RV park websites look horrendously bad. Just terrible. Most of them are basic HTML and sometimes even still have the flashing color ads that make me feel like it's 1998 all over again. Rich is using his skills in web development to move the industry forward, one RV park website at a time.

He travels from place to place and stays for free at RV parks who have hired him to design their website. It's really a smart way of acquiring free lodging while being paid to travel. During a recent conversation we had, Rich told me about his pricing model and how he charges for RV park websites.

I guessed that most campground owners would be willing to pay somewhere between \$2,000 and \$4,000 for a nicely designed Wordpress site. I was wrong. He's charging upwards of \$7,500 per site. \$7,500!? And RV park owners are willing to pay that amount? I could barely believe it.

It's not that I don't believe a great website is worth that amount. I absolutely believe it. It's just that I couldn't believe that RV park owners, many of whom still think of

the internet as a “fad,” were willing to pay that amount.

While I was silently freaking out, Rich calmly explained to me how he’s been able to charge such a premium for his services.

1. His work gets results.

Previous clients of Rich’s have soared straight to the #1 spot in Google, which consequently brought in tens of thousands of dollars of business.

Because of his deep knowledge of SEO, he’s able to provide immediate results. When a prospective camper is researching RV parks in the area, they are most likely to click on the top result in Google (which he helps RV parks achieve). Rich knows that whatever they pay him, they will receive at least double the return on their investment.

2. He learned from undercharging for his skills and undervaluing his time.

Before shifting to websites, Rich worked as a wedding photographer. He’d charge a few thousands dollars per wedding (which might sound decent for an outsider). But then you factor in hiring a second shooter, rental gear,

spending all day on a shoot (sometimes not even taking a lunch break), and then several days editing all the thousands of photos, he realized he was actually paying himself near minimum wage.

Rich said he could have worked at Walmart and made near the same amount of money he was earning per hour shooting weddings.

3. He combined his best skills.

Rich is a web designer by trade. But for years now, Rich has invested in his photography skills and equipment. Now, in addition to redesigning websites he can shoot high quality photos for each RV park website.

Rich even takes aerial photography with his drone and spends several days shooting photos and editing them. This service alone is worth thousands of dollars if you were to commission out a professional photographer.

Talking with Rich gave me a new perspective on how we value our time when pricing client projects. When Alyssa and I first started shooting online educational courses with clients, we had no idea what to charge.

Our first client paid us \$1,400 to help him shoot a 15 part video course. On top of shooting his actual course, we worked with him on a weekly basis for several months leading up to the launch of his course, then flew across the country (using our own airline points), and then spent an additional two months helping him market and launch his course.

During the first week his course was live, he brought in \$10,000 in revenue.

In hindsight, it was embarrassingly obvious how badly we undercharged him. That being said, it was our first client and at the time my main concern was gathering the experience. I wish the experience would have come at a higher price point, but lesson learned.

A year later and we've honed that process significantly. Now we spend less time with each individual client as we've become more efficient, put systems in place that work, and have quadrupled our prices.

Now, when Alyssa and I sit down to price out a client project, we ask ourselves 3 questions.

1. How much value are we providing?

Is the work that we are putting into this project going to significantly help improve our client's business? If so, what is a potential dollar amount we foresee their business improving?

Since our first client's online course brought in \$10k in revenue, how much do we foresee this video project bringing in for this company?

This gives us a baseline to know what to charge. If our project was only going to bring in \$2,000 for a client, it wouldn't make sense for them or us to charge \$10,000.

2. What is the industry charging?

My best friend James' shoots wedding videography in Austin, TX. He's an incredible shooter and is constantly raising his rates based off what others in the industry are charging. He began on the lower end and has gradually raised his prices to match his competitors.

We've practiced a similar strategy in our business. We started out lower on pricing and have gradually increased prices now that we've met other videographers who offer similar services.

If you're struggling to figure out what you should

charge, check out some relevant websites in your industry to see what others are charging. You won't be able to charge the same amount when first getting started, but you can use this to gauge the potential value of your work.

3. How much have you invested in your equipment/knowledge?

Rich was able to charge more for his website development because he can also provide photography and aerial photography. I know from experience that cameras and drones are *not* cheap. However, they greatly increase the quality of the work that Rich provides, and his prices reflect that.

The price in which we pay for new equipment or skills is the reason why clients pay us to provide a service for them. How much would it cost a prospective client in time, money and resources to go out and buy thousands of dollars of film equipment and then learn how to use it?

Answer: A *really* long time and *a lot* of money.

This is the reason why your customer needs you and why we are comfortable charging handsomely for our

services (and you should be too).

Ultimately, pricing out client projects can be scary. You feel like you're overcharging or undercharging. It's a giant cluster in the beginning and a bit of a guessing game. However, the good clients respect your time, know the industry standards, and are willing to pay for valuable work. The clients who are looking for a bargain and the cheapest work aren't the kind of people worth working with (at least from my experience).

Find clients who you want to spend time with and genuinely help improve their business. We only say yes to working with people who we'd genuinely want to invest our time with. As a result, we never have to spend time with people we don't like.

Chapter Fifteen

How to Find a Sponsor

Cees and Madison from ourvie.com had zero following online a year ago. They had just graduated from college and were planning a year-long road trip to visit every national park in the country. Cees told me he read some of my posts online about how we earned sponsors and decided to try his own luck. His goal was to find enough adventure and outdoor companies to sponsor their 59 national park tour.

At first he had little success reaching out to companies, but over time he started to gauge interest. Cees told me he would've been happy if they had just given him a t-shirt, but sponsors started offering more than that.

Ultimately Cees and Madison were able cover over 70% of their funds for their year-long trip sponsored before ever hitting the road. *How?* They were able to tap into a theme and project much larger than themselves: the Centennial National Park Celebration.

This year marked the 100-year anniversary of national parks, something a lot of companies would love to somehow be involved with. Because Cees and Madison would be traveling to all of these national parks, these companies now had a very cheap way to gather great content for their respective websites and social media channels. Instead of having to send out an employee or professional photographer to go and shoot all of these places, they could simply sponsor two people who were already planning on visiting all the national parks.

Cees and Madison were even able to bring on Chacos Sandals to support their journey.

We're living in a world where companies are starving for unique, engaging content. If you can produce videos, write great copy, or take great photos, you have a unique opportunity to provide a ton of value for companies.

If you want to explore the sponsorship route, here are ten tips to find your first sponsor:

- **Figure out a project you'd like to go out and do, whether or not anyone else funded it.**

With Hourly America, I told Snagajob that whether or not they helped us financially, I was going to quit my job and work in all fifty states. Did I know how I was going to make it happen? Absolutely not. But I showed my determination to make it work. Perhaps they liked the idea of sending a newlywed couple to all 50 states or maybe they just admired my gumption, but they quickly came on board as the main sponsor for Hourly America.

Leaving my job and going all in proved to them that I was willing to make sacrifices in order for this to work. If I was willing to go all in, it was likely we'd make it to all 50 states and they'd get recognition in every place we visited.

- **Tie into a cause bigger than yourself.**

Just as Cees and Madison tied into the Centennial Park

Celebration, find a cause that's bigger than you. With the type of publicity the national parks received in 2016, it made total sense for multiple companies to sponsor efforts to preserve our parks system (especially companies in the adventure industry).

I tied into hourly jobs when riots for increasing minimum wage were happening across the country. This meant more news outlets were looking for stories about hourly work. Find something bigger in the world and create your project around it.

- **Set a project timeline and a detailed plan of how you'll execute it.**

Before pitching Snagajob on Hourly America, Alyssa and I mapped out our entire route along with a timeline. This allowed Snagajob to easily wrap their mind around a beginning, middle, and end of the project. Having a route and timeline legitimized our idea and showed we were capable of executing on a seemingly crazy idea.

- **Be personable.**

Don't be a machine and don't send a templated email to

any company. You're making a big ask of them, take the time to write a sincere and custom email. If they end up coming on board as a sponsor, you'll be glad you did.

While it can be intimidating to reach out to big companies, it's always going to be a single person on the other end of the computer that reads your request. The more personal, the higher probability you'll receive a response.

