

## CHAPTER 1



# THE SITCOM AS LIFE

*Unless each day can be looked back upon by an individual as one in which he has had some fun, some joy, some real satisfaction, that day is a loss.*

—Anonymous

### WHY YOUR LIFE NEVER MATCHES WHAT YOU SEE ON THE SCREEN—AND HOW EASY IT IS TO CREATE A LIFE THAT DOES

Close your eyes and imagine along with me.

Wait a minute. I just remembered. You're *reading* this. You'd better keep your eyes open. It's kind of hard reading with your eyes closed.

Back up. Rewind and edit.

Read along and imagine with me. Ask yourself as you read—does the following scene sound familiar?

*Fade in.*

The office is humming with activity. Everywhere you look in the large, overly lit room, people sit in cubicles, industriously typing, talking on the phone, and examining computer screens.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

Quickly, we swing into one cubicle for a close-up. The rest of the office blurs and fades away while the sound of office activity softens to a background hum.

In the cubicle that comes into view, a young, slender, cherry-blonde woman sits looking at eBay on her computer. She snaps her chewing gum while she does her nails. In her cubicle, every surface but the desk and two office chairs is covered with Barbie dolls, Barbie doll posters, Barbie doll books, and Barbie doll accessories.

As we watch, she tries without success to match the rhythm of her gum chewing to the strokes of her nail file. She tries alternating the beats, then tries to match the rhythm.

Suddenly, she takes the gum out of her mouth. Clearly frustrated, still holding her gum in one hand, she looks around on her desk for a place to put it. Her desk is covered with paperwork. Frowning, she starts to stick the gum first on one stack of papers, then on another.

Finally, she shoves several stacks of paper aside, places her gum firmly on the desk, then quickly shuffles some papers back over it.

She taps something on her computer keyboard. Then she clenches her fists, staring intently at the screen.

"Damn."

She types quickly again. Then she sits, staring in anticipation.

"Damn."

"Jenny?"

The voice catches her by surprise. Jenny jumps a good foot out of her chair, spins, and sees her friend, Tom, standing in the doorway to her cubicle. He's smiling mischievously.

"Don't you *ever* knock, Tom?" Jenny asks, wide-eyed. "You scared the living daylights out of me."

"There's no door on these cubicles, Jenny. C'mon. What good would knocking do?"

Tom steps into Jenny's cubicle and plops down in one of the two empty chairs, swinging his feet up to rest on the seat of the unoccupied chair. "Are you still looking for that Barbie you've been blathering about for months?"

"Yeah," Jenny says. "I'm still lookin'." She stares intently at the screen again. Then, she taps a few keys and sits, watching the screen.

"Damn. I can't believe it, Tom. This is the first time I've seen a genuine side-parted bubble-cut Barbie on eBay in *months*—and *somebody* out there keeps outbidding me the moment I bid it up. Crap. I'd gladly give a month's salary for that Barbie."

### The Sitcom as Life

Tom laughs. "I'd give a full year's salary to anyone who can explain why you'd want another Barbie at all."

Another voice pipes up at the cubicle door. "Me, too."

Jenny and Tom both jump nearly a foot, in unison, snapping their startled attention to the doorway. It's Jenny and Tom's mutual friend, Albert.

"Why don't you just make your top bid a full month's salary?" Albert asks. "Then the system will place the next highest bid for you automatically. That'll make it tougher for anyone to outbid you so quickly."

Wearing thick-rimmed glasses, a white shirt not all the way tucked in, and a black pencil-thin tie, Albert laughs nervously, ending with a loud snort.

"Albert," Jenny says, composing herself. "I can't afford to spend a month's salary, no matter how badly I'd love to add that Barbie to my collection. That was just a figure of speech. Besides—it's more fun actually bidding on them."

"Either way, I'm with Tom," Albert replies. "I can't imagine why any adult would want *one* Barbie, let alone hundreds."

