Cultivate a Successful

FREELANCE CAREER

AN E-BOOK BASED ON THE 60-DAY EMAIL COURSE BY BRAD HUSSEY

by Brad Hussey

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Lesson 0:

Who the heck is Brad Hussey?

First of all I want to welcome you to the course, Cultivate a Successful Freelance Career!

Before we jump in, I want you to get to know me a little better...

My name is Brad Hussey! I'm from a small Canadian city called Yellowknife, way up in the subarctic. Yes, it's cold, yes we lived in igloos, and yes we rode polar bears to school... I'm totally kidding about the igloos ;)

[Fast forward twenty years] I moved to Vancouver, British Columbia with my wife to take a program called Interactive Design at Capilano University. In two short years, my life completely changed! Before enrolling in the school, I knew NOTHING about web design & development — I'd been working at a camping supplies store in a small town, wondering what the heck I was going to do with my life — but within my first year I'd already had the knowledge, and the skills to get my first paying client as a freelancer!

It got me so excited! After that, I was like a sponge, and I took everything I learned and ran with it! I became so confident in my skills and ability, that shortly after graduating, I was able to quickly and easily get myself my very first studio job as a Front-End Web Developer in Calgary, Alberta. I really loved the gig! The people were awesome, the vibe was great; we played foosball, made fancy espresso drinks, ate pizza, worked late on cool projects, drank beer, you name it! It was a DREAM job! For a little while anyway... Eventually it wore off on me, and just became normal, mundane, even boring.

"Why!?" I would often ask myself, thinking I was being ungrateful, or unfocused. I would get up (often late), jump out of bed, throw on some clothes, kiss my wife and rush out the door, jump in my car and power through rush hour traffic in Calgary. Eventually I'd get to work, and then I'd sit down, turn on my computer, and play the part again, for another day. And another.

And another. Etc. Etc.

I love my wife. And when I would leave every day to go to work, something just felt wrong. I hated leaving. I hated being away from her. She hated it too! After months and months of going through the motions, doing what I was "supposed" to do, my wife and I had a sort of epiphany. She had brought this thought to my attention:

If you knew you were going to die soon — maybe not tomorrow, but soon — is what you are doing with your life what you want?

It hit me. It hit her. No! It wasn't at all what I wanted. It's not what we wanted.

From that moment forward, everything I did—every action I took, every task completed—was a step in the direction of me working for myself, from home, as a freelance web developer. The funny part is, I started enjoying my job again. However, I didn't take that as a sign to stick with my job, and give up on my dream. I just allowed myself to enjoy my work again, knowing it was temporary.

Over the next few months, I'd built up my client list, taken on more projects, prepared myself for the uncharted territory of self-employment, and made an exit strategy. Then my wife and I found out she was pregnant, and we were going to

have a baby! Wowza! If there was any time for me to throw in the towel, give up on my crazy idea, and be responsible, and choose the "safe" option, THIS was the time!

Did this stop my plan? I wouldn't be sitting here in my home studio, sipping a nice Scotch, writing this lecture if it did. Here I am ;)

I used the pregnancy, and the reality of having a baby as my sole, and driving force to succeed. There was no other way, and there was no option for failure. After negotiating a remote, contract-based position with my employer, my wife and I took it one step further, and moved south of Calgary to a city called Lethbridge — where there would be no jobs for me if my plan failed, talk about burning the boat! (Now, while I don't recommend quitting your job, and moving to a town with no jobs when you find out you're going to have a baby, it's most certainly one way of giving yourself a huge kick in the a** to succeed!)

I told myself, and everybody else, if I could earn only 75% of what I made at my studio job, the 25% loss in salary was worth the freedom. And I wholeheartedly stood by that. That was 2012. The freedom I experienced in my first year of business was absolutely amazing, breathtaking even. I literally thought I'd cheated, like I'd pulled the wool over someone's eyes and found some secret to life that nobody else knew about! There were no more alarms to get me up in the morning, I woke up well rested (until Ayla was born ;), I'd make a latte, and get to work with my very own clients. We went on vacations when it worked best for us, we'd take spontaneous road trips to Montana, heck we even went to Hawaii and San Francisco for over 3 weeks! And we could do that because I could work from anywhere, at anytime! It was my dream, but it came true, and it had become my reality!

Oh, and that 25% salary cut? It never happened. In my first year of business, I doubled what I made at my studio job!

Here I am today, still working for myself, loving it more than ever before, and I am confident now that I will never go back to the way it was. I've seen the light. My dream is my reality. I live my life the way that works best for myself, my wife, and my daughter. On my own terms.

Which brings you here. You are a part of my story. And, well, perhaps you'll let me be a part of yours. I want to help you, in the ways that I know best: by teaching, leading by example, sharing my stories, and my experience.

What this course is

This course is my way of sharing my knowledge, my failures, my successes, my tips and my tricks with you, so that you may copy them, tweak them, and use them to best aid in your success as a freelancer in your respective field. At the end of each lesson, I'll have a list of "actionable steps" I suggest that you take. I'm going to challenge you, I may even make you uncomfortable with some of the things I'll ask that you do. Action and persistence is rewarded with success. Sitting and doing nothing gets you ... nothing.

What this course is not

This course does not guarantee your success. Success is your job. Nobody can guarantee your success other than yourself. That doesn't mean that what I have to share has no value, what it means is that some of the things I share simply may not apply to you. That's okay! What works for some may not work for others.

Different strokes for different folks. Know what I'm saying? Use what works, scrap what doesn't.

Lesson 1:

Why you must "cultivate" your career

First of all I want to welcome you to the first official lesson of the course! The fact that you're here tells me you fall into one of three situations:

1. You have a day job, but desire to work for yourself;
2. You're burning the candle at both ends, working a day job AND freelancing, but are afraid to take the leap;
3. You are a freelancer, but you need some extra help.

I know your pain. I've been there. I've done the 9-to-5 and dreamed of working from home.

I've worked 8 hour days at my day job, and 8 hour nights at home trying to build my freelance business. I took the leap, and was worried I wouldn't be able to make enough money to pay my bills.

The great news? This course will help you, whether you're in group 1, 2 or 3!

Before anything, you must understand the very first step to success:

The first step to cultivating a successful career as a freelancer is to TAKE ACTION. Not tomorrow, or next week, or [insert excuse here] — you must take action TODAY.

Taking action can actually be quite simple, in fact, you already took action today by enrolling in this course! Congratulations!

But your job is far from done. You need to continually take action, and I mean you need to take action EVERY DAY.

Ok, now let me tell you a little secret.

You're not going to be successful overnight. Your career as a freelancer won't just happen out of nowhere.

You must CULTIVATE your career. What I mean is, becoming a successful freelancer takes time, hard work, effort, and persistence. When you "cultivate" your career, you build a solid foundation for future growth, future connections, and future success.

There is no big red easy button, but it certainly does get easier over time. When you adopt the mindset that a successful career is one that has been cultivated, and nurtured like a garden over time, you'll reap the benefits.

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Relax.
2. Truly KNOW that you can do this.

Lesson 2:

Define, visualize, and feel your success

You can't just say "I wanna be a successful freelance web designer", and then just hope you become successful. You need to define what success is to you in order to know where to even start!

Seriously, grab a piece of paper and write down what success means to you. Don't be afraid to dream big! Oh, and be specific.

Here are some examples to get you started:

Success to me is working from home as a freelance web designer so I can spend more time with my family

Success to me is making an extra $1,000 / month in my side business as a graphic designer

Success to me is being able to travel anywhere in the world, while maintaining my consulting business from wherever I am

Success to me is working part time with my current job, and building a side business that funds my hobbies

Success to me is making $5,000 / month as a mural painter

Okay, now that you've written that down. What does that success look like? Once you've attained that goal, what does a typical day actually look like?

Close your eyes, and imagine that you've achieved your definition of success. Most importantly, feel—as strongly as you can—the emotions that would come from realizing your dream, whether that be joy, satisfaction, sense of accomplishment, love of life, excitement.

