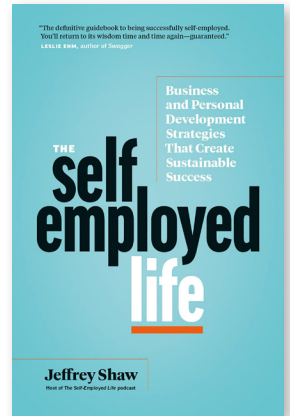


# The Self-Employed Life

Business and Personal Development Strategies  
That Create Sustainable Success

by **Jeffrey Shaw**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

“Self-employment” is a term that seems simple on its surface. In fact, many people choose to be self-employed because of the simplicity it offers—it’s just you, after all. But self-employment in practice is often much more complicated. It involves putting your entire self into your business, with the willingness to grow personally and work every day toward building the successful life that you’ve always dreamed of achieving.

In this summary of *The Self-Employed Life*, you’ll benefit from the collected expertise of small business consultant and host of The Self-Employed Life podcast Jeffrey Shaw as he shares the principles of personal development that lead to career development in the field of self-employment. In the end, you’ll receive a path forward in self-employment that will allow you to create the success you want and the life you want. As Shaw says, “You may be in business for yourself, but you’re not in business by yourself.”

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to remove limited thinking and establish forward-thinking mindsets.
- Marketing, business models, systems, and other tools for growing your business.
- Efficient and effective habits to even out the ups and downs of self-employed life.
- A holistic approach to self-employment that brings long-term success and personal fulfillment.

### Introduction

This is the time for self-employed business owners to come together as a community and take their rightful place in the spotlight. It's time to be accepted in the business world and respected for their tenacity, sacrifices, and impact. Perhaps you were trying to gain control over your destiny when you started your business, but it doesn't feel like it's quite working out as planned. That's okay. Until now, perhaps no one has really provided an alternative. This book provides that alternative—the Self-Employed Ecosystem. It is a proven method to help you gain as much control over your business and destiny as possible, and a guide to managing what you can't control so that you can stay on track.

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### The Self-Employed Ecosystem

You are about to learn that you can have far more control over your business than you may have thought. You are also going to learn how to manage what seems to be out of your control, so you don't get derailed. You'll learn how to create sustainable success to even out the ups and downs that are inherent in being self-employed, and you'll have everything you need in one place: personal development strategies that prepare you for greater success and bring out your best; business strategies that actually work for you as a self-employed business owner; and effective and efficient daily habits that create sustainable success.

This trifecta of personal development, business strategies, and daily habits is the formula for success—the self-Employed Ecosystem. Why an ecosystem? Because an ecosystem is multiple interconnected elements where the whole works better than its parts. That's precisely what you need and how it works when you are self-employed. You don't have the luxury of checking out when you go home. You don't have a chance to not take it personally. You don't have a huge budget to hire people to solve problems for you.

The self-employed life is running your business and your life, all mixed together all the time. Your personal development, the actions you take, and the habits you maintain, all integrated, all intertwined.

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### Get Out of Your Own Way

Getting clear about what you want to get away from sets you in a positive direction, away from what you don't want in your life anymore. Intentions, when done in the From-To format, which you'll learn about in the next chapter, create a

clear direction as to where you are going. As with any other journey, when you start in a new direction, it's possible you'll come across some obstacles in your way. If you go on a road trip, the obstacle may be traffic. If you set out on a hike in the woods, the obstacle may be a fallen tree obstructing your path. And when you embark on the journey of self-employment, the obstacle is likely going to be yourself.

Keep in mind that an ecosystem is a delicate integration of many components. When those components are working in harmony, the ecosystem is healthy and thriving. When even one part of an ecosystem is out of whack or not functioning well, it affects the health of the entire ecosystem. The blocks that you're going to explore and remove in this chapter are an important part of the health of your Self-Employed Ecosystem. If you don't get these obstacles out of the way, you may never have a truly healthy ecosystem working on your behalf.

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### What Moves You Forward

Typically, if we can gain even one significant change in our way of thinking or in a business practice, we are more than pleased. It doesn't always take as much energy or as many hours on the therapist's couch to create significant change as we have been led to believe. There really is truth to the adage that life can turn on a dime. The following two practices are the best I know in order to move you toward the success you seek: setting intentions in a way that really works, and holding your vision for your future in a more effective way.

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### Embrace Hug Marketing

When you see it as your job to emotionally move people, you shift the responsibility of being successful from the customer to yourself, which gives you more control over your business. And it certainly feels better for your customer too. Emotionally engage them by sharing your values, your mission, and your stories.

Make your customers feel like you “get” them. The goal in marketing today is to know your customers so well, they are likely to say, “Wow, it's like you're in my head.” That's not just lead generation, it's forming a genuine bond. That's not a customer; it's a relationship. Now sales and marketing no longer feel creepy.

Relationship marketing like this is the sweet spot for the self-employed. It's what we're good at, and with little or no

line between ourselves personally and our business, it's a joy to share ourselves authentically. This is why marketing has evolved to be more aligned with self-employment, offering an opportunity for you to enjoy marketing perhaps more than ever before. People want to do business with businesses that care.

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### Create an Emotional Journey

The journey on which you take visitors, whether it's prospective customers on your website, readers of your blog, or listeners of your podcast, is a blend of consumer behavior psychology and the subtleties of your audience. For example, typical consumer behavior will say that people need to see their problem before they seek a solution. As a general rule, I would say that is true. However, the nuance is, how do you point out the problem so that your audience responds well? Is it the usual-pointing out their pain approach? Or is it more aspirational, helping them imagine what is possible if their pain point is solved? More than in the past, I think many people prefer an aspirational message.