Jenny looks perturbed. "I don't have *hundreds* of Barbies. For cryin' out loud. Everybody knows Barbie's special. She was a part of my childhood. I grew up with her. She's—like—my *role model*. And the side-parted bubble-cut Barbie is one of the only truly rare Barbies I still don't have."

As Albert enters the cubicle, Tom sits up, taking his feet off the only other chair in the cramped space. Albert slumps into the now-open chair, his posture slouched.

Smiling again, Tom says, "There, there, Jenny. We understand. I'm sure your life won't be complete without her."

Jenny stares solemnly at Tom for a minute. "You're mocking me. You really don't understand. After all the time we've worked together and known each other, you still don't get it, do you?"

Both Tom and Albert speak in unison . . . deadpan serious. They shake their heads back and forth in unison. "Actually . . . we don't."

Tom says, "I have to admit it, but Matchbox cars were my favorite toy when I was a kid. I'd even have to say they were important to me during that time. But, I still don't feel the slightest pressure to have every Matchbox car ever manufactured during my childhood today."

Albert chortles, pushing his glasses up, which slide back down on his nose with each shoulder-shaking snicker. "Hah. That's the truth, Tom. Now you collect *live* Barbies instead."

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

Tom smirks at Albert. “What’s your point, smart-ass? I’d much rather have a living, breathing Barbie in my room than something made out of plastic. And—no—it doesn’t count if she’s inflatable.”

Albert waves Tom away, blushing.

Jenny scowls at both of them. “You two are so *clueless*. Barbie means everything to me. I collect her. I care about her and think about her all the time. I can’t wait to clock out and spend time with my collection. I’m happiest when I’m trading online with other collectors, and looking for the few missing dolls that I still need.”

“You’re right—we’re clueless.” Tom and Albert speak in unison again. Laughing, they throw up their hands in mock exasperation.

Jenny snaps her attention around, back to the screen, then points at it. “Damn. See? You two pop in here, distract me, and I lost the auction.” She turns to look disapprovingly back at the two young men, still sitting in her cubicle. “You guys made me miss it. It’s *your* fault.”

Another voice breaks in from the cubicle doorway. “I understand *completely*, Jenny.”

This time, Jenny, Tom, and Albert all jump at the sound, snapping their heads in the direction of the doorway in unison. Their mutual friend, Gloria, a slightly pudgy brunette with long, flowing hair and a pretty face, stands there, leaning against the glass.

“It’s like my Corvette fetish, Jenny. I *love* Corvettes. I’d do *anything* to get one of my own.”

Tom gives an exaggerated nod. “I know, Gloria. You’ve been known to do *anything* just to *ride* in one.”

Albert and Tom laugh uproariously. Jenny suppresses a chuckle of her own behind a hand. Gloria frowns disapprovingly.

“No—really,” Gloria says. “Jenny loves Barbies. I love Corvettes. Tom loves easy women. Albert loves . . . whatever it is Albert loves. So what? It gives us all something to work toward, something to look forward to. It gives us a reason to come in here, work nine-to-five, struggle to please a stupid boss, and put up with all the hassles of life. That’s good—right?” She nods, smiling, at each of the other three in unison. Jenny smiles back. Tom and Albert wave Gloria away, skeptical.

“You guys will never understand,” Gloria says.

“You got that right,” Jenny chimes in.

Gloria changes the subject. “So—what are you guys planning to do tonight?”

## The Sitcom as Life

Another voice booms from behind Gloria, almost growling, “How about all four of you getting some work done before you worry about what you’re doing tonight?”

Jenny, Tom, Albert, and Gloria all jump in unison at the sound. Behind Gloria, a tall, balding, heavy-set fellow stands, hands on hips, a scowl planted on his face.

Tom and Albert jump up instinctively, then bustle around the cubicle, bumping into each other as they try to get through the door Gloria is still blocking. They stop moments before colliding with her.

“Sure, boss,” Jenny says, quickly closing the eBay window on her computer and typing furiously on the word processor that sat right behind eBay on the screen. “We were just . . . exchanging some facts.”