It could look something like:

> *I wake up well rested, because I didn't have to set an alarm. I make a green smoothie for breakfast then go outside for a run.*

> *After a shower, I respond to a couple business emails, and send a project estimate to a new web design client. I then spend a couple hours finishing the home page design for an exciting project, and send the designs to the client for approval.*

> *After lunch, I head to the beach to go stand up paddle boarding for an hour while I soak up some sun. I come back in the afternoon and notice my estimate has been approved and the client sent me a 50% deposit to get started on the new project.*

> *Throughout the rest of the afternoon, I work on the new project, respond to a couple more emails, and get 4 more sales for my WordPress Theme. Today was a great day. I think I'll head out to that Italian Pizzeria I've always wanted to try, I hear they have the best Margherita Pizza in town!*

How was that for you? Feels great, hey? I absolutely love doing this because it allows me to truly feel what it's like to have already achieved my goal. That alone gives me inspiration to start taking the steps necessary to achieve my goal of success.

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Write down what success means to you, dream BIG and use DETAIL
2. Every morning when you wake up, and every night before you go to sleep, close your eyes and visualize that you already have achieved that goal. Imagine what an average day looks like.

Lesson 3:

Reverse engineer your success

In order to reach your goal of success, you need to be able to chart your path from Point A to Point B. Thankfully, you already defined and visualized what success looks like to you (right?). This makes it easy for you to chart your path, and reverse engineer how to get there.

Think of it this way, let's say I want to go on a road trip, and the point of the road trip is to get to New Orleans to party at a local music festival. There are two ways I can go about this road trip:

1. *Get in my car and drive south, and just hope I end up in New Orleans;*
2. *Find New Orleans on a map, then map out how to get to New Orleans from where I am right now.*

Clearly, the second option is the best plan of action! The same principle applies to your career:

Imagine you are the car, and success is New Orleans. You can aimlessly move forward, and just hope to end up successful (not likely going to happen); or you can define success, map out what you need to do to get there, and then drive!

Make sense?

You also need a timeline. Timelines are important, because if you just say "I'm going to drive to New Orleans, but I don't know how to get there, and don't know

when I'll arrive", there's a chance you may never make it! But if you say, "In 12 days, I will arrive in New Orleans by taking Route X and Y".

The same principal applies to your career as a freelancer. "I wanna be a successful freelancer" won't cut it. Try, "In 3 years from today, I will be working from home, making $5k / month as a freelance web designer."

So here's what you need to do: On a piece of paper, at the very top of the page, write the current YEAR, then under the year write "Target Goal" and "Actions". The idea here is that you specify one target goal for the entire year, and then under "Actions" you specify the steps, or actions, you'll take to achieve that goal. Do this for each year until the target year of you finally achieving your main goal of success. (You may also do this in a smaller timeframe, over the course of months rather than years).

2015

Target Goal

Make $10,000 freelancing

Actions

- Attend 8 networking events in my city
- Sign 6 new clients
- Give my business card out to 50 local businesses
- Cold call 5 local businesses every month making them aware of my services
- Make an average of $833 in freelance income each month

2016

Target Goal

Make $24,000 freelancing

Actions

- Attend Smashing Conference 2016
- Get 30 emails from potential contacts at the conference
- Sign at least 5 current or new clients in a monthly retainer
- Meet the Director at Agency Y
- Make an average of $2,000 in freelance income each month
- Negotiate to work one day a week at home with boss

2017

Target Goal

Make $35,000 freelancing

Actions

- Grow my professional network by scheduling a meeting with Company A's CEO, and Company B's Director
- Have coffee with John from Agency X
- Propose to work from home for current day job
- Have 20 total clients by end of the year
- Sign at least 5 current or new clients in a monthly retainer
- Make an average of $2,900 in freelance income each month

2018

Target Goal

Work exclusively from home as a freelancer and make $40,000

Actions

- Negotiate to work exclusively from home with day job as a contractor
- Sign all small clients in a monthly retainer
- Get in touch with 2 large local agencies
- Attend Smashing Conference 2018
- Make 30 new connections at the conference
- Diversify income streams by creating a digital product I can sell to my clients
- Make an average of $3,333 in freelance income each month

It's worth noting that these goals and actions may evolve over time, as you may be ahead of schedule, or desire something a little different. That's okay. Allow them to evolve, but make sure to update your Goal and Actions to follow suit.

"If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere."
— Henry Kissinger

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Create your timeline, it can be short, it can be long, but make sure there are clear, actionable steps you can take!
2. Join our Community on Facebook (http://facebook.com/bradhussey/)
3. Follow me on Twitter (http://twitter.com/bradhussey/)

Lesson 4:

The #1 question I'm asked daily

I want to share with you the one question I get asked the most, by my students, my subscribers, and even some of my colleagues. In fact, I often wondered this question before I set out on my own as a freelancer:

"Should I just quit my job and dive in head first? Or should I build my business on the side and quit my job eventually?"

The answer: Don't quit your job.

Yep, you read that correctly. Just straight up quitting your day job is a terrible idea for a number of reasons:

You may not be ready

Quitting your job is a process, not a single action. It took me months of preparation and planning to quit my job. You may not be mentally prepared, or have enough money in your bank account to keep you afloat if you don't get any work for a couple months! Quitting your job needs to be a calculated move, not a reckless emotional decision.

You're missing out on a golden opportunity

When I quit my job, I didn't even necessarily "quit". It was more of a graceful departure, that was planned well in advance, and thought through. I didn't walk

up to my boss and say, "I hate this job, I'm tired, and I quit!" — that would have burned a major bridge for me in my first months of business.

Since I was leaving my position as the only Front-End Developer at the company, they needed me, and just leaving would not only put them in a terrible position that would leave them scrambling for a replacement, but they would resent me and never give me work again.

I knew this, so I planned to negotiate to work for them, full time, on a contract basis until they found my replacement. So, instead of getting my regular monthly paycheque, I would invoice them for the work I did for them at $60/hour. This made me way more money doing the exact same thing I did when I worked full-time for the same company, plus this agreement paid my bills for the first 4 months of me working from home, while I was building my business.

You'll likely fail, the wrong way

There's two ways to fail: the right way and the wrong way. When you fail the right way, there's a positive outcome, one that you can learn from, one that you can get up, dust yourself off and try again! Every single success in this world has been preceded by multiple failures. That's a good thing.

Failing the wrong way usually comes from making a reckless, thoughtless decision. Spontaneity is not the same as being an idiot.

To illustrate the difference, here's an example of failing wrong and failing right using the exact same scenario:

Failing The Wrong Way

After 1 year of working at your full-time job, you realize how much you hate it, you feel the boss under-appreciates you, and you can't stand being there anymore. You let it build up, and in a frustrated fury, you tell your boss to shove it and you quit on the spot. Freedom! Right? Wrong.

You then spend the next 3 months wondering how the hell you're supposed to make money, and suffering great losses because you failed to plan and burned a major bridge. #failedthewrongway

Failing The Right Way

After 1 year of working at your full-time job, you realize how much you hate it, you feel the boss under-appreciates you, and you can't stand being there anymore. Instead of letting it build up, you talk to your boss to negotiate a better working situation, perhaps a raise, or to give you a 1-month trial period of working one day a week from home, giving you the opportunity to prove how much value you add by working from your home office.

As the months go by, you feel a bit more relief in your working situation, but in the meantime, you've been planning your final exit strategy, building your client list, taking on a few extra freelance projects. You schedule a meeting with your boss, mentioning you'd like to discuss your future with the company. In your meeting you outline how working from home once a week has been very successful, your productivity has boosted, and you're getting more work done for the company as a result. You're able convince your boss that letting you work

exclusively from home, with a monthly in-person meeting, is a good idea and you agree to try it out for a couple months.

During those two months, your freelance business dries up, and you aren't getting any more work. You're discouraged, and feel defeated, but at least you didn't burn a major bridge with your old employer, and you're able to jump back into your old position until you're ready to try again. #failedtherightway

See the difference?

I never recommend just quitting your job straight out the gate, because you're missing out on a great opportunity to test the waters, and start building your lifeboat before you decide to jump ship. Grow your freelance business on the side, build your connections, take action on those steps you wrote down in your timeline — all while working your day job, and getting paid your regular income so you can pay your bills and put food on the table.

