

BREAD
and
butter

BREAD + BUTTER

- OR -

HOW TO STAY CREATIVELY ENGAGED IN YOUR OWN PERSONAL SWEATSHOP

Let me first acknowledge that sweatshop is an inappropriate word to use to refer to the position of privilege from which I have created this workbook. I use the term to acknowledge my own recent experience: the long hours of physical labor without breaks, hiring neighborhood children to help for 2 pennies per knot tied, all taking place in my unairconditioned dining room in late August. So yeah, it's a shop; and yeah, it's sweaty. But it's not a sweatshop and believe me, I know how lucky I am to have the problems I have.

Because I chose this. And I can choose something else! That's what this workshop is about: choosing the next thing once you've figured out what the hell you're actually doing.

So often, when we get into a groove with a product or service—when it becomes popular, and our customers expect it to stay the same—it can begin to grind us into a creative rut. This is especially true for those offering wholesale: making the same thing over and over begins to feel more tedious than creative, BUT so often it's the thing that is paying the bills. What to do about this (rather good) problem? The metaphor of bread and butter is perfect: it's very delicious, but you don't want to fill up on it before your (healthy? indulgent? fresh from the garden?) dinner comes.

So do we focus our energy on creating a "next" thing? Do we discontinue offering the thing people love because if we have to make another one we might actually die? Do we keep making it and eventually loathe our dream jobs that we worked so hard to create? No! Of course not! But...

This workbook will focus on different ways to get out of this draining cycle, without giving up on our bread and butter. It will involve ideas for ways to free up our time to focus on new endeavors through streamlining and outsourcing, and how to feel good about channeling our surplus creative energy into different aspects of the business. Like much of what self-employed people struggle with in business, each situation will be unique, and the hope is that we will all find the answers in the only place they exist: within ourselves.

BEING GOOD IN BUSINESS
IS THE MOST FASCINATING
KIND OF ART. MAKING MONEY
IS ART AND WORKING IS ART
AND GOOD BUSINESS IS THE
BEST ART.

—Andy Warhol

WHAT IS A BUSINESS?

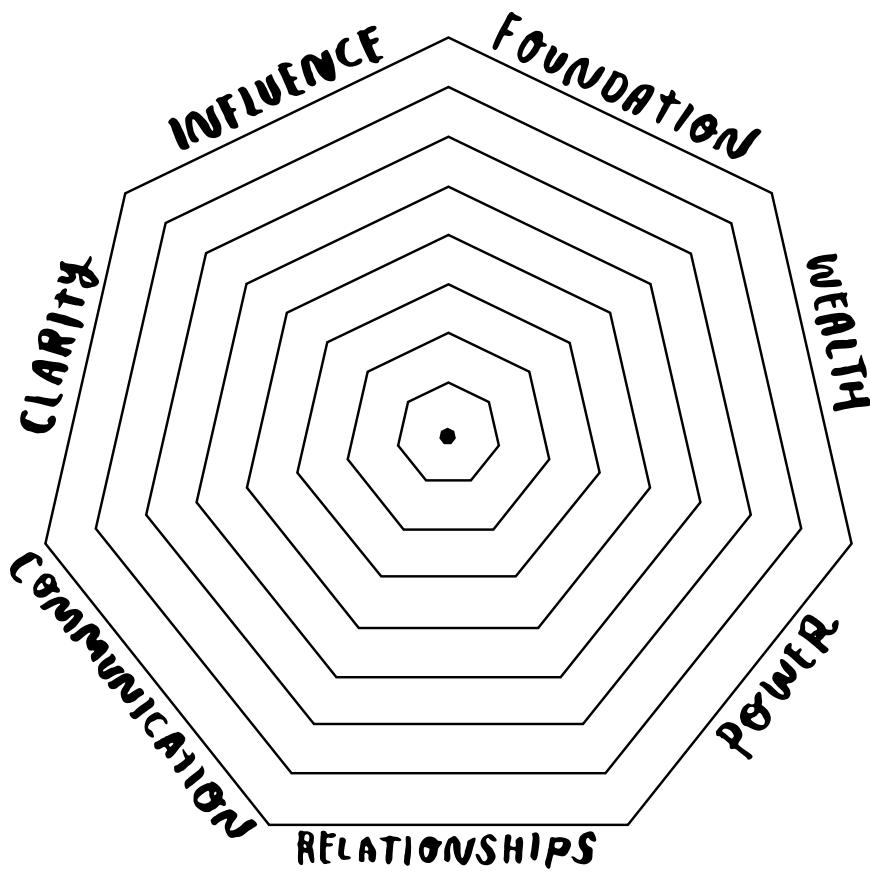
"What IS a business? Some people think they have created a business when they have actually created a hobby or a job. This confusion is understandable. We think that if we are working for ourselves and there is money exchanging hands, we are in business. I have created both a hobby and a job that I thought were businesses. The result was a lot of stress, overworking, money woes, magical thinking, and unhealthy boundaries. Ultimately, these were unsustainable.

How do you know if you've created a hobby or a job? A hobby is an enterprise full of creativity but troubled by a lack of professional boundaries and unconsciousness around finances. A hobby can be emotionally fulfilling but is financially unsustainable (usually it is a money hole). Conversely, a job is generally profitable but not much fun. Your income is tied to your output and therefore, to make more you have to work more which is really hard on your body and will lead to burnout, sooner or later.