“Uh . . . thanks for helping straighten out that discrepancy, Jenny,” Tom says, nervously, jumping up from his chair to head toward the door.

He steps first to the left, then to the right, at the same time as Gloria steps to the left, then right, until it looks like he’ll never get past her. He’s obviously desperate to scurry back to his own cubicle.

Gloria finally turns to leave. Tom pops out the opening behind her, then sidesteps the boss, to slip away as Albert approaches the cubicle opening, still under the boss’ watchful eye.

“Hi, boss—see ya, Jenny.”

“See ya, Albert,” Jenny says. Still trying to look busy, she quickly grabs one of her misplaced stacks of papers and sets it directly on top of the other papers she’d laid over the wad of gum earlier. Now the gum is hopelessly stuck to her desk—but at least it’s hidden from sight.

As the boss enters her cubicle, Jenny absent-mindedly pats the papers down, cementing them and the gum to her desk even more.

*Fade out.*

### **Life Isn’t Really like This . . . Is It?**

Does this sound like your life? It might sound slightly familiar, but different, too. You might lose your job if you were caught doing what Jenny, Tom, Albert, and Gloria were doing—wouldn’t you? At the very least, you’d probably catch a lot more flack from your boss than their boss gave to them.

The scene I just painted is eerily familiar because, at work, we’re constantly thinking about what we really enjoy doing—*if* our work

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

isn't the source of that joy in the first place. Unfortunately, far too few of us ever land the kind of job that's truly fun and liberating. We can't all work for Google, so most of our lives are burned up churning the hours necessary to pay the bills and trying to find time to enjoy *some* of the hours that remain when we clock out.

I'm going to change all of that for you through the simple system I'll lay out in the chapters that lie ahead.

First, tell me—would you agree that the previous scene sounds more like a sitcom than your life? Could this be the source of any familiar feelings you might have had as you read that scene?

If that's what you felt, you're right on target. Just insert a laugh track and the scene we described could easily fit into a dozen different television sitcoms.

I'm sure you've seen at least a few. Come on—we're friends now that you bought this book. Admit it. Most of us have seen more sitcoms than we care to admit. And, if we're truly honest with ourselves, most of us would love to have a job like the ones we see on these shows, if such a job actually existed.

But—have you ever noticed how rarely it is that these shows resemble *real life*?

At work, sitcom characters spend virtually all their time working on personal matters. They discuss what happened at home last night. They gossip about the other employees. They pull pranks and joke with each other constantly.

On rare occasions, they might even get into competitions with some of the other employees. Usually, it's about who can sell the most Girl Scout cookies or who can stick the most pencils into the ceiling fastest—nothing to do with the actual work they're being paid to perform. But, at least there's a sense of purpose and drive involved in the activity.

On these shows, the boss is also almost always a background character, scowling, unhappy with the productivity of his workers, but also never pushed to the point of firing anyone.

After all, firing someone, or even *requiring* people in the office to get something productive done, would kill the buzz on a sitcom. In these shows, the boss is usually either a bungling idiot, oblivious to the lack of productive work going on around him and part of the problem himself, or a scowling straight man trying desperately to keep his employees working, but without a clue when it comes to motivating them to actually accomplish anything.

## The Sitcom as Life

Sitcoms are, after all, about *comedy*. They're *supposed* to be funny and—let's be honest—actual work isn't usually perceived as being much fun.

...Or—is it?

I want to show you how much fun work—even *hard* work—can be. All you need to do is find the *right* work to do, then discover how to make it pay.

Ask yourself: does *any* sitcom you've *ever* seen match your life?

### It's Never Been like a Sitcom for Me

I've only held a few “real” jobs in my life, but I can safely say none of them were anything like the jobs I've seen on sitcoms.

One boss I had furiously smoked a pipe. *All day*. He would use his pipe to literally fume when you didn't have the right answers to his questions. I swear I heard his pipe bit crack whenever he was seriously pissed, which generally worked out to be most of the time.