As you build your connections, grow your portfolio, acquire more clients, and bill for more work, you'll eventually get to the point where you simply CANNOT work a full-time job AND work as a busy freelancer. You'll reach a point where you're burning the candle at both ends, and it's time to make a decision:

Jump ship (quit your day job / negotiate part time work / negotiate work-from-home)

or...

Get in the lifeboat, and set sail (begin your journey as a self-employed freelancer)

Does that make sense?

"I learned many, many lessons from my father, but not least of which is that you can fail at something you don't want, so you might as well take a chance doing what you love."
— Jim Carrey

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Don't quit your job
2. Take action on at least ONE of those steps you created in your timeline
3. Watch this video of Jim Carrey (trust me, it's relevant)! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vU5jh858ZU)

Lesson 5:

Should you make a business plan first?

What gets you excited about starting a business?

Is it the freedom you'll get from being self-employed? Is it the ability to make money doing what you love while travelling in Thailand?

Or is it making a business plan?

...

Duh! (I hope you answered the former)

OF COURSE freedom, and travel, and working on meaningful projects is WAY more exciting! Successful freelancers don't start working for themselves because they couldn't wait to write a formal business plan.

Do you want to know a surefire way to kill your desire to be a successful freelancer and not get anything done? Incorporate, get a lawyer, write a formal business plan, create a pricing sheet, and pen all of your client policies.

For most people, these things are uninspiring and get in the way of just starting, and taking action. If you're good at what you do (or trying to get good at it) just start already! Give some thought about your prices, and put up a nice portfolio website, of course, but just get yourself out there! Once you're busier, give some considerable thought to your long-term business plan, a good brand identity, prices, etc. There will come a time when incorporating, lawyers, accountants,

business plans, shareholders, etc. are in the cards. But for now? Just start something!

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Don't write a business plan
2. Do one thing that will get you closer to your goal, just one!

Lesson 6:

Should you work for free?

Here's a common question all freelancers have to answer at some point:

"Should I work for free to gain experience, and build a portfolio?"

My simplest answer? Yes.

But wait! I'm not done answering.

If you are looking to gain more experience, build connections, and add some work to your portfolio, then working for free can certainly help. However, there's a catch! If you work for free for too long, you're sending the wrong message. People will start to see you as the go-to-guy (or go-to-gal) for their web problems, their "cool website idea", or for updating their company website for free. Basically, it won't be long before you start getting taken advantage of, and you might have a hard time getting out of that rut.

What I suggest is, at first (and only if you must), do a "favour" project for free, for a friend, colleague, connection, etc. in exchange for something — a raving testimonial, a recommendation on LinkedIn, displaying your business cards at the front desk of their office, or a service trade. This way, there's an actual transaction of some sort going on between the two parties, and you'll be providing value to each other. This will help you avoid being taken advantage of for free work, and should both parties be satisfied with the agreement, you can continue trading services.

When I first started, I built a lot of personal projects and websites that helped fill my portfolio, I also had school projects that I was able to highlight on my portfolio, however, the sooner you replace those portfolio pieces with REAL client work, the better — people don't take you as seriously if you only highlight school projects.

When I needed to highlight "real" client work, but I wasn't in a position to actually charge money, I traded services with people. In one case, I built a website and offered ongoing maintenance in exchange for free chiropractic care. In another case, I built and maintained a website in exchange for free massage therapy. Win-win, right?

It was only after two "free" projects that I charged for my first website. For how much, you're probably wondering?

A whopping $595!

But in all honesty, that was the BEST $595 I've ever made. The website took me about 2 entire months to complete, and I recall being the most stressed I've ever been.

But in the end, I had my first client, who was happy with the result, and I LEARNED by DOING! (My favourite way of learning).

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Actionable Steps To Take This Week

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1. Make a list of colleagues, friends, small local businesses who you can offer your services in exchange for theirs.
2. Contact at least 1 of them, via email, phone, or in person.

Lesson 7:

Where to find jobs & freelance gigs

One of the big problems for new freelancers (and some experienced ones, too!) is finding jobs. There are a lot of jobs out there, but finding them can be difficult if you don't know where to look.

Well, I know where to look. And I'm going to show you right now:

Krop (http://www.krop.com/)

An excellent resource for getting Full-Time, Part-Time, Freelance, and Telecommuting positions! I used Krop to get my first Full-Time Job as a Front-End Web Developer! Set up an email alert right there on the home page for your specific job search.

Authentic Jobs (http://www.authenticjobs.com/)

Another amazing job site for securing Full-Time, Part-Time, Contract, Freelance, Moonlighting, and Internship positions. Set up an Email / RSS alert on their home page for your specific job search.

Coroflot (http://www.coroflot.com/jobs)

Another very useful resource, abundant with jobs for us creative people.

Smashing Jobs (http://jobs.smashingmagazine.com/)

I love Smashing Magazine. They not only have great learning resources, but their job board is great too!

AIGA Design Jobs (http://designjobs.aiga.org/jobs)

For you designers, graphic designers & web designers. Lots of options here. High quality employers.

Mashable Job Board (http://jobs.mashable.com/jobs/search)

An excellent and reputable website. Lots more job options!

Craigslist (http://craigslist.com/)

Don't be shy to check the job section here! I've snagged myself a couple high quality clients in my local Craigslist "jobs" listings. Make sure to check the "web / info design" or "art / media / design" listings. (Bonus Tip: Don't limit yourself to your local listings! Feel free to look for listings in other cities, too. I'm in Canada, but I was able to get myself a great client who listed a job posting in the Honolulu, Hawaii craigslist!)

oDesk (http://www.odesk.com/)

Another decent option, if you're looking to build some portfolio work, make some extra cash, and gain some experience. Some people make a living by freelancing exclusively on sites like oDesk! It's worth signing up, creating a profile, and putting yourself out there.

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1.   Bookmark ALL relevant job boards
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2. Find at least 3 jobs that match your skill set

3. Apply to them.

4. (optional) Create an oDesk profile, and apply to a gig!

Lesson 8:

Persistence and the "Mountain & Valley"

When it comes to freelancing, growing a business (online or offline), building relationships, and cultivating your career, there is one simple way to guarantee you do not succeed.

A lack of persistence.

While there are a myriad ways to fail, a lack of persistence is nail in the coffin. Put another (more positive) way, the only way to find success is through persistence. Sure, there are some people who get lucky, or seem to be in the "right place at the right time", but you can't count on that situation when building your business. That's called the lottery. Most people don't win the lottery. So don't gamble with your future.

Let's do a little case study on persistence:

JOHN
TALENTED WEB DEVELOPER
WANTS TO BUILD A FREELANCE BUSINESS

John is a talented web developer. He is a highly skilled individual, has taken all the online courses, read all the books, and is ready to rock 'n roll with a brand new freelance career. He's negotiated with his employer to work on a contract basis, which frees up most of his time to build his empire, and is excited to get started. The first couple months are great, and seem fairly easy, because he prepared and lined up some initial work.

John is jived (as he should be!) but at this point, he is currently experiencing what I like to call the mountain period. A mountain period is when a freelancer

makes a large income in a short timeframe, typically a month or two. These incomes can be as large as 3 - 4 months-worth of income in a single month.

John is very excited to see his bank account grow at such a rapid rate, and he inflates his lifestyle to account for his new found fortune.

Big mistake.

What comes after a mountain? A valley.

Seemingly out of nowhere, John stops getting calls, and doesn't seem to be getting many emails from his clients for new work. What happened? John is now going through a valley period, and his income seems to be drying up. John didn't prepare for this, as he blew most of his cash from the previous months. He panics, doesn't have enough money to cover rent this month, and convinces himself that freelancing is not for him. He calls up his employer begging for his old job back, and leaves what could have been a fruitful future for him and his family.

What's wrong with John's story?