What is a business? A business is its own entity. It is separate from you. It has a clear structure, with policies and procedures, awareness of purpose, as well as financial information, and a growth plan, to name a few. **A business is a needs-fulfillment machine. It exists to SUPPORT you.** In turn, you support it, and together you and your business support your customers and clients. Win. Win. Win."

Jen Armbrust
Feminist Business School
www.sister.is

BUSINESS CHAKRAS



Reflect on each category as it relates to your business. Rate each category by placing a dot on one of the lines under each heading. The outermost ring being highest (8) and the center of the circle the lowest (0).

You can repeat the process for different aspects of your life, connecting the dots each time to reveal areas in which you are thriving and the areas that need work. The goal is to be balanced and whole (which no business or person is), and to always look at each aspect of the energetic business body as an interdependent system.

WHERE YOU'RE STUCK WHERE TO PUT YOUR ENERGY:

FOUNDATION

- office or studio organization
- systems design
- interior/space overhaul

WEALTH

- budgeting/financial planning
- pricing strategy
- working smarter not harder

POWER

- creating new contracts and agreements
- writing new job descriptions

RELATIONSHIPS

- attending networking events
- reaching out to new contacts
- set up one on one meetings

COMMUNICATION

- blogging (again)
- rebranding your business
- developing a new marketing strategy

CLARITY

- revisiting your business plan (or creating one for the first time!)
- rewriting your mission statement
- taking time to clear your head each day through meditation or ritual

INFLUENCE

- training an apprentice
- setting big picture goals
- trusting the fucking process

Notice that nowhere on that chart is a category for working until your fingers bleed. This is because:

THE WORLD DOES NOT NEED MORE BURNED-OUT PEOPLE.

What the world does need is more engaged, open-hearted, creative, passionate, driven, focused people. We are not meant to do it all by ourselves, even though it sometimes feels like we're the only ones who can, or care enough to.

The truth is, if nobody else can do the thing you do in your absence, you're going to burn out. If you can't take a week off to recharge, or get sick, or need to focus on other things in your life, you're going to burn out.

It's okay to want, need and ask for help.

Whether that means hiring someone, taking on an apprentice or outsourcing, your bread and butter can be put on autopilot to free you up to do the things you'd rather be doing.

Let's talk about LABOR

FREELANCE LABOR

Many services can be outsourced or done by freelancers. This work may include accounting, manufacturing, Web-site design, marketing and public relations — even administrative assistants can be hired on a "virtual" basis. While the ultimate goal would be to have full time employees to whom you pay a living wage with benefits; sometimes contract workers will be your best bet in the beginning.

APPRENTICE LABOR

Although the formal boundaries and terminology of the apprentice/journeymen/master system often do not extend outside guilds and trade unions, the concept of on-the-job training leading to competence over a period of years is found in any field of skilled labor. This requires a very qualified candidate, an existing high functioning relationship, and a willingness to share your knowledge.

REGULAR EMPLOYEES

To legally hire employees, you'll need an EIN and to set up your accounting system to withhold taxes (or hire a payroll company like Gusto.com; highly recommended). It is an involved and costly process to hire and fire employees, so make sure you find the right people, and agree on fair compensation.

INTERNS

If you feel you have an educational offering, you might be able to hire an intern. This person works in an organization, sometimes without pay, in order to gain work experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification. Get in touch with local colleges, universities or vocational training institutions to learn more.

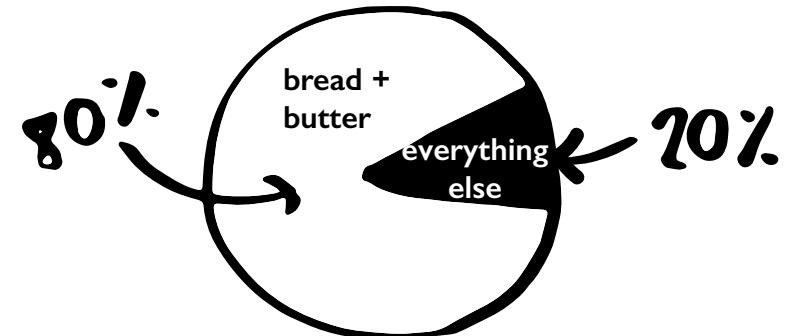
HYPOTHETICAL EXERCISE: HIRE YOURSELF

Now that you've hypothetically hired and trained people to do your bread and butter work, what will YOU do with all that extra time? The interesting thing about bread and butter is that even though we know we are ready to outsource or hire people, we don't because we're not sure what we will do with ourselves. Or we are control freaks. Either way, bread and butter is a very comforting food.

1. Write a job description for a new position within your company. Keep it realistic, and limited to what you would ask of a single person (who is not you). What do you/your company need? (See page 5)
2. Apply for this job. If you feel you're not qualified, read up and practice a little first. Then write yourself a cover letter describing why you would be the perfect fit. Update and attach your resume.
3. Hire yourself. Negotiate a salary, agree on hours expected, and set some goals for yourself.
4. Work hard to impress yourself, meet your own expectations, and bring your best self to the position.

Keeping in mind this is a hypothetical exercise, does it illuminate anything about the areas of your business you might have been neglecting because you were so busy packing orders? Does it bring up some anxious feelings about stepping out of your comfort zone? Does it help you feel more empowered to take on new roles and learn new things?

IN SUMMARY... REMEMBER the 80/20 rule



**20% OF THE INPUT CREATES
80% OF THE OUTPUT**

**20% OF THE WORKERS PRODUCE
80% OF THE RESULT**

**20% OF THE CUSTOMERS CREATE
80% OF THE REVENUE**



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