This guy must have spent a huge percentage of his inflated salary on new pipe bits.

Many times, this wretched soul was pissed at me. Most of the time, it didn't matter whether he was angry or not. The guy not only ran the company—he was also out on the street, bringing in sales. If he had a bad day out selling, he'd storm into the office, throw things, and then stomp around yelling at everyone, regardless of how busy we were.

He was likeable enough when things were going perfectly. But, those times were extremely rare.

One day, after hitting the streets for several hours without making any sizeable sales, this guy (notice how I hesitate to call him “boss”) stormed through the building to his office and slammed the door. We all listened intently as he slammed and banged things around behind that closed door for a while. And—we looked at each other in silence, braced for the worst.

When his office door swung open again, we immediately dropped our eyes back to the work before us and focused on our tasks, praying we could somehow avoid his gaze as he stormed into our area.

I wasn't so lucky.

Even though I was working diligently at the far end of the room, in spite of the fact that this man wasn't actually mad at *me*, he asked another employee about the status of a job we were working on—and didn't get the answer he wanted to hear at that moment.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

In anger, he grabbed an X-Acto knife and hurled it across the room. I heard the knife whiz past my ear. It was *that* close. The blade stuck into the wall I was facing with a loud “thwang,” directly in front of me. Then, without a word, the guy turned around and stomped back into his office, slamming the door behind him.

All activity in the office froze. Nobody said a word. Nobody breathed. I kept waiting for the laugh track to kick in, but it never happened. Maybe I was too stunned to hear it. Maybe this was real life, instead.

Looking at that knife in the wall, I realized I’d just narrowly escaped being *stabbed* by this jerk—and I immediately walked out the door. I hopped in my car and drove directly to the unemployment office, where I made a claim, based on the fact that my boss had just thrown an X-Acto knife at me.

Luckily, the unemployment claim was granted. I didn’t feel like immediately going out looking for another job right then.

I don’t know about you, but I’ve never worked in *any* job where three or more of us were allowed to gather for anything besides a general staff meeting without catching a bunch of guff from a supervisor or boss who would gleefully inform us all that we’re “just this close” to being fired.

The threat was usually so pronounced that no one would think for a minute of hanging out and chatting. My bosses routinely reminded me that I was easily replaceable and, if I didn’t want to work, I could quit right now.

Was I cursed? Did some bizarre permutation of the universe lead me to only apply and get hired for jobs in the worst possible places to work?

I don’t think so. I’ll bet at least some of you have had jobs that are more like the one I did. You might be working at one today.

### Personal Time—On the Clock

Anyway—there are perhaps at least *some* similarities between your work life and the jobs you see in sitcoms. You probably *think* about personal business while you’re working, whenever that’s reasonably possible. If you’re like almost everyone else, you probably start out each day fresh, get into your work flow and, after 5 or 10 minutes, start watching the clock—eager for quitting time to come, so you can go home and start *living*.



## The Sitcom as Life

Even if you already own your own business, chances are it's not at all like the businesses we see people running in sitcoms. If you ran things like a sitcom entrepreneur, your business would go up in flames. Revenue would come to a screeching halt. You'd have lots of laughs—but there wouldn't be a business to run after a while.

It makes sense, when you think about it. We tune in to sitcoms to have fun. Work is rarely perceived as having anything to do with fun. Therefore, anything even resembling real work simply doesn't play well as entertainment.

Sadly, real work is a part of real life. You have to pay the bills and the mortgage and buy groceries or life itself gets a *lot* less fun.

If life was more like it appears on the sitcoms, we'd all be happier. But we wouldn't have enough money to actually *do* anything fun in the short time we have when we're *not* at work because the companies we worked for would self-destruct if they were run like sitcom companies. Then, there wouldn't be *any* place to work to earn a living.

Never fear—I'm going to tell you how to make all the money you want to make, have fun doing it, and enjoy every minute of the work you do to make more than enough money to survive. You can, at a minimum, utilize the simple system I'll show you to more than cover the cost of what you already love doing most. With some patience and effort, you can even replace your current income and start living like you're already retired.