A few things:

1. He put in the initial effort to line up work for the first few months, but never seemed to care much after that;
2. He inflated his lifestyle after experiencing a temporary mountain period (perhaps upgraded to a more expensive apartment, dines out every week, bought a couple nice suits, perhaps leased a new car);

3. He gave up. He never put persistence to the test. He quit after experiencing his first valley period. Silly John.

The above story had two main points:

1) Freelancing income typically happens in cycles

Unlike a traditional job, where you get paid your predictable salary (let's say $2,500 / month), freelancers get paid whenever their client pays them, and sometimes they'll get paid for a bunch of work at once (let's say $7,500 in a single month). The smart freelancer will pay themselves only what they need, and save the rest for an upcoming valley period. The naïve freelancer will think, "Wow! I make so much money now. Who knew freelancing would be so lucrative?", and inflate her lifestyle accordingly.

2) Persistence is key to success

Let's say John didn't ever make mistakes #1 and #2, but still gave up after experiencing a valley period. Because he never pushed through, never persisted, John wasn't able to realize that the valley is only temporary, and more mountains await him.

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Success doesn't come overnight. Heck, success sometimes doesn't come for months, or even years! As a freelancer, if you give up every time you experience defeat, failure, or every time you experience a valley period, you'll never succeed. You'll never win.

Self employment, freelancing, and building a business is about playing the long game. The only way to win the freelance game is through persistence, hard work, and putting in perpetual effort.

"Before success comes in any man's life, he is sure to meet with much temporary defeat, and, perhaps, some failure. When defeat overtakes a man, the easiest and most logical thing to do is to quit. That is exactly what the majority of men do. More than five hundred of the most successful men this country has ever known told [me] their greatest success came just one step beyond the point at which defeat had overtaken them."
— Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich

How to "bridge" inconsistent freelance income: my secret to bypassing the "valley"

Did you know there's a way to make yourself immune to the valley period? I call it "building a bridge". I experienced one true valley period at the beginning of my freelance career (much like John!) and made a measly $708.75. Instead of giving up, I realized I never wanted to experience a valley like that again, so I decided to build a bridge. This bridge essentially makes me immune to valley periods, so I can focus on climbing those mountains! I wrote a blog post here that explains how I built my bridge, and how you can start planning to build yours.

> ### Actionable Steps To Take This Week
>
> 1. Read my blog post on how to bridge inconsistent freelance income

2. Pick up a copy of Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*

3. Don't give up, and don't plan to give up!

Lesson 9:

Your price. What are your services worth?

There is one thing you should NEVER be apologetic about...

NEVER be apologetic about your price!

The services you offer are valuable, and by undercutting yourself, you're doing yourself, your client, and the rest of us freelancers a disservice.

A reasonable rate for a junior freelance web designer in North America is $30 / hour. If you send a quote to your client for a $1,000 web design project, that's roughly 33 hours of hard work. Don't be apologetic about that! You may get a client who thinks that's WAY too much money — if you give in to that sort of client, then there's a high likelihood they're not looking for valuable services, and you'll soon find yourself with a huge headache and a client who under-appreciates the value you add.

The same goes for the freelancers with premium prices! If you're a software developer, and your rate is $100 / hour, you can still run into the same problems with clients looking to undervalue your services.

Cultivate the clients who value your professional services, and fire (or better yet, don't even hire) the ones who will only bring you and your business down.

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

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1. Decide your hourly rate with this free hourly rate calculator for freelancers (https://motivapp.com/freelance-hourly-rate-calculator)

2. Don't undervalue your services

3. Over deliver on something you're working on!

Lesson 10:

Where do you go from here?

Congratulations! You've made it to the final official lesson of Cultivate a Successful Freelance Career.

But our journey is far from over! Just because you made it to the final lesson of the course, it doesn't mean I'm done with you :) It's quite the opposite, really. My mission in my business is to help as many people as possible realize their dreams, start a new business, cultivate a successful freelance career, and experience a fulfilling & passionate life.

This course will continue to grow, and I will add new material and bonus lessons in the following weeks & months. So long as you're a subscriber of mine, you'll never miss this new material, and I'll continue to deliver quality content in your inbox.

I hope this course has been truly valuable to you. I've received hundreds of personal emails from many of you, and it's been really amazing for me to see that you've been actually taking action and laying the groundwork for your new career!

So, where do you go from here?

The most important thing is to keep up the momentum! You've dedicated the last 60 days to getting the ball rolling, and at this point you should have a respectable amount of knowledge, an action plan, useful resources, access to jobs and freelance gigs, and perhaps you may even have a couple small gigs under your belt!

Don't stop now! Your decision to keep the ball rolling will either make or break your success in your new business. Remember: persistence is key to success.

Here are a few things I suggest you continue to do:

1. Continue learning and honing new skills (coding, design, marketing, communication, etc.)
2. Continue building your portfolio
3. Continue to make professional connections (local meetups, conferences, digital conferences)
4. Keep applying to relevant jobs (using the job boards I provided)
5. Just keep building that momentum!

Code College Discounts

For those of you who are interested in really stepping up your coding game, and want to learn to code and build websites, I highly recommend signing up for Code College. As you already know, Code College is my online school where I teach online courses about coding, design, and online business. The library will be growing substantially this year, and therefore the price of unlimited access will also be increasing.

At the time of publishing this content, you can have unlimited lifetime access to Code College for $24 / month, or a one-time investment of $997. These prices will increase later this year (2015), and therefore, the best time to get access is now. Doing so will lock in your price, and you'll never have to pay extra when the investment levels increase.

To help make the decision a little easier for you, I'm giving my Cultivate students 25% off these prices. That means you can subscribe monthly for only $18/month, or make a one-time investment of $747 and have lifetime access to all current and future Code College courses.

All you have to do is use this link (http://codecollege.ca/courses/code-college-subscription?coupon_code=CULTIVATESERIES), or use the discount code **CULTIVATESERIES** before you check out and confirm your investment.

If you have any questions, or problems, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'm here to help you grow :)

Yours in freelancing success,

Brad

Resource

Trello

If you already use Trello, then you probably know how great it is. If you don't currently use Trello (or haven't used it in awhile), I'm going to tell you why it's always open in my browser tabs.

What is Trello?

Trello allows you to stay organized, keep track of progress, manage your team, and get stuff DONE! It can be used for almost any project — a home renovation, chores, or more importantly, running your business. Trello uses a Board - List - Card system. It looks like so:
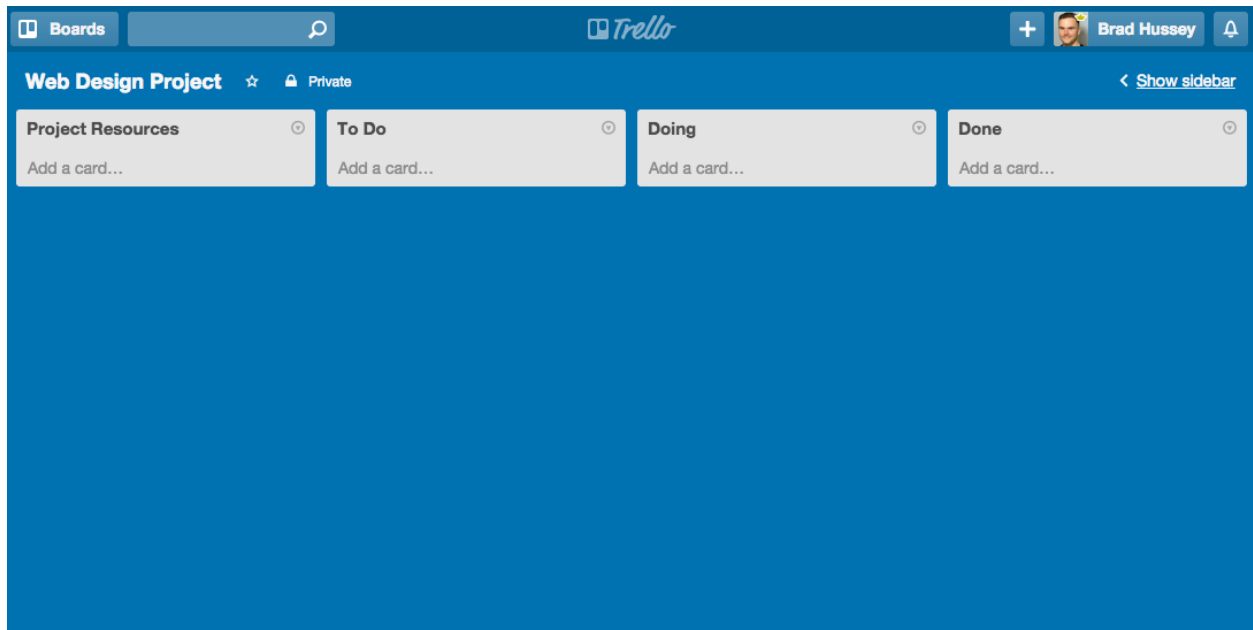
Board