- **Don't make sponsorship your first ask.**

When I pitched Snagajob, I wasn't even thinking about sponsorship. I just asked for help finding jobs. When I pitched Winnebago on partnering with us, I didn't just call Winnebago headquarters and ask for a free RV. I spent months building a relationship with the man who runs their lifestyle blog. I wrote for them and took pictures of our Alaskan road trip featuring a Minnie Winnie.

Before you make the big sponsor ask, find ways to provide value. Show them what they will get out of the deal by proving value. This may be through consistently blogging online, by getting media attention, by growing your online following, or plenty of other ways.

When you show your value ahead of time, getting a yes will come much easier.

- **Have a clear, profitable ask.**

When reaching out to any company, make sure you have a clear, profitable ask. So many RVers call up RV manufacturers and ask for a free RV because “they are going on this road trip and blogging about it and it would be great exposure for the company.” No. This is *not* how sponsorships work.

Like I said above, sponsorship should come from showing you can provide real value. With Winnebago, I knew having a popular blog wouldn’t be enough to secure a deal with them. So, I created an opportunity to get us on a tv show called Going RV on GAC where customers go RV shopping. Once I secured a real value for Winnebago (a 30 -minute episode on national television), I asked for a *discount* on their Winnebago Brave in exchange for exposure on the tv show and my blog. At that point, I was able to show them exactly what they would get out of the deal and clearly articulate what I wanted.

Make sure you have a clear ask before reaching out to

any potential sponsor, one that makes sense for you and them.

- **Know your why's.**

Why are you doing this project and why is this company the perfect company to sponsor it?

Any company will want to immediately know your motive and reason why you're so passionate about this project. I told Snagajob that I was a 23 year old college grad who didn't like his job and wanted to explore other kinds of work across the country (the truth).

This immediately made them realize my motive. Also, my motive happened to relate to many of the job seekers who used their service.

- **If it's relevant, point towards some of your work.**

Part of the deal with Snagajob was that I would write blog posts recapping each of the 50 jobs I worked. To prove to them that I was a decent writer, I sent over a lot of samples of my writing. I had been publishing blogs on my personal blog, LinkedIn, and a guest post on my old job's website.

Being able to see my work gave them the confidence that I could document the experience. In 2016, this is more important than ever.

Cees and Madison are taking incredibly photos during their 59 national park tour. This is great for Chaco Sandals because they're receiving amazing photos of their sandals out in the wild. It would cost Chaco multiple thousands of dollars to hire a professional photographer to go out and document their products in beautiful locations. They'd have to pay for travel and a premium for the photographer skills.

Instead, they're able to sponsor Cees and Madison and receive original, high value content that can be shared on their website and social channels. This is a huge value. If you can show a company how your skills can save them money and earn them exposure, you're ten times as likely to secure them as a sponsor.

- **Don't reach out to just the big dogs.**

As I mentioned before, most RVers who hit the road contact their dream manufacturer and ask for a free or discounted RV in exchange for various promotion. These

companies receive these kinds of inquiries in droves and are mostly ignored.

It's important to be realistic about the kind of sponsor you can land. Don't only reach out to the most obvious and well known companies in your niche. For instance, Snagajob wasn't a company I had ever heard of—but because they were smaller than a Monster.com, I was able to easily get in touch with them and come to an agreement.

- **Make sure your project completely aligns with the mission of your dream sponsor.**

For Hourly America, my project was to explore different kinds of jobs across America to better understand what I wanted to do with my life.

Snagajob's mission as a job board is to help people find hourly jobs so they can have a meaningful career.

Our missions were so closely aligned, it made a ton of sense for them to connect themselves with our project. Don't overlook this component (as it's a big one). Make sure to draw a direct line between the mission of your project and the mission of the company you are seeking

sponsorship from.

Chapter Sixteen

Part 3 Summary

Finding the First Client:

1. Let prospective clients know you're just getting started.
2. Offer a free 30 day trial of your services.
3. Invest in your skills (even if that means working for free).
4. Ask yourself the hard questions about your ideal client.
5. Communicate clearly in your outreach.
6. Create a website or work with me page that explains your services.
7. Tell EVERYONE you know that you're starting

up a business and that you're looking for your first client.

Finding the Perfect Customer

- You'll never know your ideal customer until you start pitching them (with each one you gain more understanding).
- The more you pitch, the faster you'll gain understanding of what works and what doesn't.
- The enemy of finding the right customer is blatantly cold calling and mass emailing "anyone and everyone". This doesn't work. You're not a telemarketer. Be strategic.
- Constantly tweak the delivery and pitch until you find what works.

How to Set Your Own Emotional Runway

Step #1: Ask yourself, "How many no's am I willing to go through before I reach a yes?"

Step #2: Set your number of rejections before you start any project and don't change it. If you don't set this number before you start, you'll likely try to change it once you feel the pain of rejection.

Step #3: Celebrate no's. While rejection can be biologically painful, we don't have to hate it. We can learn to love rejection by celebrating each no we receive. Hey, it's progress.

Step #4: Get to work and quit overthinking everything.

3 Questions to Ask When Pricing Client Work

1. How much value are we providing?
2. What is the industry charging?
3. How much have you invested in your equipment/knowledge?

Finding a Sponsor

- Figure out a project you'd like to go out and do, whether or not anyone else funded it.
- Tie into a cause bigger than yourself.
- Set a project timeline and a detailed plan of how you'll execute it.
- Be personable.
- Don't make sponsorship your first ask.
- Have a clear, profitable ask.
- Know your why's.

- If it's relevant, point towards some of your work.
- Don't reach out to just the big dogs.
- Make sure your project completely aligns with the mission of your dream sponsor.

PART 4

Chapter Seventeen

How to Create an Online Store

“Most people want to know when your trip is going to be done. This is a lifestyle change for us, not a vacation.” - Olivia Brady

You don't have work a six-figure job to save up enough money to hit the road. Kyle and Olivia are currently driving their Casita trailer across America while running their Etsy business at the same time.

Before they hit the road, Kyle was a musician and Olivia was a waitress. For over a year they schemed, saved up, and hustled to build up their Etsy store before taking it on the road. If you've never heard of or used Etsy, it's a marketplace where anyone can sell homemade products. Alyssa actually bought my wedding ring off Etsy.

Accidentally Starting an Etsy Business

Kyle and Olivia were at a garage sell one day when they found an old vintage atlas with a lot of neat looking maps. They were in the planning and dreaming stages of hitting the road and they were patiently trying to find ways to supplement their income.

Looking at this vintage Atlas, they decided to fix it up and resell it. However, instead of simply reselling the old atlas, they tore out all of the individual maps, put them in cool frames, and then resold them on Etsy.

They ended up selling 20 of those maps in their first month. People liked the maps as gifts or art projects they could use for decorating an office. It took a bit of time to make the old maps look nice again, but it was a good use for an old book that otherwise was going in the trash.

After a couple months of the maps selling extremely well, they realized an Etsy store would be their ticket to starting a business they could run from the road. They dove in headfirst and immediately started selling everything vintage they could get their hands on.

Vintage posters, photos, old Playboy magazines, and

old clothes too. Overtime, they were able to get closer to finding their niche.

Why would anyone want to sell physical products from the road?

Long before their initial atlas and map refurbishing success, Kyle and Olivia loved going to garage sales and flea markets. Their passion was collecting vintage goods. They didn't plan on starting an Etsy business, it just kind of happened.

They had already been planning and scheming a transition to living on the road. Kyle was planning on using musical talents to supplement their income. Once they discovered the vintage goods they loved searching for good be resold for profit, they were hooked.

Here was an opportunity for them to convert their hobby into a profitable business.

Yes, now that Kyle and Olivia are on the road, they ship out physical products from their tiny RV. However, instead of buying large and bulky vintage products, they stick to lightweight paper items. They have a bin they fill up with around 2,000 paper products they can easily carry

with them wherever they go.

While traveling to different small towns across the country, they seek out local flea markets and garage sales, hunting for old magazines, maps, and small vintage items. They take photos, upload their inventory to Etsy, and then send out two shipments each week.

Most people wouldn't think of starting a physical product business on the road, but this is something they already love to do.