First, I need to have you answer another personal question (even though I'm speaking these words in your head at the moment, I won't actually hear your answer—so go ahead and be honest):

How's your home life? Is *this* where all those sitcoms finally converge with reality? See if the next scene is at all familiar:

*Fade in.*

We're in the living room of a small apartment, one week later. The apartment is neat, decorated in a feminine style. Barbie dolls sit in a neat line across the fireplace mantel. There are more Barbies bunched on the two end tables on each side of the overstuffed couch. Not surprisingly, even the artwork on the walls is mostly framed Barbie posters and magazine covers featuring the beloved plastic personality.

Jenny moves from doll to doll, whispering to them as she straightens their hair, fluffs the ruffles on their dresses, or poses them, then repositions their poses—one by one.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

The doorbell rings. She jumps, startled, knocking two Barbies to the floor in the process. She stoops quickly and gently picks up each doll, muttering under her breath.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you." And, "You okay, dear? I'm so sorry."

Then, she races to the door and swings it open, revealing her three friends from work—Gloria, Tom, and Albert. They stand with arms open wide. Tom has flowers in his hands and Gloria and Albert each hold gaily wrapped oblong packages.

As the door swings open, they all shout, in unison, "Happy Birthday, Jenny!"

"You guys!" she gushes. "You didn't have to do this for me." Jenny invites them in, waving to the couch.

"Oh—but we did," Tom says, with a devilish grin. "You'd make life at work a living hell if we forgot your birthday."

"Oh, Tom." Jenny says. "I'm not that bad and you *know* it. Thanks for the flowers—they're beautiful."

Jenny quickly removes the flowers from Tom's hand and moves to the kitchenette, to find a vase.

Albert smiles and says, "You're right, Jenny. After all—it's Mr. Noggin's job to make our lives at work miserable—not yours. Open my present first."

Jenny fills the vase, puts the flowers in, fluffs them a bit, then moves back around to the living room area. She sits across from the threesome, seated on the couch, reaches for Albert's present and rips into it quickly, tossing the paper in every direction. As she tears the package open, her eyes brighten and she gets visibly excited, wriggling in her chair.

Once the wrapping is off and the present is fully revealed, she holds it up to the light, a slightly puzzled look on her face that she quickly replaces with a forced smile.

Inside the box is a doll that looks a *lot* like a Barbie—but clearly isn't one.

"Thank you, Albert—uh—what is she, exactly?"

"You don't know?" Albert asks. "It's Tess, the new completely computerized, fully programmable doll from Peach Computers. You can program her to say whatever you want her to say, set timers to make her say them—and you can even set up responses, so she can actually answer spoken questions."

## The Sitcom as Life

"She's . . . lovely, Albert," Jenny says, reaching across to lay a hand on his arm. "Thank you. I know she'll be fun."

Gloria is frowning. "Albert—Jenny collects *Barbie* dolls . . . not just dolls."

Albert puffs out his chest and replies, "Hey—this is the most technologically advanced doll I've ever seen. All the high-tech magazines are raving about her. I thought she could keep Jenny's other dolls company."

"She's wonderful, Albert," Jenny says, trying to smooth things over. "I'll treasure her because she came from you."

Albert looks down at the floor, blushing visibly, while Jenny shoots Gloria a nasty glare.

Oblivious to Jenny's disapproval, Gloria says, "Open mine next."

Jenny rips open the box, similar in shape and size to the one Albert gave her. This time, she's more reserved, bracing herself for whatever might be inside, unwilling to let her emotions fool her again.

But—as the wrapping comes off, also tossed to the floor with wild abandon, Jenny can't contain herself. Inside is a mint condition side-parted bubble-cut Barbie—just like the one she's been obsessing about and was trying to purchase on eBay earlier that week at work.

"Oh . . . my . . . *God*, Gloria! You found her. You found my dream Barbie. In *perfect* condition. How on earth . . .?"