This is the main overview of your project, where you'll see a "big picture" view of everything.
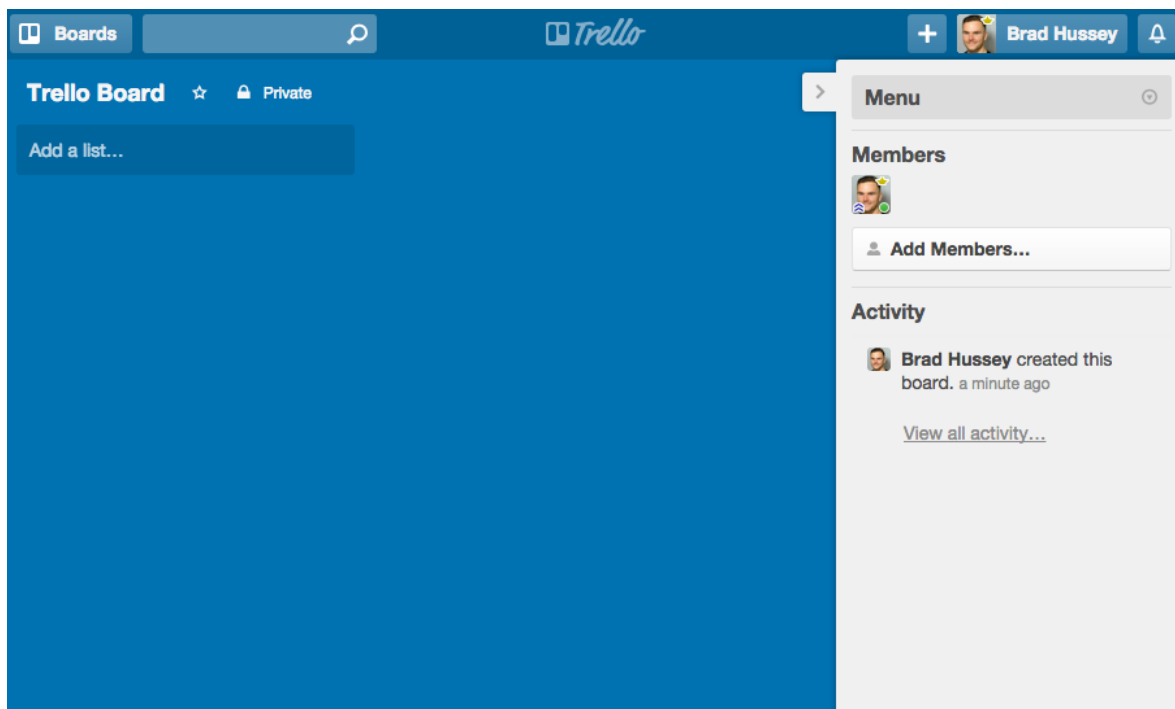

Lists

Lists are kind of like a "container" for list items (called "cards" in Trello world). This is an actual screenshot of the exact lists I use with my team when working on a web design project.

Cards

Cards can be a simple task, a question, an idea, etc. They can hold a ton of valuable information. This is where Trello differentiates itself from a standard To Do list; the list "items" can be as detailed as you wish.
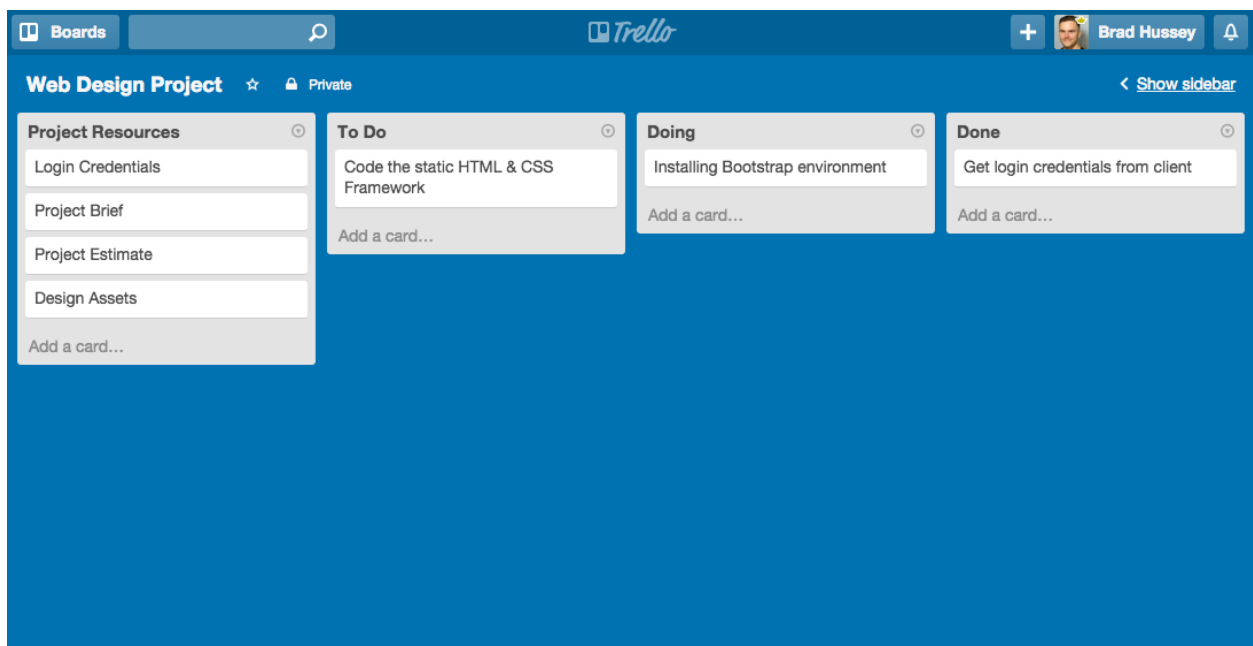
Card detail

When you open a card, you're given endless options for adding details to your specific task, including card description (with MarkDown editing capability), colour coded labels for organization, ability to assign the task to a team member, a due date, comments, attachments and so much more.