Going from \$0 to \$2,000/month in revenue

For over one year, Kyle and Olivia hustled to get their Etsy business off the ground. While working on the Etsy store, they still kept their full-time jobs as a waitress and musician.

Here is what they did during that time that helped them to launch their Etsy business:

1. Set clear goals.

In September of 2014 Kyle and Olivia made a goal to hit the road in one year. They calculated they'd need \$8,000 in savings and \$2,000 of monthly revenue from their Etsy store before they hit the road.

Having clear goals for exactly how much money needs to be in the bank and how much you need to make each month gives you clear finish line. Setting a realistic deadline to hitting the road gives you urgency to make it happen. Without these two numbers and a deadline, it's impossible to know what you're working towards.

The best goals have a timeline. Timelines make things scary because then we're beholden to them. But that's just the thing, once we commit then we're able to finally execute and quit procrastinating.

Kyle and Olivia were able to reach their \$2k/month goal and even put \$250/week into a savings account.

This is a season of life where short term sacrifices are key towards long term growth. Kyle and Olivia wanted to travel full-time, so they were willing to give up some short term comfort so they could accomplish this big dream. If you can't give up your fancy dinner or clothes in order to save up enough money to hit the road, then you probably don't deserve it.

2. Continuously hone your niche.

Etsy is a huge marketplace with thousands and thousands of businesses. Etsy is incredibly saturated with

people selling hand knit scarves and homemade bags and the like. In order to stand out against the crowd, Kyle and Olivia had to constantly refine what they were selling.

Once they realized people loved their vintage maps, they tried out vintage cooking wear, clothes and anything vintage they could get their hands on. But, the vintage maps, magazines and paper products were still the best sellers. Focusing on this small niche allowed them to build up a customer base of fans who were incredibly interested in those products.

Limiting yourself to a small niche can seem like you're limiting yourself. But in reality, you're freeing yourself up. You no longer have to worry about all the variations of products you could possibly sell. You are now only bringing in inventory that you know incredibly well. Plus, you have a better understanding of what will sell best within your niche. You start to become the go-to resource your your niche. If I wanted to check out some vintage products, I'd hit up Kyle and Olivia's Wooden Earth Etsy shop.

3. Learn exactly who you're selling to.

At one point in time, Kyle and Olivia tried setting up at

a small-town local flea market to sell their vintage paper products. They didn't sell **any**. They realized afterward that people in small towns had frequent access to flea markets and garage sales where Kyle and Olivia bought most of their inventory. It was actually people from the city who were most interested in purchasing from them.

Knowing this, they didn't spend anymore time catering toward small towns. They closed down their booth at the flea market to strictly sell on their Etsy shop.

4. Focus on the brand.

"Every part of the process has to be done with care. You have to put yourself into your store and make it with passion. You can't have a generic looking banner. Everything has to be at the highest level, because there's so much at the medium level. People aren't going to want to experience that middle level.

They want to experience the high level where care has been put in. It's not just the product that sells it. You have to make sure your photos are good quality, it's staged nicely, it needs a whole feel and energy when you go onto that (shop) page like you're walking into a virtual shop. You definitely want to buy something that looks like it's been staged VS. something sitting on someone's counter. On Etsy it's way more about a brand and

a feeling.” - Olivia

Great Etsy stores have just as much branding as in person boutique stores.

When I think of branding, I think of Starbucks. Every time you walk into a Starbucks, no matter where it is, you feel the Starbucks brand. They have created a certain smell, color scheme, and atmosphere that you can recognize anywhere.

The most successful online stores create this same type of branding in their virtual shops. They know how they want people to feel about their brand. Each design is intentional and it stands out from the crowd, it's not stale.

For a year Kyle and Olivia learned how to take better photos and create an all-around brand for their Etsy shop.

If you're building an online store or blog to sell something, how do you want people to feel when they walk in?

5. Building a blog to push people towards your products.

After hitting the road, Kyle and Olivia also started a blog called Drivin' and Vibin'. By sharing their travels with people and pointing them towards their Etsy shop,

they can convert new customers from their travel blog.

Having a shop with products gives Kyle and Olivia a huge advantage over a lot of travel bloggers. Most travel blogs don't generate any money. However, by having an existing product, they are able to capture readers on your website and turn them into paying customers. It's like having buckets to catch potential dollars on your website. If you don't have a bucket, the money will leave.

6. Validate your business on an incredibly small amount of investment.

Kyle and Olivia's initial investment in one old atlas validated that people would buy customized vintage maps and paper products online. While they still had to do the hard work (build branding, get repeat customers, get reviews to their store), a quick sale validated they might be onto something.

Most businesses take significantly less capital than people think. One of my favorite books, *The \$100 Startup* by Chris Guillebeau, actually documents a list of businesses that started all for less than \$100. You need creativity and the willingness to start before you're ready, but quick validation saves you a great deal of time.

Let's dream for a second.

Kyle and Olivia are proof that you don't need a lot of money to get started in this lifestyle. While not everyone's passion is selling vintage products, there is so much opportunity for new businesses that you can take on the road.

The best asset while transitioning to a remote work lifestyle is creativity. If the goal is to have freedom, income outside a 9-5, and be able to travel and see the world, you have an infinite number of ways to get there.

If you're anything like me, it will probably take you at least ten bad ideas before you land on something worthwhile. Take a minute and write down ten ideas for how you could make an income while full-time traveling. I'm well aware of how corny it sounds, but close your eyes for a minute and think about driving an RV across America. Imagine waking up in beautiful places all over America -- mountains, rivers, and lakes.

What is the work you're doing each day? How are you spending your time? What does your ideal day look like?

Write down a few ideas. You don't have to overthink or pick anything right this second. Just dream for a minute.

Let me know what you come up with at #rvebook on Twitter or Instagram.

Chapter Eighteen

Using Your Blog As Your Business Card

Most people aren't launching a blog with the intention of landing a book deal or making tons of money. The blog serves as more of a journal, a way to capture the stories of travel and life on the road.

We weren't really sure what purpose our blog would serve when we first hit the road. We both knew we aspired to be authors one day. We both enjoyed the craft of writing. But other than those details, we had no idea.

After traveling to all 50 states, producing a documentary, paying off a lot of student debt, and living in the RV for nearly 3 years, we've used our blogs for several purposes:

- Hone our craft of writing
- Share stories of inspiring people we've met on the road
- Keep friends and family updated with our travels
- Document the progress of Hourly America, my quest working an hourly job in all 50 states
- Build a community of people interested in the RV lifestyle and provide helpful resources
- Share our journey paying off student debt
- Connect with other travelers and like-minded people on the road
- Create passive income streams through endorsing products and services we believe in
- Attract sponsors for our travels
- Bring in new client work

That last one has been one of the biggest unforeseen benefits of keeping a blog.

I'll explain.

Earlier this year Alyssa and I were trying to figure out different ways to grow our business. We wanted to add on a few more video projects to our plate and maybe attract some sponsorships for my new podcast. Up until that point, all of our work had been 100% referral based. This is

great, except for we wanted to take some initiative in finding new clients.

In passing, Alyssa brought up the idea of creating a “Work with me page” on my blog. I told her I didn’t think it made sense. 100% of the people who visit my website are reading up on the RV lifestyle or currently RVing. They don’t care about hiring us for video projects. However, being more intelligent than myself and persistent, she pushed on and ultimately convinced me to create a work with me page.

Then, something strange happened.

I started receiving emails from strangers with the subject line “Let’s work together”. The result was almost immediate. I had companies reaching out to ask about sponsoring episodes of the podcast, inquiries from prospective clients, and other random offers.

Within weeks, we had a new video production client from Canada who hired us for a two-month project. The clients were actually two experienced nurses from Saskatchewan who wanted to teach an online course on prenatal breastfeeding. Since our work consists of helping people create, film and launch online courses — we were

stoked to work with them.

And it happened, at least in part, because I'd created a simple little page on my website.

Granted, I'd been blogging consistently for three years to build up traffic to my blog and this year my new podcast has significantly helped to increase that traffic. But one big mistake I'd made was thinking my traffic wasn't interested in working with me. I thought they only wanted to receive information on RVing. As it turns out, there was a nice little overlap of people interested in RVing and those who were willing to hire us for video production projects.

