There are few professions like a stand-up comedian. Those interested in being comedians start at the lowest of the low, but they have the opportunity to become superstars if they have what it takes.

Early on, comedians work for free or have to pay to work. This is done via open mics, which are comedy shows done in clubs, bars and restaurants. Anyone can perform in front of a crowd at an open mic for three to five minutes. The audience for these shows usually consists of other comedians with little non-comedians in attendance. It's these shows where new comedians begin working on their material, which will take years to improve on.

"Right now, I'm doing it for the passion," said Deepu Gill, who's been doing comedy for three years. "I have other side jobs to help pay the bills, but comedy is all I want to do in my life."

If a comedian has enough funny material, they can become a club regular. This means they can perform at one, or multiple clubs, and earn $25 to $75 a performance.

Once a comedian has made a name for themselves and has at least an hour of comedy material, they can be a headliner. As a headliner, they can earn multiple performance fees in New York clubs during the week. Then on the weekend, they can travel to comedy clubs across the country and earn from $1000 to $5000.

To earn that kind of money, it also help when a comedian has a fanbase.

"I cultivated a fanbase that's really into me," said Luis J. Gomez, a 12-year comedian. "It's not like I was given an opportunity to headliner."

Comedy is hard to do, both literally and monetarily. It takes a strong will and a sense of humor to make it.