Drag & Drop

When you want to move a card to a new list, you can easily drag that specific card to a different list, for example, from Doing to Done. A bonus feature in Trello is that everything auto-updates in real time! Meaning everyone viewing the board will see automatic updates without having to refresh.
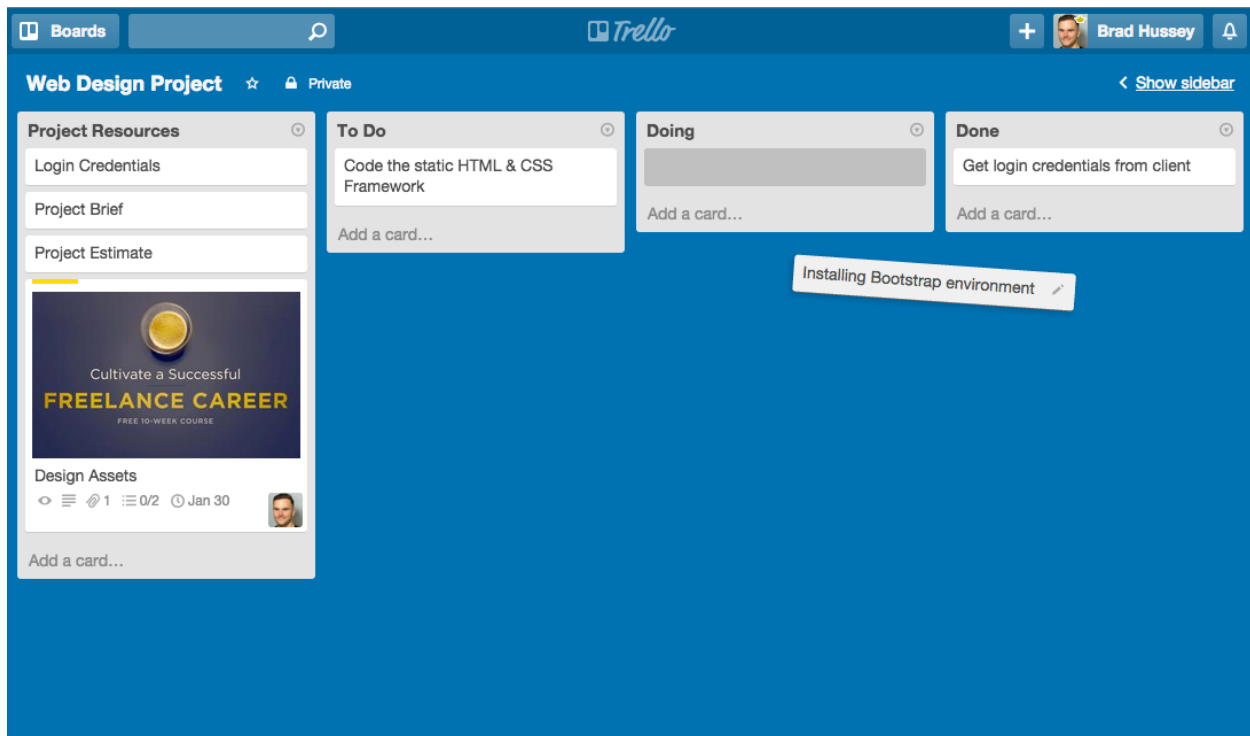
I seriously love Trello, and have been finding more and more uses for it every single day. For example, I just created a new system where I add a new card to a list called "Please Quote", which notifies my assistant developer to quote on a new project. When he adds his quote to the card details, I receive a notification, send an official estimate to my client, and move the card to the "Approved" list. Before using this method, we'd email back-and-forth between me, my client and my developer — and it was just a headache! This method is quick, efficient, and reliable.
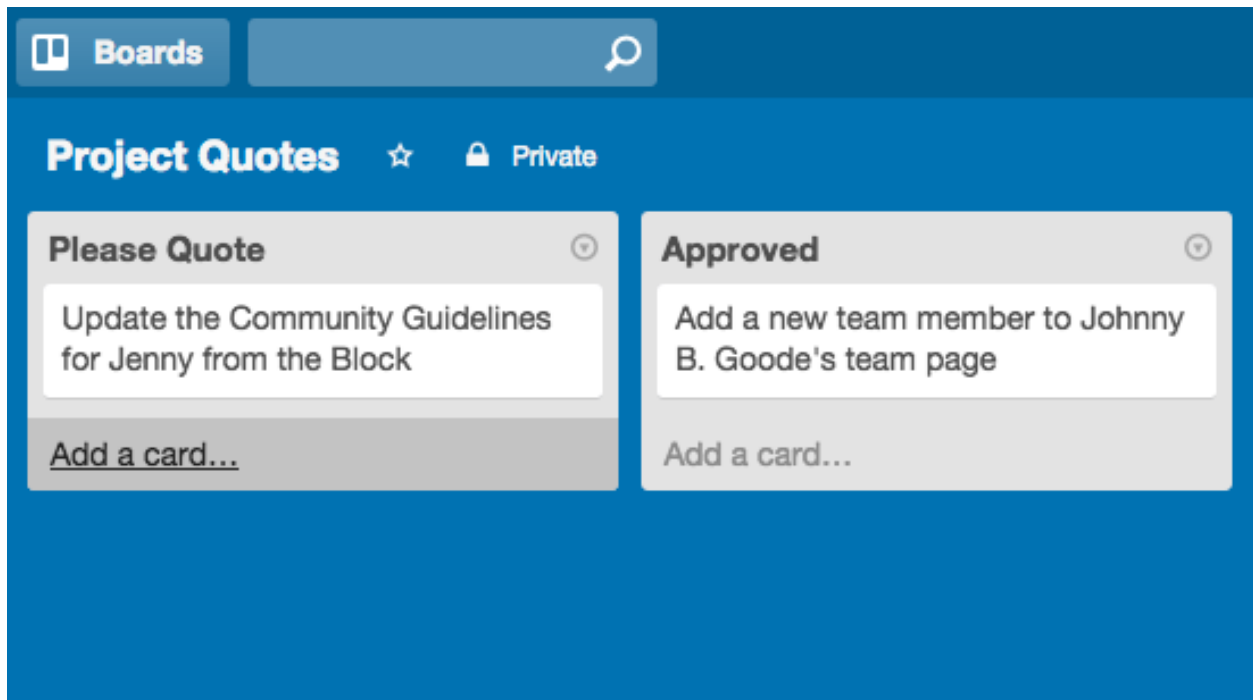
It's free!

Who doesn't love free stuff, right? I signed up for Trello about 3 years ago, and have used it extensively since then. I require this tool to efficiently run my freelance business, and I think you will find a ton of value in this tool. Trello has a "Gold" and "Business" version, which gives you extra features, like custom backgrounds, stickers, and such, but the free version gives you everything you'll need, and doesn't skimp on features.

You can sign up for a free Trello account right here (http://www.bradhussey.ca/usetrello).

Also, to be totally transparent, the above link is (technically) an affiliate link. I will not receive a commission if you sign up, however, I do get a free month of Trello Gold should you decide to sign up for a free account using my link.

I hope you find Trello super helpful in your journey to cultivating your freelance career!

Resource

Learning to Code

Okay, so this might come as obscenely obvious, but you've gotta learn to code.

If you already know how to code, great, but there's always more to learn, and you can always improve. If you do not know how to code, well, I can promise you you're in the right hands.

While this email course is meant to help you cultivate a successful freelance career—whether you're a painter, a musician, a life coach, or a programmer—I will naturally come at it from the perspective of a web designer / developer, because that's my specialty.

Even if you're not planning on building a business out of coding websites, you should still learn to code.

What does "learning to code" entail?

Regardless of your career choice, and most importantly if your business relies on building websites, you need to learn the following:

HTML & CSS

HTML & CSS are a dynamic duo. They're meant for each other. I like to think of HTML as the "brains" and CSS as the "beauty".

HTML stands for "Hyper Text Markup Language", and is the backbone of every single website on the web. Every website uses HTML to display content. There's no way around it. The great thing about HTML is that it is by far the easiest web language to learn, hands down.

CSS stands for "Cascading Style Sheets" and it's how you make websites look good. CSS is reserved for the "presentation" of the content (a.k.a. how the website looks). Like HTML, CSS is very easy to learn. When you pair HTML & CSS together, you can create truly beautiful websites.

JavaScript & jQuery

These guys are reserved for the "behaviour" of a website. Things like animations, fading elements, image carousels, popup boxes, etc. are typically handled using Javascript, or more specifically jQuery. What is jQuery, you ask? It's simply a library built on-top of Javascript. "But Brad, why not just go straight to the source and use Javascript? Why beat around the bush?". Well, while it's important for you to understand the essentials of Javascript, it is notorious for being a fairly complicated language! Unless you're planning on being a hardcore programmer, and building a career around Javascript, I'd recommend getting the 101 on Javascript and move straight into jQuery.

jQuery is an incredibly easy language to learn! It harnesses the power of Javascript, while allowing beginners the ability to efficiently manipulate the DOM (Document Object Model) shortly after learning how to use it.

PHP & WordPress

PHP is the most popular advanced programming language available to web developers. It allows you to create "dynamic" websites, instead of "static" websites. A static website (a.k.a. a "brochure" website) is a website that is simple in nature, and rarely changes it's content. HTML & CSS alone can only create static websites. And while there's nothing wrong with that, you won't secure high paying freelance gigs when you can only code static brochure websites. It's once you start learning to code dynamic websites that you're able to join the big leagues.