This is just one example of many that have transpired since creating a work with me page.

Now with the blog, Alyssa and I can spend time doing what we love, which is documenting the RV lifestyle and providing helpful tips for other RVers, while simultaneously attracting new business. This means more time exploring new places and less time doing sales outreach for new clients.

Creating an Effective Work With Me Page

Here are a few things I learned while crafting our Work With Me page:

- ◆ **Don't lie.** Be honest about everything you've done. This page is your resume and lying would just come back to haunt you.

- ◆ **Write this page for your ideal client.** What kind of person would you want to work with? What is their personality? Would they appreciate a personal tone on your about page or would they relate more to professionalism? Personally, I want to work with people who are fun and don't take themselves too serious.

Therefore, I'm extremely casual and have fun on my page.

- ◆ **Be clear on your value proposition.** What are your best skills and how have you delivered for other clients? This is not the place to be vague and tell people you're a jack-of-all-trades. Congratulations, you might as well say that you're good at nothing. Be uber specific about where you can help provide value for your ideal client. If you do graphic design for small businesses, your value proposition might look something like this: "My name is Kerrah. I create engaging and beautiful logos, websites, and custom-branding for small-businesses. Here

are ten samples of projects I've worked on and testimonials from former customers and the results it's helped them achieve." If you don't have testimonials, go do some projects for free and get people to vouch for you.

◆ **If it's relevant, give your pricing on this page.** I know this is not standard in every industry, but people value transparency and it helps cut through prospective clients who are cheap and not willing to pay up. This page also gives you a great chance to describe your lifestyle to potential clients. If they are worried about hiring someone who is working from the road, you can explain how you will be available to them on the road and how you stay connected.

Chapter Nineteen

A Brief Guide on Building a Profitable Blog Creating a Profitable Blog

Everyone has a different reason for why they do or don't want to start a blog. Since almost every single traveler launches a blog of sorts, I decided to dedicate a section this book to talk about the different ways to earn an income through blogging.

If you are interesting in potentially creating a blog that can be monetized, keep reading. If you have no desire to monetize a blog, feel free to skip this chapter.

—

When I first started writing a blog, I had trouble editing

my blogs because I was so afraid to look at them. I would just click "Post." I wouldn't edit them at all. I wouldn't do anything with them. Words were misspelled. I didn't know how to put commas in, something I'm still learning. I just wasn't a good writer. It's embarrassing to look back at my earlier posts.

With blogging, everyone has to start somewhere. In the beginning, some people have a head start. Perhaps they studied writing in college and it comes more naturally to them. Others might have a background in internet marketing, so they understand how to write proper blog titles and gain social media following. I don't think it matters where you start. With blogging, just like any other business venture, you can walk into it knowing absolutely nothing.

The people who win are the ones who stick with it the longest, learn along the way, seek relentless feedback, and keep showing up to make improvements. That's it. If you're willing to put out less than perfect work on a daily basis for several years while you find your niche of writing, you've got a shot here.

Warning: The most discouraging thing you can do as a

blogger is compare yourself to other bloggers. I'm terrible at this. I will look at a blog and well designed it is, how many comments they have, how many people follow them on social media, and it will make me want to quit on the spot. Don't do this. Just don't.

Know Your "Why"

Why do you want to monetize your blog? This might be a stupid question. But other than making money, what's the point? What is the bigger vision? Monetizing a blog is great, but making passive income isn't all it's cracked up to be.

For example, over the past three years I've written over 200 blog posts.

Each blog post generally takes me anywhere between three to eight hours to write. I've also recorded over 25 podcast episodes for The RV Entrepreneur podcast. Each of these episodes takes anywhere between 5-10 hours when it's all said and done. In addition to the recording and blog copy I've written, I've spent countless hours posting on social media, building community in groups, learning about email marketing, how to write good headlines, responding to several reader emails per day,

and reading books on blogging.

Blogging a successful blog takes a significant amount of time. Making a measly \$2,000/month in passive income sounds incredibly sexy, but it's nowhere near the time investment you will put into it. If I calculated my per rate hour for personal blogging, it would be depressing.

I say all this not to discourage you from starting a blog, but to paint a realistic picture from someone in the trenches.

You have to have a bigger reason why.

I started blogging because eventually I wanted to write books. I knew that I needed to find an audience for that first. Later on, my focus shifted to building a company in the RV community. I knew that if I could continue serving RVers through my blog, my community would be a great asset while building this new business.

What is the reason you want to blog? Do you want to write books, get sponsored or make a few bucks? Think big. You need some long term vision to hold onto when nobody is reading your blog and nobody cares about you. Otherwise, you're going to quit.

Before we jump into how to monetize your blog...

When I first started blogging, I had no idea that some people made a full-time income from their blog. I thought blogs were something that authors used to build large audiences and then sell books. Now I know that many authors make more from their blogs than they do from their books.

I'm not an expert in building a profitable blog, but I have built a niche audience of 30k monthly readers and a website that helps us generate enough income to cover a significant portion of our expenses. Plus, on the client side of our business we've worked with countless full-time bloggers. We've played a supporting role in helping them increase their online following and monetize more of their existing audience by creating online education courses (something we'll chat about more in a moment).

Now that you have your overarching vision for why you want to start a blog, let's get into the nitty gritty for different monetization routes you could take when monetizing your website.

These are a few examples for how bloggers can make an income through their websites:

- 1. Ebooks (aka this book)**

Drafting up educational or entertaining content through ebooks and selling them to readers.

For example, the past two years I've created a lot of content within the RV community. Through my blog I've built up a niche audience of people who are interested in the lifestyle. Readers email me questions about RVing and if enough people ask me the same questions, I'll write a blog post about that particular subject so more people can read it.

The biggest hurdle and question I've seen people ask is "how do I make an income on the road?" To solve this problem, I created a Facebook group called Make Money and RV. Inside the group, people can ask questions and offer advice on how to make a remote income. Next, I launched the RV Entrepreneur Podcast where I interview nomadic entrepreneurs.

After watching my Facebook group grow to a couple thousand members and my podcast downloads reaching the tens of thousands per month, I saw just how many people wanted to learn about building a remote business. Deciding to write this ebook was easy because I saw a clear need within the RV community.

Hence, I found a need for an ebook (how to earn remote income) and then got the experience (doing it myself) and also sought out advice and lessons from fellow RV entrepreneurs.

To write and launch a successful ebook, you have to find a niche where you can provide value. Whatever you're an expert in, whatever people are always asking you questions about, take that idea and write an ebook. Sell it for \$5. Get feedback. Edit. Improve. Sell it for \$10.

Writing an ebook isn't easy. It takes a lot of hours writing, formatting, and designing. Pat Flynn from The Smart Passive Income has a great, free ebook on how to create ebooks. Check it out [here](#).

2. Creating online courses

Online courses are a big deal in 2016. If you're not familiar, an online course is essentially an educational The past two years Alyssa and I have carved out our niche of film work in helping people create, film, and launch online courses.

Most bloggers, content creators, and entrepreneurs are creating free and paid online courses. Websites like CreativeLive, Udemy, and Skillshare are all platforms

where you can go to learn about any given subject (Photoshop, creating a business, video editing, etc.).

Online courses are a souped up version of ebooks. Online courses can be in video, email, or audio form. A lot of content creators are pushing out online courses because they have a significantly higher profit margin than ebooks. Ebooks are typically somewhere between \$5-\$15. Online courses can be sold for up to several thousand dollars a pop.

The benefit of teaching online courses is that you can take any type of service business and translate it into an online course. One of our clients, Jenny Foss, has created an incredibly popular resume-writing business in Portland, Oregon. Over the past year her business has become so successful that on frequent occasions she turns away new clients.

Jenny has no desire to hire on additional employees that she would need to manage. She likes having a small business and wants to keep it that way. Jenny reached out to us and asked for help. Her idea was to “productize” her resume services so she could sell them in a course format. By creating a resume writing course, Jenny would be able

to sell more of her services without spending more time on individual clients.