This idea of knowing the emotional journey your audience needs to go on in order to buy into your offer means understanding them on a whole new level. Yes, it is still about the message—their lingo. It's also about the sequence in which they need to receive it.

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### Build a Business Model of Multiples

It comes down to this. If there is to be a niche, it's not the one thing you do. It's the one thing you are known for. Your area of expertise. But this "area" is spacious and has breathing room. Your area of expertise is your core brand message and Stand Out Statement.

How is this different from the traditional niche? Well, it's not about being limited to doing one thing; it's about being known for one thing for which there are multiple audiences and multiple ways you can do that thing. That's what makes it a Business Model of Multiples. Plus, by having a Business Model of Multiples, you can have multiple streams of income.

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### Set Up Systems for Success

As you develop yourself personally, you increase the capacity of success that you are prepared for so that more success can come into your life. You and your business are like the reservoir in the sand, and the incoming flow of water is

your incoming business and the life you want to live.

That's why the systems you need for your business, some traditional and some not, should be for the business you want, not the business you currently have. Too often, the systems small businesses use or build are just enough for what they need now. It's like building a walkway one step behind the person walking ahead of you. You're just playing catch up. The better way is to build systems for your business from the perspective of creating the capacity that you want to fill. You could say personal development is a system of developing yourself so that you can receive more.

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### Create a Steady Foundation

That there's a need for a happy medium if we want to apply new daily habits to our busy lives and businesses. The fact of the matter is, many practices such as yoga and meditation demand much effort and time and are rooted in an Eastern monastic lifestyle. That's great if you live in a monastery in Tibet. But we don't. We lead busy, multi-tiered lives. The happy medium is in taking these positive behaviors and realistically adapting them to and applying them in our everyday lives, the benefits of which will, in turn, spill over into our self-employed lives. When we do this, we truly have the opportunity for the best of both worlds, where East really meets West and the result is a steady inner environment prepared to manage the unsteady outer environment that we live in.

The personal development and business strategies shared in this summary really do help you gain control over seemingly uncontrollable circumstances. To create sustainable success, we must paradoxically step back into knowing that much of life is out of our control, but we can create steadiness by having the habits to see our way through. Now you're going to learn how to manage the natural ebbs and flows of any ecosystem, be it business or the ocean, without having to ride every wave.

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### Create a What's Going Right Journal

There are some habits that are so effective, they are worth repeating. That's the case with a What's Going Right Journal. Write down what's going right in your life and career every day. When we focus on this, we tend to see what's going right even more. The journal ticks all of the important boxes for a busy, ambitious person—it's efficient, it works with priming, it provides noticeable results, and it creates an

inward flow of things going right. It even taps into our spiritual sensibility. By paying more attention to what's going right in your life, you are far more likely to recognize more of what's going right.

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### Expand Your Thinking

To create sustainable success, you need a habit of collecting wisdom, information, and knowledge. You need somewhere to go for inspiration, grounding, and your next strategic idea. You need a habit of depositing into this well of inspiration on a regular basis so that you can withdraw as needed without everything falling apart. You probably already know how often you will need to withdraw in order to stabilize yourself in the ever-changing world of self-employment.

Think of wisdom, information, and knowledge as a reservoir, a space within ourselves that we are responsible for filling up. The cool thing is, it's an unlimited reservoir. What we can gain from others is of unlimited capacity. It is a reservoir we need to feed into on a regular basis. Unlike a literal reservoir, this one has unlimited capacity so that we can grow and expand—a reservoir that is available to us, full of riches, when we need to tap into it.

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### Switch It Up

Create a distinct space for all of your different tasks, or at least for as many of them as possible. And don't worry. This does not require a lot of space. You might want a space for your creative work, a space for your logical work, a space for writing, a space for thinking, a space for collaborative work. A space for your different roles and tasks. Does this mean you have to have a massive amount of space? Not

at all! It's great if you can move around, but if space is restricted, it can be about how you alter a single space to take on different meanings.

What you're aiming to do is trigger mental cues: instead of moving to a different space altogether, the trigger to get in the zone for the next task could be something as simple as always fixing yourself a cup of wonderful-smelling tea before settling in to do some creative writing. Little ritualistic gestures like this or, say, lighting a certain candle every time you go to do a particular task, can shift the energy of the space and prepare you mentally.

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### Conclusion

You deserve to have control over your destiny to the best of your ability in the uncertain circumstances of self-employment. And there are many uncertainties, every day, all the time. If you embrace the concept of your self-employed life being an ecosystem; take action on the business and personal development strategies shared here; fight back against the inclination to compartmentalize your life; stop listening to a traditional-thinking world telling you to focus on one thing; and know that it's OK to take it all personally because it is personal, you will control your destiny. You deserve that.

The Self-Employed Ecosystem is the formula for your self-employed success. Creating the environment for what you want to happen and trusting that it will come to be is the answer to almost everything in life.



How many people can say they've never worked for anyone else? Selling eggs door-to-door at fourteen years of age began a lifetime of self-employment. Now, as an experienced speaker and small-business consultant, **Jeffrey Shaw** helps self-employed and small-business owners gain control of their business in what otherwise seems like uncontrollable circumstances. Drawing on his expertise as a renowned portrait photographer, Jeffrey shows business owners how to view business through a different lens and offers proven strategies for arranging the often chaotic pieces of life and business into a composition of sustainable success.

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