

A large, intricate black and white decorative scrollwork element that curves across the top half of the page. It features multiple layers of scrolls, acanthus-like leaves, and a central floral motif.

EARN YOUR FIRST
\$1,000

ON THE SIDE

by **RAMIT SETHI AND JEFF KUO**



**LESSON 2:
PICK YOUR FIELD**



LESSON 2: PICK YOUR FIELD

IF YOU'RE PRETTY SURE YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF WORK YOU WANT TO DO, THIS SECTION IS OPTIONAL, BUT RECOMMENDED.

- The **#1 BIGGEST BARRIER** to starting a business is not knowing what type of work to do (a surprising insight from our reader survey)
- **Reasons: analysis paralysis and the myth of the perfect idea**
 - “I have so many ideas and can't get around to just pick one and go with it”
 - “Nothing seems like the ‘home run’ that will enable me to quit my full time job”

THE “PERFECT IDEA” DOESN'T EXIST.



YOU CAN GET PAST THE MYTH OF THE PERFECT IDEA BECAUSE FREELANCE MEANS:

1. You don't have to have a brilliant idea – or even a unique one.
2. You can copy the next guy and do just fine by:
 - Being better
 - Marketing better
 - Marketing differently
3. It's not about “what should I do with my life.” Freelancing is flexible enough that the work you do can - and probably will - evolve.



WHAT YOU DO DEPENDS
ON WHAT YOU WANT



RECALL YOUR GOALS FROM THE LAST SECTION.

- Do you plan to do it “on the side” only?

If so, you can do pretty much anything. Ramit’s friend trains cats to use the toilet. It can make money, but probably isn’t a bankable career (not by itself, at least).

- Or do you eventually want to pay your bills and live off of this work?

If so, that’s great, but do a reality check.

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REALITY CHECK



2 HEURISTICS YOU CAN USE TO SEE IF THE AREA YOU'RE CONSIDERING HAS A SHOT:

1. SUPPLY: IS ANYONE ELSE DOING IT?

- If not, think twice. No competition is a BAD thing.
- Someone famous doesn't count.

2. DEMAND: IS ANYONE LOOKING FOR IT?

- Check Craigslist in the "Jobs" or "Gigs" sections.
- Is anybody posting Help Wanted ads?



IT'S UP TO YOU TO PICK A FIELD WITH A DECENT SHOT OF SUCCESS.

- For some, this may mean choosing something new.

WE CAN'T MAGICALLY "GROW" MARKET DEMAND – IT IS WHAT IT IS.

- Remember, just because you can't sell something direct, doesn't mean you can't upsell it later.

DON'T SWIM UPSTREAM!



ASSESS 3 THINGS: SKILLS, STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS.

- 1. SKILLS ARE THE ABILITIES YOU HAVE.**
- 2. STRENGTHS ARE THE THINGS YOU'RE GOOD AT.**
- 3. INTERESTS ARE THE THINGS YOU LIKE.**

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SKILLS



SKILLS ARE THE EXISTING, TANGIBLE THINGS YOU'RE GOOD AT.

EXAMPLES:

- PHP
- Writing Fiction
- Martial Arts
- Spanish
- Phone Sales
- Photography

ASK YOURSELF:

1. What are all the things you could put on your resume?
2. What are you good enough at that you could teach other people? (Speed reading? Weight lifting? Social media expert?)
3. What do you eventually want to be good at? Consider learning it now and selling it later.

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STRENGTHS



STRENGTHS ARE PRODUCTIVE, INTANGIBLE ABILITIES YOU HAVE A NATURAL AFFINITY FOR.

EXAMPLES:

- Developing rapport with people quickly
- Organizing data into actionable information
- Managing projects
- Helping other people understand ideas.

ASK YOURSELF:

1. What type of activities make you feel “in the zone?”
2. What do *other people* tell you you’re good at?
3. Recommended reading:
 - *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham.
 - Or see http://www.strengthstest.com/theme_summary.php



INTERESTS



**INTERESTS ARE THE THINGS THAT YOU LIKE!
GET CREATIVE WHEN THINKING OF THESE.
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT MIGHT SPARK YOU.**

- Politics
- Live music
- Digg.com
- Knitting
- Gardening
- Online Shopping

INTERESTS DON'T ALL HAVE TO BE POTENTIAL SOURCES OF INCOME.

ASK YOURSELF:

1. What do you read? (Favorite blogs, magazines and other media?)
2. Get lost on the web – jump on Stumbleupon.com and Delicious.com and take note of what catches your attention.



ACTION STEP **1**
BRAINSTORM



ACTION STEP 1: BRAINSTORM

NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT IT INTO ACTION.



NOW IT'S TIME TO PUT IT INTO ACTION.

- **LIST YOUR TOP 5 SKILLS.**

What kind of work have you been prized for in the past?

- **LIST YOUR TOP 5 STRENGTHS.**

What are you naturally good at?

- **LIST YOUR TOP 5 INTERESTS.**

What are you most into in your free time?



ACTION STEP **2**

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER



PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

TO DO: Look at everything you brainstormed and come up with at least 1 to 3 freelance trades you're interested in. Then, write them down in order of priority.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT!

**FOR ADDITIONAL HELP, CHECK OUT OUR PRINT RESOURCE:
[A BIG LIST OF FREELANCING IDEAS](#)**



ASK YOURSELF:

- “Do I want to do this full time or on the side?”
- “Do I want to do this virtually or locally?”
- “Is it potentially lucrative?”
- “Is it intellectually stimulating?”



WHAT IF YOU'RE STUCK?

*“But I’m not in love with any of those ideas.
Am I a boring, passion-less freak?”*

NO!

IT'S FINE NOT TO KNOW THE 'PERFECT' THING RIGHT OFF THE BAT.

- Pick one thing you “might” enjoy. Don't sweat over finding ‘perfect.’
- Doing will help you figure out what you like and don't like.



Now that you've brainstormed a few freelance trades, you're going to select the one that appeals to you the most and just get started.



BUT BEFORE JUMPING IN...

**WE'RE GOING TO USE THE
NEXT SECTION TO GO OVER
WHAT **NOT** TO DO.**

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