Over several months we worked with Jenny to outline a course that taught prospective clients everything they needed to know about how to write a great resume. Jenny typically worked with mid- to senior-level professionals and was able to charge \$800-\$1,000 for her resume writing services. Her online course would be \$229, just a fraction of the cost.

Now, instead of having to turn away clients, Jenny can simply point them towards her Weekend Resume Course. While clients don't get the individual attention, they are able to get the same information and help for a fraction of the cost.

Within a couple months of Jenny launching her course she was able to bring in an additional \$10,000 in sales (without having to personally respond to 1-on-1 inquiries. While this isn't much for most businesses, it's a great added revenue for many solopreneurs. Plus, this was income where Jenny wasn't actively sitting down with a client.

Online courses work well for:

- Anyone with a deep knowledge base over a particular subject
 - Someone with a services based business who wants to productize their service
 - Someone who already has a lower price point product, like an ebook, that wants a higher end product

The beauty of online courses is that it creates what a lot of people call "passive income streams." You can create what product that sells over time. The downside to online courses is that right now they are at their peak of popularity. The market is quickly being oversaturated with online courses.

Online platforms like Teachable, which allows you to easily create your own course, are popping up and enabling anyone to build an online school.

Word of warning: There are a lot of people out there who are creating "Make money online" courses and ones that sound extremely scam-like. Be intentional and do your homework before signing up for any of them. While some make lofty promises they can't deliver on, there are

also quite a few professional online courses on platforms like CreativeLive.

3. Sponsored Content

As I mentioned earlier, sponsored content is one way that a lot of bloggers are generating additional revenue from their blogs. Bloggers who have built up niche audience are being sought out by relevant companies in order to help promote their products.

For example, earlier this spring I was contacted by a company called Hurdlr. Hurdlr is a new app that allows entrepreneurs to easily track business expenses on the go. This a huge help for RVers who need to track mileage on the road. Hurdle does that all for you automatically. Partnering with companies that solve real problems for my audience (RVers) is an easy way to passively add income to your blog or podcast.

4. Affiliate marketing

One of my main strategies for increasing my blogging income this year has been through affiliate marketing.

My experience in affiliate marketing this year

Alyssa and I use Passport America all the time. It's an RV membership that provides a 50% discount on camping fees at participating campgrounds. Passport has a pretty decent app for searching campgrounds and we loved being able to save so much money at campgrounds. The membership paid for itself in two nights!

Because I use and like their service, I signed up for their affiliate program.

As part of their affiliate program, I received a custom URL that I could share on social media or on my blog. To start bringing in commissions, I wrote a blog post comparing Passport America and Good Sam.

When people read my blog and click that link to purchase a Passport America membership, I receive a commission.

In the spring and summer, that blog post (which I spent two hours writing over a year ago) generates almost \$200/month for the past five months. This isn't a huge amount of money, but it's passive income from a blog post that I haven't touched in almost a year.

Most of my blogs generate \$0, so it's nice to have one that generates a couple hundred dollars per month.

Affiliate marketing is not a new business strategy for brands or for consumers. Companies have been paying for referrals for a very long time.

But there is something fairly new that has happened recently in the affiliate marketing world.

What is new about affiliate marketing is the potential opportunity to make a significant amount of money. Referrals used to be word of mouth and could only scale so much. Now, you can write a blog post about your favorite makeup product that one million people read. Things are much more scalable in 2016.

Meet Michelle, a full-time RVer who earns a great income from affiliate marketing while on the road.

A few quick facts on Michelle:

- Michelle paid off a crazy amount of debt and shared her journey along the way, blogging about anything related to personal finance
- During that time she built up a large community of people who found her blog content valuable and trusted her
- After building up a community of people who trusted her and blogging

for a decently long time, Michelle started to endorse certain companies and products she used. This enabled her to eventually leave her job and focus on her blog as her full-time job and business.

- One of Michelle's most popular blog posts is geared towards helping you start your own blog on Wordpress. In that blog post, Michelle shared her Bluehost affiliate link. Bluehost is where you can host your website, and that one blog post brings Michelle 5 figures every month.

The beauty of this type of affiliate income is that you're getting paid to just tell people about products you already use and believe in.

The downside to affiliate marketing?

The downside is being remotely associated with slimy internet marketers.

Have you ever heard of Tai Lopez? He is the annoying guy who sometimes pops up during Youtube advertisements to tell you about the Lamborghini in his garage. In short, this guy is a garbage scam and, in my opinion, tries to cheat people out of their money by

feeding them false information.

The reason I've steered clear of talking about affiliate marketing and really investing in it myself is because I'm worried of being remotely perceived in the same category as people like Tai. It's an industry with a lot of headlines that read: "How I made \$5 kagillion dollars in one month doing affiliate marketing". It makes me squirm with how lame and scammy many of these blog posts appear. I didn't want to be in the same arena as many of these affiliate marketers.

However, last year via the internet I got to know Michelle from Making Sense of Cents. Michelle is a full-time RVer and from that fact alone we had a lot of things in common.

Unlike people I'd seen before online, Michelle didn't seem scammy at all. Even though she made her full-time income through her blog and affiliate marketing, she was a genuinely nice person. Michelle simply provided a lot of value to her personal finance audience and made money by referring products she believed in.

That being said, I started reaching out to Michelle for advice on how to build up my own affiliate marketing. I

told her the passive income stream that was promised through affiliate marketing was ideal for a full-time RVer like myself. After all, if I could make money from writing blog posts and earn passive income while out exploring national parks, that's the dream...right?

Michelle's advice and how it's helped me increase my affiliate income this year.

Michelle gave me some solid advice. To start with, she told me I needed to increase my web traffic. If you blog at all, you know this is not a very easy thing to do.

Earlier this year I kicked out my podcast, The RV Entrepreneur. Publishing almost twice as much content to my blog helped my web traffic nearly triple in four months.

From December of 2015 to May of 2016 my monthly traffic went from 7,500 visitors to over 35,000 visitors per month.

For most blogs, this kind of traffic is incredibly small. Michelle's blog receives something like 400k page views per month.

Michelle's second piece of advice was to share more

affiliate posts to companies, products, or services I believe in.

I also worked on putting that advice to work as well. In February I released

a blog post about my email marketing provider, ConvertKit. I've been using ConvertKit for almost two years and absolutely love their service and team. I spent nearly a full day working on that blog, refining the copy, and even doing Screenshare tutorials to show people the inside of my account.

The result? Several people bought a Convertkit subscription through my link. Each month ConvertKit sends me a 30% commission on all of those referrals. It's what we call "mailbox money". I convert one customer and get paid every month.

By increasing my monthly traffic and beginning to share more relevant, affiliate links from companies I believe in, this year I've significantly increased my amount of affiliate income. Is it a livable amount of money? No, not by any means. But it's progress and money I'm earning for doing what I was already doing on my blog.

Why do I care or want to pursue making more through

affiliate marketing?

Personally, my biggest motivating factor for becoming better at affiliate marketing is time. That's the whole allure of working from an RV, right? That you have more freedom to enjoy life and all the places you travel.

For me, I like the idea of doing work that scales. If I'm going to be writing blog copy and focusing on providing value for people in the RV lifestyle, why not generate some passive dollars for recommending products I love and use? The best feeling in the world as a blogger is randomly receive emails notifying you that you made \$20 from a blog post that you wrote a year ago.

How to grow an audience

It's taken time to hone the craft of writing and communicating. There are a lot of obstacles to trip you up in the beginning stages and you can have information overload.

Here's a brief checklist on how to get started building your blog:

- **Provide value for readers.**

People will read your stuff and come back to your blog if they find it valuable. Figure out exactly who you are

writing to and what would be helpful for them. Then, focus all your time and energy on writing posts that will be valuable to your audience.

- **Build trust with your readers.**

Being honest and vulnerable with people is the best way to create trust.

I'm not talking about fake vulnerability. I'm talking about being afraid to click "Publish" because you're terrified of showing your true self. When I first started sharing how much we were spending on the road and how much we were making, I got pushback from family. They were wondering whether or not I should be publishing and sharing such private information.

However, I knew that sharing the cost of full-time travel would be helpful for anyone trying to figure out how to make this lifestyle a reality. Those blogs ended up becoming some of my most popular reads. I received several emails from people telling me they were glad I'd shared real numbers.