A "dynamic" website is one that can automatically update, or be easily modified through the means of a Content Management System (CMS). Instead of manually changing the source code in order to update your client's biography page, your client can "log in" to their website and update their biography themselves via the CMS, or add pictures, new pages, etc. Obvious examples of dynamic websites are blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. Most websites on the web are dynamic, so it's worth your while to learn how to do it.

WordPress is a CMS and is programmed using PHP. It's definitely advanced territory, but easily attainable once you know HTML, CSS and PHP. Once I learned to code WordPress websites, I went from booking $1,000 projects to $5,000 projects. The work is there, you just have to know how to get the work, and how to do the work.

That's where I come in. This email course is going to help you do that. But I can't guarantee results unless you take initiative, take action, and take control of your success. If you think learning to code will add value and help you in your journey, then let me help you.

I spent $12,000 to start. You don't have to.

I went to college to learn to code — physical college, not code college ;) It cost me $12,000 and 2 years of my life to get me up and running. While it was the single most important career decision I've ever made (it's allowed me to live a life of freedom on my own terms, at home, as a successful freelancer), I know that what I learned can be condensed in a shorter time frame, with a much smaller investment. Don't get me wrong, I would have spent $24,000 on school if I knew how fast I'd get my money back by being in this career! But with a few solid days of focused effort, and an investment level of less than a few hundred bucks, you can get the same start I did.

If you're interested, and haven't already enrolled in one of my courses, you can do so on Code College (http://codecollege.ca/), and Udemy (https://www.udemy.com/u/bradhussey/).

I have a massively effective, and proven to be successful, suite of coding courses, with more than 63,000 students, an average of 5-stars with 930+ individual student reviews. I can talk up the numbers till the cows come home, but I don't create my courses for the numbers; I create my courses because I want you to achieve your true potential, and learn something life changing. I want you to see results. And I'm 150% confident you'll see results with any and all of my courses.

I strive to create better and better content because I care, because learning to code has changed my life, and because I want to show you how it can change yours. Plus, there's enough crap out there that only gets in the way of your success.

With that being said, many of you are already loyal students, and for that I'm eternally grateful. But for those who have not yet jumped in with two feet, and are ready to start, let me make it incredibly simple for you:

I have coding courses that range from beginner to advanced, absolutely free to $200+. Many of my students love Code College because, instead of dropping a couple hundred bucks for a single course, they can pay a monthly subscription and get access to all of my courses. Think of this method like Netflix, or Rdio, for learning to code!

Your (optional) next steps, on which you can immediately take action:

1. Subscribe to my YouTube channel (http://youtube.com/hussey17), where I'll teach you coding tips & tricks, plus you can access 3 full-length courses for free.
2. Use the coupon code CULTIVATE on any of my courses on Code College to instantly get 50% off the price (http://codecollege.ca/)
3. You can also get 25% off Lifetimes Access to Code College (http://codecollege.ca/courses/code-college-subscription?coupon_code=CULTIVATESERIES) using the code CULTIVATESERIES
4. For those who'd rather use Udemy as their learning platform, you can take my PSD, HTML & CSS, Bootstrap, and WordPress courses for 50% off using the code CULTIVATE.

You can also do the following:

1. Like my Facebook page (http://facebook.com/bradhussey) — we have a cool and growing community of likeminded coders, entrepreneurs and freelancers.

You may find this to be a valuable resource. I also share free content, and give regular updates as to what I'm working on.

2. Follow me on Twitter (http://twitter.com/bradhussey), because I'd love to see you there as well :)

Resource

Dropbox

Probably the single-most important piece of software I use to run my business (other than a code editor) is Dropbox (http://www.bradhussey.ca/getdropbox). It's very likely that you use Dropbox already, and if that's the case, good on ya! If you don't have a Dropbox account, or have never heard of Dropbox, listen up, because you're missing out.

First of all, Dropbox is totally free. There's an option to sign up for two different premium versions of Dropbox, but in all honesty, you probably won't need it. I only recently signed up for the premium version of Dropbox, simply because of how much I use (and love) it.

What is Dropbox?

Think of Dropbox as your cloud-based hard drive. That means your files are securely stored on a remote server that you can access anywhere in the world. Why is this so great? Well for general users, you can store and share files such as music, photos, and documents. But for us freelancers, we use it to collaborate on projects with our clients and teammates.

For example, when I start a brand new project with a client, I create a "client" folder in Dropbox, and within that folder I add a series of folders that looks like so:

Client Name

- Design
    - Fonts
    - Assets
    - Branding
    - Comps
    - Stock_Images
- Development
    - Source
    - Repository
- Project_Management
    - Contracts&Budget
    - Client_Assets&Feedback
    - Wireframes
    - Sitemaps
- SEO

Depending on the client (how savvy they are with tech) I'll share either the entire folder with them, or simply the "Client_Assets" folder. Let me break down what each of these folders are for:

Design

All things design are hosted within here: downloaded fonts, graphics, logos, Photoshop documents, and stock imagery. This helps keep my design related assets in one easy to locate place.

Development

If I have a code repository, I'll throw the GIT file in here, and the same goes for a backup of the entire website, or at least a specific part of the website — like a custom plugin.

Project Management

Our contracts, budget documentation, wireframes and sitemaps will go in here. I typically use the "Client Assets & Feedback" folder for collaboration with my client. It's in this folder my client can provide me with feedback, or documents & images I may need from them to build the project.

SEO

Keyword research documents, copywriting, competitor research, and content audits will typically live in here.

You may be thinking, "I can just create those folders on my computer, why would I care to use Dropbox for that?"

Well, using this system with Dropbox is far superior to doing this on your own Desktop because:

You can access the files from anywhere! I relied on my Dropbox folders to continue working on client projects while I was vacationing in Hawaii for 3 weeks with my family. If I didn't use Dropbox, all of my work would have been sitting on my Desktop computer at home and I would have not been able to get any work done.

Your documents are automatically backed up. This means you never have to worry if you accidentally delete or lose a file. Dropbox regularly backs up all your documents.

It's secure. Dropbox takes your security and privacy very seriously, and they have all sorts of documentation explaining the security measures and systems they use to give you peace of mind when it comes to your important documents.

You can get extra GBs of space for free! If 2GB is not enough for you, you can get up to an additional 10GB+ of space on your Dropbox account. They give you a list of tasks you can complete to earn your free space, including installing it on your phone, turning on auto-backups for your photos, sharing with your friends, and tweeting about them.

Dropbox has been an invaluable tool for me in my business, and I couldn't recommend it enough. I encourage you to get your own free Dropbox account right here (http://www.bradhussey.ca/getdropbox). Feel free to steal my folder structure for your own freelance projects!

Resource

Web Hosting

Let's quickly review what we've learned so far:

1. We've learned who the heck I am and why I'm qualified to give you tips & tricks to get your freelance career of it's feet
2. We now understand why it's important to "cultivate" a freelance career, rather than just hope for the best and give up when we don't see immediate success
3. I gave you free access to a must-have resource called Trello (http://www.bradhussey.ca/usetrello)
4. We've defined, visualized and simulated the feeling of success
5. We've established the importance of learning to code, and I gave you a great resource to get yourself up to speed within only a few hours (http://codecollege.ca/)
6. We've created step-by-step roadmap to our goal, and "reverse engineered" our success
7. We learned that it's a stupid idea to quit your day job without a smart exit strategy
8. You signed up for a free Dropbox account (http://www.bradhussey.ca/getdropbox)
9. We understand that creating a business plan and doing all of the boring stuff first is a great way to kill inspiration

Wow! Not bad. We're making good ground here. Okay, next up, I want to give you another great resource.

This is one of the most important resources you're ever going to get from me.

It's web hosting! Anybody who is looking to start a freelance career, run a business, promote their services, sell something online, write, blog, etc. etc. needs web hosting!

There is simply no way around it.