Gloria waves her hand dismissively and says, "I almost didn't get her. I found her on eBay, but some fool kept trying to outbid me until I almost gave up. I had no idea there were *other* people who collect Barbies the way you do."

Jenny gasps, breathless. "That was *you*?"

Gloria looks confused.

"I'm that 'fool' who was trying to outbid you. I guess it's a good thing I gave up when I did."

All four friends laugh.

"Hey—I'm glad it worked out the way it did," Gloria said, smiling. "I was afraid you'd find one before I did, and I'd wind up stuck with a toy I gave up playing with years ago."

"I get it, Gloria," Tom says, smiling and winking mischievously. "You've switched from one kind of toy to another. How's your collection of vibrating toys coming along?"

"You cut that out," Jenny yells, mockingly. "Gloria's done something amazing, and all you can do is abuse her for your own

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

amusement. But—seriously—you are *all* amazing. Thank you *so much* for making this birthday truly special.”

They all smile and hug.

Gloria speaks up. “Hey—it’s not over by a long shot. Eight AM is a long way off. Let’s hit the streets and party.”

They all nod, smiling, and head out the door. As she’s pulling the door closed behind her, Jenny takes one last look at the new, super-rare addition to her collection, now sitting on the couch as if she were alive, waiting patiently for her new owner to return.

“See you soon, princess,” Jenny whispers through the door. Then she pulls the door closed and locks it behind her.

*Fade out.*

Now we’ve had a chance to see what home life is like for the four unlikely heroes I’ve introduced to you. It was still kind of sitcom-pretty, wasn’t it?

Again, add a laugh track, a few commercial breaks and—it’s a prime-time show.

You might have noticed that the lives of Jenny, Tom, Albert, and Gloria, as I’ve depicted them here, are pretty much the same at home as they are at work.

They all pretty much focus on what they want to do and enjoy doing the most. There was no housecleaning or laundry being done at Jenny’s. Not while we were watching, anyway. Her idea of “straightening up” was rearranging her prized collection of Barbie dolls.

Filling a vase with water and putting Tom’s flowers in it was about the toughest “job” I saw Jenny tackle during the entire scene.

### **You’re Really Not in Kansas Any More**

It still felt slightly familiar, didn’t it? But, something’s not quite right. Jenny lives in a neat apartment and spends all her spare time tidying up her dolls, studying them, and looking for new additions to her collection—but she tosses gift wrapping on the floor with wild abandon, ignoring it as she heads out the door with her friends.

In *our* world, we might tuck that gift wrap neatly into the trash after we unwrapped our presents—or we would at least pick it all up before we left (well—most of us would. I understand some of you wouldn’t throw the paper away—but your home wouldn’t be as neat as Jenny’s).

Jenny clearly isn’t worried about it, either way. Maybe she decided to pick it up later, when she returns home from her celebration with

## The Sitcom as Life

her friends—but it's nowhere to be seen when she takes that last loving glance back at her latest acquisition, on the way out the door.

Was it magic?

Yes. Sort of. It's the magic of fiction, brought to life and delivered to your home as television entertainment in written form.

Again, it wouldn't be entertaining if it included all the mundane chores and day-to-day rituals we all go through as part of our ordinary, nontelevised lives. I defy you to find many routine everyday tasks like taking out the trash, scrubbing the tub, or doing dishes being carried out on television shows of *any* kind—even the glorified game shows so many people refer to as “reality” TV today.

It simply doesn't happen because these shows are something we turn to, to take us *away* from the mundane, everyday reality we usually have to face, just to pay the bills and keep up the appearance that we're civilized beings who care about our surroundings

### What You *Never* See on Television

You won't find much of this stuff on television or in the movies or in the books we read—because we're looking for entertainment from these sources. We want our entertainment to be fun—and work of any kind simply doesn't fall under the classification of “fun” for most people.

I'm pretty certain you feel, like most people do, that work is something you do to get the money you need to pay your rent and bills and buy groceries. Fun is something you do with whatever time and money you have left after paying all your bills.