Build that trust and don't do anything to jeopardize it.

- **Connect with other like-minded bloggers.**

Building relationships with other bloggers in your

market can help create guest-posting opportunities and friendships with peers. I love getting to talk with other bloggers because we can share struggles and successes together. We make each other better. Plus, guest posts are a great way to draw more traffic to your blog.

- **Know your niche**

In the beginning, most blogs start out with a wide variety of topics. They talk about travel and business and a million other things. But over time, you start to realize what your voice is and where you can provide the most value for people. Perhaps a few of your blogs pick up traction or you start getting asked about specific questions. This is the a process of narrowing your niche. My blog was about rving, working hourly jobs and my honeymoon when I started. Now it's about making money while traveling in an RV. It does not get much more specific than that! The more niche your blog, the easier it will be to scale and attract readers.

- **Have a nice looking website**

You don't need to shell out thousands of dollars on a web designer or Wordpress expert to start building an audience. Most Wordpress themes have plenty of tutorials

that will teach you everything you need to know to get started. Plus, there are plenty of free templates out there to get you started!

- **Social media**

Social media is a great place to connect on deeper level with your readers. You can join relevant Facebook groups, online forums, and interact with the community. Be helpful and answer people's questions. Don't immediately jump into the group and start sharing links to your blogs (nobody will click and the Admin will probably kick you out). You don't have to be on all platforms.

Know your strengths. If you prefer photos, jump on Instagram. If you're good on camera, maybe Snapchat or Facebook Live Videos is a better outlet for you.

- **Guest posting on successful sites**

Guest blogging is a great way to direct traffic to your website. Plain and simple, when you're just getting started and just trying to get your name out there, find people who are in your industry. Go guest blog for them. Link back to your site. It's very simple. Just reach out to people.

Guest posting on relevant sites and linking back to your website helps with SEO.

Ultimately, each linkback to your individual blog posts is like the internet giving a thumbs up of approval for something you've written.

SEO or Search Engine Optimization, noun. In simplest terms, SEO is what determines how people can find your website on Google. According to Wikipedia, SEO is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a web search engine's unpaid results — often referred to as "natural," "organic," or "earned" results.

- **Focusing on growing email list**

We ended up getting a lot of national and international media during our first year on the road for our Hourly America documentary. I missed out on opportunities to convert people to followers and subscribers during this time because I didn't have a good email opt-in.

Create something that would be valuable to whoever you would like to subscribe to your email list. You can make a free ebook, course, PDF download -- the content doesn't matter. All that matters is that you create something of value that you can give away to your audience. This will help you convert casual readers into long term subscribers.

- **Consistently post content**

I've published a lot of blogs, both on my site and on other websites linking back to my website. Showing up to consistently blog creates the habit of writing and helps you continuously get your name out there to your audience.

I just want to say again, in the beginning, the habit of writing is more important than what you're writing about. Don't be afraid to have a wide topic of writing subjects.

You'll read a lot of information that says you should niche down, but in the beginning, it's more about just building the habit and not worrying about whether or not you know exactly what you're going to be writing about consistently. All those things will come over time. It's more about just getting into the habit of writing.

Get started on your blog

If you want to get started blogging, here's a quick checklist of things you can do in your first 30 days to kick things off:

1. Sign up for a free Wordpress blog, just so you can build the habit of writing.
2. Write down five potential topics you'd like to talk about on your blog. Think of any major five things. When

I first started, these topics were entrepreneurship, rving, hourly jobs, marriage, and inspirational rants.

3. For each topic, write down 7-10 blog topic ideas. If you can't think of any blog topic ideas, go to [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com) and search for questions people have about your subject. The most useful blogs are blogs that answer a question.

4. Tell 100 friends and family members that you're starting a blog and ask them to join your email list. You can join a free email service like Mailchimp to send your blogs to your list each week (or however often you decide to email your followers).

5. Write 500 words daily. You don't have to publish content every day, but you should practice writing daily. This will make you a better, more confident writer.

Chapter Twenty

Solve Real Problems: How the RV Geeks

Accidentally Built a Successful Youtube

Channel

In college I had a lot of junk business ideas. I once had an idea for a company called Servency that was a social currency for good. The business was meant to help support local nonprofits through corporate sponsorships. I meant well by coming up with the idea, but it didn't actually solve a *real* problem.

Learning how to solve real business problems took me quite some time to figure out. I spent several years coming

up with solutions to problems that didn't exist.

Not long ago, I sat down with two guys named John and Peter. John and Peter have been on the road full-time in their RV for well over ten years. At first hitting the road because of an illness, they later realized they had a passion for travel and RVing.

Instead of settling down after a year on the road, they started up a business designing RV park websites (again, huge need). After five years of building RV park websites, they started another project, a Youtube channel called The RVGeeks.

The purpose of The RVGeeks Youtube channel was straightforward. John and Peter had a couple friends who were getting ready to start RVing. Their friends had a lot of practical questions that any new RVer would have.

"How do I dump my black and grey tank?"

"How can I hook my RV up to electric?"

"How do I fix (insert item) that's broken on my RV?"

To help out their friends, they put together a few DIY and informational videos to help get them started. After putting a significant amount of work into the videos, John and Peter realized they could simply upload them to

Youtube so other new RVers could get value out of them as well.

Thus, The RV Geeks Youtube channel was born.

18 million views and over 70,000 subscribers later, John and Peter have built one of the largest RV-related Youtube channels. They didn't plan on being "Youtube stars", it just kind of, happened.

John and Peter even consider themselves social media luddites. They barely have profiles on other platforms and have ignored "common practices" that most social media gurus preach. Yet, they've built a massively large and passionate audience.

How? They solved a problem.

The problem: RV's can be intimidating for people when first getting started and there are a lot of things to learn.

The solution: The RVGeeks went above and beyond to teach people how to become acquainted with their RV and fix common issues.

Hearing John and Peter describe their humble Youtube beginnings was a great reminder for me to focus on solving real problems.

Solving a Problem Through My Blog

When I first started my blog, I used it as a place to document our travels across the country. I read all of these self-help blogs that talked about how to grow a “platform” or increase your followers. They offered up a bunch of strategies that were semi-helpful (but not really).

After a year of writing on my blog and not seeing much growth at all, something clicked. I posted an article that shared the detailed expense report from our trip to all 50 states. People were fascinated at how inexpensive it was to travel to all fifty states in an RV.

They had questions about how we’d kept our grocery costs so low and how we’d spent so little on lodging (easy: we bought Great Value brand from Walmart and parked in *a lot* of driveways).

None the less, this was a turning point for my blog. Instead of continuing to document random travel stories, I put together what we’d learned during our first year of travel on how to travel cheap. As it turns out, a lot of people were concerned with costs on the road and this solved a pain point for people. It was really that simple. I found a problem and helped solve it for others.

After that blog post, I created a seven-part course on traveling cheap. My blog quickly grew from less than 1,000 views a month to over 30K views a month. I had to switch my hosting service because my web traffic was lagging the site.

Through my blog and podcast my aim is to help people solve two big barriers to travel — the cost of travel and earning an income. If I started a podcast about cool people I met on the road or my favorite RV park, my blog wouldn't have grown nearly as much. Those products don't solve every day needs, they are just fluff.

Find a real need, one that your audience is struggling with, and find a way to use your skills and knowledge to solve that problem.

How to identify a real problem to solve.

1. Go to [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com) and read about what questions people are asking in your industry.
2. Examine your own skills and make a list of what problems your skills solve.
3. Think about 2-3 of the biggest hurdles you've overcome in your personal and professional life. Are there

other people struggling with those same things? How can you help them using your experience?

4. Think about what friends ask you advice about. Do they always ask you about engine maintenance? Maybe you could be a mobile mechanic. Do they ask you to edit their reports? Maybe you could be a freelance copy editor. If people are already commenting on your skills, they likely solve a common problem. Develop your business plan around that.

Why it's hard to solve real problems:

1. It's fun to dream up big, lofty ideas that may or may not be practical.

I'm an idea guy and I always will be. But just because I have an idea for a new business doesn't mean that business will actually solve a real need. It always sexier to dream up an extravagant business plan instead of taking the time to practically solve a problem.