Before we jump too far ahead of ourselves here, I want to make sure you know what web hosting is. Web Hosting is simply a service that allows you to "park" your domain name (www.yourwebsite.com) within it, which in turn, allows you to have your own little piece of the Internet! Every website requires web hosting.

> *I like to use the real estate analogy: You have a lot on which you build your house, and in order for friends to find your house you must tell them your address.*

> *This converts to: You have a hosting provider on which you build your website, and in order for customers to find your website you must tell them your domain name.*

Does that kind of make sense?

So, now that we've established what web hosting is and why you need it, I want to make it insanely easy for you to get your own web hosting set up. Many people see this process as confusing and stressful, and therefore give up on the whole thing. You can also hire a web developer to do this process for you, but that'll cost you more than just learning to do it yourself!

I've created a totally 100% free video course called Web Hosting 101 (http://codecollege.ca/courses/web-hosting-101/), and in about 15 minutes from now you will not only understand the entire process, but you will have purchased a domain name & hosting, and published your first live web page! As a fun bonus, I'll also show you how to set up a WordPress blog, and publish your first blog post in less than 5-minutes.

Access the Web Hosting course for free right here (http://codecollege.ca/courses/web-hosting-101/)

For those of you who already understand this process, but have not yet set up a hosting service, or purchased a domain name, you can skip the course and go straight to getting your domain & hosting in one fell swoop with Justhost— my preferred hosting provider (http://www.bradhussey.ca/csfc-justhost).

Transparency disclaimer: Please keep in mind that I am an affiliate for Justhost, and I'll earn a small commission should you decide to make a purchase with the above link — at absolutely no cost to you! Keep in mind that I have been exclusively using Justhost for 7+ years, have thorough experience with their service, and I am only recommending them because they have helped me succeed in my business, and are incredibly useful. Don't spend your money on any products or resources unless you think they will make your life a bit easier:)

Resource

Maximizing output when you're most productive

How many hours a day do you work?

I'm assuming around 8.

Now, how many of those hours do you actually get real work done?

I'm willing to bet it's much less than you think.

When I started working for myself in 2012, I realized that filling an entire 8 hour workday was surprisingly hard. Not because I didn't have enough work to fill up the hours of the day, but because after working for about 6 hours, I'd get pretty much everything done that I wanted to complete for the day. I was no longer "in the zone", and for the rest of the day I'd simply not have the drive to start something new, and ultimately waste time on Facebook or YouTube.

Eventually, I realized that I simply wasn't productive when trying to work the traditional 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week.

For me, the reality is I'm really only productive in the mornings and early afternoon, Monday to Thursday. And since I've realized, and accepted, the hours of the day I'm most productive (8am – 2pm), and the days of the week I'm most productive (Monday – Thursday), I actually get more work done than I ever did when I worked a full 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week.

Why? Because during those hours, I maximize my output by getting in the zone, focusing, working smart, and getting stuff DONE.

The best part? I've freed up a handful of hours every week that allow me to do things like:

- Be with my family
- Go for a bike ride
- Take the afternoon off to go Stand Up Paddle Boarding
- Plant a fruit & vegetable garden
- Take Friday off and have a long weekend

Or for those of you who have kids, like me, you know that impromptu visits to the emergency clinic are not entirely uncommon. Because my schedule is flexible, it's not detrimental to my business if I have to drop everything and rush off to the hospital. Kind of a weird benefit, but a benefit nonetheless.

Here's a recent RecueTime report for a typical workweek of mine:
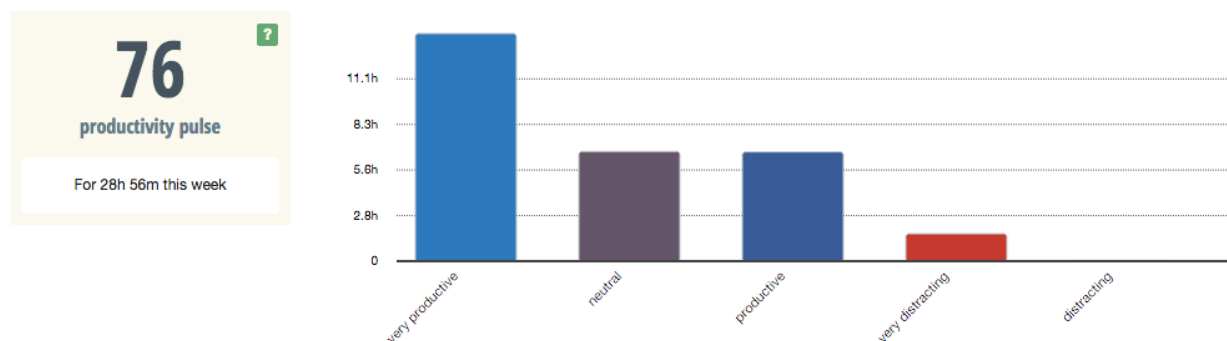
As you can see here, 76% of the 29 hours I worked that week were productive. Less than 3 hours of my entire week were "very distracting".

I challenge you to find out when you're most productive

You can use a free application called RescueTime (http://www.bradhussey.ca/ rescuetime) (affiliate link) which sits in the background and monitors your computer usage and gives you weekly reports that tell how productive you are during certain hours, and what you spend most of your time doing. This way, you can begin to craft a smarter workday, where you spend your productive hours maximizing your output, and your non-productive hours doing the things you truly love doing (or at least taking a break). If you work from home, you can use this time to do what it is you wanted to do when you started working from home in the first place.

Are you sitting at your desk 160+ hours a month, getting only 80 hours of productive work done? I'm challenging you to see if that's the case. And if so, put the wheels in motion to craft a smarter workday. If you work from home, you have the perfect environment, and no excuse to immediately apply this challenge. If you work at an office (and must work a full 8 hours), you can do the same and simply maximize your daily output by structuring your most important tasks around your "in the zone" times.

Actionable Steps To Take This Week

1. Download & install RescueTime for free (http://www.bradhussey.ca/rescuetime)
2. Take note of how productive you really are during the week
3. Read my full article on maximizing productivity & the origins of the 8-hour workday (http://www.bradhussey.ca/smarter-workday/)

Resource

HelloSign

We're nearing the home stretch of our course! I hope you've been putting all of the steps into action, and finding value in the resources in the Resource Roundup section.

Tell me, have you ever been in this situation...

1.   Somebody emails you an important document that requires your signature
2.   You download and print the document
3.   You sign the document
4.   You realize you don't have a scanner
5.   You go out and blow $80 on a scanner
6.   You scan your document
7.   You attach the document to an email and return it to sender

I can certainly tell you, I've been in that situation way too many times! It's incredibly frustrating, and is an archaic ritual we silly humans do given then digital day-and-age we live in. But there is a better way!

What if I told you these are the only steps you need to take...

1.   Somebody emails you an important document that requires your signature
2.   You digitally sign the document
3.   You send the signed document back to sender

BOOM! Done!

You can do exactly that with today's resource: HelloSign (http://bradhussey.ca/hellosign).

HelloSign is a free service (with the option to upgrade to have more documents and features) that simply lets you upload a document from your computer (or Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, etc.), you can then prepare your document for signing using the many tools provided. You can use your real signature, add text, signing dates, and more.

Another awesome feature of HelloSign is you can send anyone — let's say your client — a document that requires their name and signature straight to their email. Once they receive your email, they will be provided with a link to the document on HelloSign and they can add their own signature to the document and have it returned to you once signing is complete.

I use HelloSign to get my clients and subcontractors to sign contracts, proposals, and sign off documents all the time — and it's been a HUGE timesaver for me.

I know you'll find this tool incredibly useful, so I encourage you to sign up for a free HelloSign account (http://bradhussey.ca/hellosign).

Thanks for taking the course!

I hope you've found value in the lessons and the resources. Please share the email course with your friends, family, colleagues or followers on Facebook & Twitter to spread the love.

Keep in touch with me at the following locations on the web:

Blog
www.bradhussey.ca

YouTube
www.youtube.com/hussey17

Facebook
www.facebook.com/bradhussey

Twitter
www.twitter.com/bradhussey

Google Plus
plus.google.com/+BradHussey

Cheers & Chat Soon :)
Brad