2. Solving problems often involves beta or real world testing.

To actually validate a problem is being solved, you must create a solution, find perspective customers, and seek out

feedback. Seeking out feedback is difficult and it takes time. But without feedback, your idea is useless. It needs to be tested.

Likely, you will find out your first idea isn't great (remember Megaphone Social) and there is a better way for you to grow your business. Would it just be easier to create a ten page business plan and ask friends for praise? Yes. But that won't give you the feedback you need to grow.

3. Solving real problems take time.

If it was an easy problem, who cares if you solve it? Real problems actually require thoughtfulness and time to solve them. Spending a year in an RV while traveling to all 50 states gave me the credibility to share advice on traveling cheap. We'd found practical solutions to a common problem.

Most of the time it would be easier to give up after a few tries than persevere to create a solution.

Solve a problem.

Chapter Twenty-One

Part 4 Summary

How to identify a real problem to solve.

1. Go to [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com) and read about what questions people are asking in your industry.
2. Examine your own skills and make a list of what problems your skills solve.
3. Think about 2-3 of the biggest hurdles you've overcome in your personal and professional life. Are there other people struggling with those same things? How can you help them using your experience?
4. Think about what friends ask you advice about.

Checklist for Launching a Successful Online Store

1. Set clear goals
2. Continuously hone your niche
3. Learn exactly who you're selling to.
4. Focus on the brand
5. Build a blog to push people towards your products
6. Validate your business on a small investment

4 Different Methods for Monetizing a Blog

- Ebooks
- Creating online courses
- Sponsored Content
- Affiliate marketing

How to Grow an Audience

- Provide value for readers.
- Build trust with your readers.
- Connect with other like-minded bloggers.
- Know your niche
- Create a well optimized and easy to read website
- Social media
- Guest posting on successful sites
- Focusing on growing email list

- Consistently Post content

5 Steps to Getting Started on Your Blog

1. Sign up for a free Wordpress blog, just so you can build the habit of writing.
2. Write down five potential topics you'd like to talk about on your blog. Think of any major five things. When I first started, these topics were entrepreneurship, rving, hourly jobs, marriage, and inspirational rants.
3. For each topic, write down 7-10 blog topic ideas. If you can't think of any blog topic ideas, go to [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com) and search for questions people have about your subject. The most useful blogs are blogs that answer a question.
4. Tell 100 friends and family members that you're starting a blog and ask them to join your email list. You can join a free email service like Mailchimp to send your blogs to your list each week (or however often you decide to email your followers).
5. Write 500 words daily. You don't have to publish content every day, but you should practice writing daily. This will make you a better, more confident writer.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Closing

Two years ago when Alyssa and I hit the road, we were the “young RVers”. We were the crazy 23 year old kids who were full-timing it around the country. Flash forward to now, we’ve met and talked with so many other twenty-something and thirty-something RVers that we've lost count.

We’re living in an era where it’s possible to go out and build your company from the road. If you want to combine your love of travel with building a business, then now is the time to make it happen. Or maybe you just want to travel for a year while working on a passion project, now you have options for how to finance it and

make it work.

For the longest time I thought travel was a setback. If I go and travel, I won't be able to build the business I want. If I go and travel, I'll lose all my friends. If I go and travel, I won't be making the best life for myself and my wife.

Those were just irrational fears. Once you hit the road, you'll find a new community. Travel doesn't hold you back from business or life, it helps you experience it fuller. You will meet people you wouldn't have met at home. You'll push yourself so far outside your comfort zone that it will expand. You will learn how to be a productive citizen of society while living an incredibly unconventional life.

Plus, if you travel in an RV, you'll learn how to fix a bunch of random things :).

The RV lifestyle isn't for everyone. It's for the person who craves adventure, the person willing to leave behind the stuffy office for a mountain view, and work insanely hard to make it happen. The scary part is saying yes, I want this life. The scary part is telling your friends and family that you're leaving behind the norm to hit the road and do your own thing. The scariest part is when you hit

the road and think you just threw away your life. But you didn't, I promise.

Life on the road isn't always a dream. We've broken down more than our fair share of times. We've battled a leaking roof, a broken sewer hose, a dead refrigerator, and inoperable slides. But then we'll grab a margarita and queso and spend the next day exploring something beautiful to remind ourselves why we chose this lifestyle in the first place.

This lifestyle is a huge privilege available for our generation. Not many generations before now could leave behind a traditional work setting to travel full-time. This isn't a pipe dream. It's here for anyone who wants it.

Do you?

In 2014 Heath Padgett quit his job in software sales to travel to all fifty states with his newlywed wife. During his travels, Heath worked an hourly job in each state and filmed a documentary about work across the country. His film, *Hourly America*, premieres this fall.

After spending a year on the road, he realized that returning back to “life as normal” in a 9-5 job wasn’t going to fly. Instead, he spent 2015 building up a remote income through a freelance business so he could continue full-time RVing, paying off over \$14k of student debt in the process.

Heath’s blog, heathpadgett.com, is one of the top blogs for future RVers. This year Heath launched The RV Entrepreneur podcast (which quickly shot to #1 in Travel New & Noteworthy) to better understand how other nomadic entrepreneurs build up remote businesses. You can follow Heath as he continues traveling on:

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

Chapter Twenty-Three

Commonly Asked RV Questions

There's an infinite amount of questions that people have before moving into an RV. I dedicated this section to try and answer a few of those before you leave. While the purpose of this book is to focus on the business side of travel, I didn't want to leave you empty handed.

We get a lot of random questions about living full-time in our RV. Most of them are pretty basic, like, where do you dump your poop? That one is easy to answer, we actually hired a guy to follow us around and he manually dumps our poop once a day. Kidding. That would be the crappiest job in the world (sorry, I had to.. I'm done with bathroom talk).

Other questions are more difficult to answer. Questions

like, “Where could you see yourselves living one day?”

No matter what questions people ask us about living in an RV, I always enjoy answering them (unless they ask me how we drove our RV to Hawaii, people always ask that question and then laugh out loud like they just busted a Chris Rock joke... I don't get it).

I hope this post gives you a bit of insight into what it's like living full-time in an RV.

1. Do you ever get tired of living in such a small space?

Honestly, no. Sometimes I miss having a bathtub. I realize that as a man it sounds weird acknowledging that I miss bathtubs, but I don't really care. Baths are awesome. I guess what I'm saying is, every now and then I DO miss some little luxuries like limitless hot water and amazing wifi.

But as far as space goes, I never feel cramped or tired of living in a small space. At least not in the first two years of doing it. Plus, it helps that we keep our space very clean. We do the dishes after almost every meal and make the

bed every day.

Doing these little things helps us feel organized and helps to make the space feel bigger.

2. How do you get mail, Internet, TV, phone service?

For internet we carry around a Verizon jetpack (little wireless device) that allows us to get wifi wherever we travel. We lease an unlimited plan that we found through a blog called Technomadia. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Previously, we had a 15 gig plan that we used for browsing the internet and email (p.s we took this jetpack to all 50 states and we get service just about everywhere, with the exception of a few places in west Texas and the Teton mountains). If we wanted to do any streaming or uploading of videos, then we typically went to a local coffee shop like Starbucks (Starbucks always has good internet).

Most RV parks have wifi, but usually the speed is very slow and it might make you want to pull your hair out. If you would prefer to work out of your RV all the time, you can always invest in a cell signal booster like this one.

For mail, we currently have that forwarded to my in-laws. Most of our mail is via email anyway, so that's not too much of an issue for us. [Escapees](#) is a company that actually has services that will help you setup your mail forwarding and all of that before you ever hit the road.

For TV? We mostly watch Netflix (when internet permits) and an occasional DVD of Friends in our TV.

3. Do you just stay at RV parks? How much does overnight RV parking typically cost?

We almost always stay at RV parks. However, it really depends on where we are and what we're doing. While we've spent time out on the west coast we've stayed in a lot of state and national parks, mostly because it's beautiful and there are tons of parks.

RV parks have all your basic amenities—bathrooms, showers, washateria (not all of them), internet (typically slow wifi), and the occasional pool. One of the first things we realized early on was the difference between RV park vs Trailer Park. RV parks are places where RVers like us or retirees typically stay. A trailer park is... well, what you

think of when you think of trailer park.

RV parks typically average around \$30/night, but can easily go much higher (especially on the west coast). We are members of Passport America and Good Sam, which both offer discounts at participating campgrounds/

4. How long do you typically stay in one place?

We have been living in our RV full-time for over two years and we've mostly done 1-3 night stays or 2-4 month stays. It really just depends on what is happening in our lives. While we were filming our documentary Hourly America, we were hustling to get to as many places as possible and would stay very little time. Now that we're done filming and can travel more leisurely, we're staying in places for longer periods of time because it saves money. Last fall we stayed at a lakefront RV park outside of Austin for \$360/month.

5. How long did it take you to downsize?

We made the transition not long after college, so we

really hadn't had time to accrue a lot of stuff. We had to get rid of a TV, few pieces of furniture, and a lot of our clothes, but other than that— not too much. This was probably much easier for us than it would be someone who has lived in a home for 20-30 years. I can understand the difficulty of what that might look like when I see my parent's home where my brothers and I were raised. I can only imagine how hard it must be to give everything up.

That being said, I've talked with a lot of full-time RVers who do a "test-run" of RVing for one year before selling everything. This way, they can give it a shot before taking the full plunge. I think that's a smart way to go.

6. What made you guys decide to buy an RV vs. a tiny house?

I honestly looked at buying a tiny house before we moved into the RV, but our style of travel was better suited for living in an RV. We like to move around a lot and while tiny houses CAN be mobile, they aren't mobile like RV's. The other reason I had originally looked into tiny houses was because of their sleek and modern design.

But as it turns out we were able to renovate our older RV and our newer rig has quite the modern feel as well (see pictures [here](#)).

7. How many miles per gallon do you get in one of those things (in other words, how much does gas cost)?

In our new Winnebago we get a whopping 6-9 miles per gallon with our Honda CR-V in tow.

That being said, in 2014 we did 48 states in our 1994 coachmen RV and we spent around \$6,000 total on gas throughout 7 months. You can read more of those financials [here on this post](#) I wrote.

8. How do you stay in shape while on the road?

Mostly the Bowflex... kidding.

We go on walks, I do push ups, and on days when I'm feeling super motivated I'll go for a run. Other than that, we don't do too much. For a period of time we've also had a gym membership to Planet Fitness, which was \$20/month and we had access to over 800 locations across the

country.

If you're trying to stay in good shape while you're traveling I would definitely suggest [Planet Fitness](#). They typically have really nice facilities for showering and workouts, plus free massage chairs and tootsie rolls. Need I say more?

9. Will you travel when you have kids?

This is the million dollar question. To be totally honest, I have no idea. I know that I WILL travel some when I have kids. I don't know if it will be full-time or part-time, probably a bit of both. I want my kids to have other kid friends, but I also want them to see the world.

I did an [interview last year](#) with Michael Boyink from [DitchingSuburbia](#) and he travels with his two kids and told me all about the amazing experiences he's had from full-timing with his kiddos. Hearing from people like Mike encourage me to want to travel and live in an RV one day with my kids as well.

10. When are you going to get a real house or “settle down”?

We don't have an end date on our RV travels. It could be next year or several years down the road.

11. Where do you dump your poop? (oops. I brought it up again)

Most RV's have a grey tank, black tank, and a freshwater tank (although some people use a [composting toilet](#)). The freshwater tank can run around 60 gallons and that is your drinking water. Black tank is your waste (poop). The grey tank is sink or shower water. You have a little hose that comes out of your tanks that connects with a sewer. You pull a lever that says grey and one that says black and you dump your tank. It's actually very simple.

(tip: Dump the black before grey and not at the same time. You want your grey water to wash away any toilet paper or other waste that might be stuck inside the line.)

12. How do you keep up with friendships while on the

road?

We lost quite a bit of friends we had from our college town in Austin when we hit the road. That's natural when you graduate from college or leave any geographical region. The good news is, we met a lot of people out on the road who had similar mindsets and missions in life... and we developed a community of people who also travel, write, and do video work (like us).

I think the most encouraging part about traveling is that once you hit the road you start to meet people with a similar mindset who can affirm your beliefs and values. I know that sounds obvious, of course you'll meet people on the road who also like to travel. But it's hard to envision what that feels like when you're only surrounded by people who don't get it.

Our family was pretty unsupportive at first, but then we made enough money to keep traveling and got some recognition for our work. When your parents get to watch you on [national TV](#), they think that is cool. Now they are our biggest fans.

13. What do you guys do for health insurance?

We found our health insurance through the [RVers Insurance Exchange](#). We have a plan for Alyssa with Scott and White that will cover us no matter where we are in the country, since we travel outside our home state, Texas, for more than 6 months out of the year.

Her plan runs around \$265/month, which is pretty steep. Fortunately for us, I can still be on my parent's plan until I'm 26, which I did at the request of my dad (he didn't have to try too hard to convince me).

14. What about washing clothes?

I packed 10 shirts total for our trip when we first hit the road. We didn't have much room in our motorhome, so I wanted to make sure I didn't bring all that much along. We read a book before we left called "[Packing Light](#)" and that was some really good inspiration for us before we hit the road to not overburden ourselves with too much stuff.

We stayed at a lot of RV parks, state parks, and national parks— but almost every RV park we stayed at had some form of Washateria. They aren't all that expensive. You can

buy a little portable washer / dryer set from Amazon, but it's so tiny I haven't heard great things from it. I would much rather just budget a little bit of money per month to wash clothes in a real machine.

At least, that's how we've been doing it and it's worked out so far

15. Does Alyssa drive the RV?

Heck yes she does! She's a beast. Our older motorhome was a bit smaller and less bulky than our new Winnebago, but she has been able to handle this one just fine.

16. What do you guys do for groceries and cooking?

We go to grocery stores like normal people. Alyssa has a gluten allergy so we cook almost all of our meals in our RV. We've done that ever since we started full-timing.

[Here's one](#) of Alyssa's favorite "Texas-style" meals to cook in the RV.

17. How did you know what type of RV to choose?

This was a much tougher question when we were first getting started. First, check out [this comparison](#) I did between a Class A vs Class C motorhome.

I had to do a lot of research to better understand the difference between fifth wheels, motorhomes, truck campers, pull-behinds, etc. Ultimately, we made our choice on motorhome because we liked the idea of having our vehicle and home be all in one. We enjoy being able to walk to the back and use the restroom or make food, without having to leave our vehicle while we're traveling.

Plus, this way we didn't have to buy a new vehicle to tow it. I could easily offer more educated responses on why we chose an RV VS. a trailer, but this was really the one that did it for us.

18. What's your favorite place/trip that you've been or done?

Probably driving up the Pacific Coast Highway. We basically put away our laptops and pushed work aside for the week and just enjoyed the views. We camped out

along the ocean, went to Hearst Castle, and really felt like we epitomized what it's supposed to feel like when driving an RV across America.

There is so much energy while driving up the west coast. It's real and invigorating. You wake up and look outside your window and you're literally on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It's the coolest thing I've ever done.

19. Have you guys found anywhere you might want to live?

The answer to this one is tricky. We've found tons of places we could see ourselves living in the future, but right now we just aren't at a point where we want to settle down quite yet. Top of our list is Nashville, TN, mostly because we've made a lot of great friendships in that town and we would have a lot of awesome community. But we're still definitely keeping our eyes open for more great places to live.

20. Why did you originally choose to live in an RV?

We chose to live in an RV mostly by accident. We wanted to travel across America and we calculated that buying an RV would be the quickest route for us to go and visit all 50 states. We had no idea that we would live in an RV long term, share the lifestyle with other people, or that I would spend so much time writing about living in an RV. The rest happened because we truly fell in love with the lifestyle.

Living in an RV has helped bring Alyssa and I closer together in our first couple years of marriage. We've seen more of America than either of us could have imagined we would (and still have a lot to see!). Because we are self employed, we've been able to pick up and go when new opportunities come our way. Not to mention, in the past year living super cheap allowed us to pay off over [\\$14k of our student debt](#).