I'm right, aren't I?

Sadly, most people who make enough money to really enjoy the fun things in life work so many hours that there's no time left to have much fun. And, most people with lots of time for fun don't make enough money to really enjoy the additional time for fun that they do have.

It's a serious Catch-22 that, at first, seems impossible to break through. So, most people go through life working at a job they don't really enjoy, trading away the bulk of their lives for the dollars they believe are necessary to cover expenses, stealing away just an hour here or an hour there to really enjoy life.

The point is—this second scene probably didn't sound any more like your *life* than the first scene sounded like your *job*. Did it?

I didn't think so.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

There is a way out, and I'm here to tell you how it's done. Even better—it's not nearly as difficult as you might imagine, although some attitude adjustments are in order if you're ever going to truly succeed in making this all work for you.

All you need to do is look at work in a different way, and every waking moment of your life can be like living in a sitcom or being on vacation for life, with more money pouring in than you could ever make working at a regular, real-life job again.

Suspend your disbelief long enough to try the steps I'll show you. I am certain you'll agree.

Remember—you weren't at all skeptical when Jenny's birthday wrapping miraculously disappeared from her apartment floor just a while ago. You didn't even think about it. Just do the same as you read the rest of this book. I'm really not going to ask anything of you that's more difficult than you can handle.

## INVENTORING YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE

This book is about starting a business to turn your favorite pastimes into money. It's truly possible to do what you enjoy doing most *all* the time, earn a living doing it, and never look back on the job world again—if you follow the steps I'll be outlining as we move forward. Worst-case, you'll start enjoying your free time more, because it'll be paid for and tax deductible. Like all fun should be.

We'll get to the nuts and bolts of starting that business and how to easily turn it into a profitable enterprise, possibly moving into it full-time, in a minute.

First, you need to take a long, hard look at your life. That's why I started things off with those two scenes. (I know as well as you do that you don't need more sitcoms.)

What I'm suggesting is an intervention, of sorts. Not the kind where you get locked in a room while all the people in your life who truly care about you hammer you with the reality of your current situation, long enough that you see it for yourself.

I'm reasonably certain you've done a pretty good job of hammering yourself most of your life if you're like most of the clients I work with on a day-by-day basis.

Instead, I'm inviting you to ease into this in a much gentler way. For the sake of clarity, I'll call this process a *gentlevention*.

### Sitcom Role Models?

Jenny, Tom, Albert, and Gloria are great role models for you. I revealed their stories here so that I could bring their experiences to life for you. Through the process you'll be following throughout the rest of this book, you'll eventually be joining them.

No—you won't have to collect Barbie dolls like Jenny does or living Barbies, like it would appear Tom does (unless, of course, that's what you *really* love doing). And there won't be any need for you to learn to love tech gadgets like Albert does or long to own Corvettes like Gloria does, either (unless, again, that's something you truly do love).

But, eventually, you should find one of these four fictional people that you can relate to. Chances are good you already resonated with one. We'll be focusing on Jenny throughout most of the book—but I'll eventually bring it all back around at the end, so you can see how this works out for each of the characters we've come to know together.

You don't have to decide now. I'll help you with that soon. Enough.

### It All Starts with a List or Two

For now, I want you to take out a sheet of paper or open up a fresh document in your word processor. Then, I want you to list 10 things you've done in your past that you truly enjoyed doing, so much you could easily spend all your waking moments doing them.

You should list 10 items. Most people find it easy to come up with five favorite activities fairly quickly. The other five usually require a bit more digging. The digging is worth the effort. Your second group of five favorite activities could well be the gold we're mining for here.

Leave nothing off the list, regardless of how silly or mundane it might seem. Even things you've only done once, a long time ago.

If *you* enjoyed it and would love doing it more often, it's important to include it on your list.

Yes, sex can go on the list (I told you I couldn't hear you thinking—but I heard you that time). But—only add it to your list if you could handle doing something related to sex all the time, day in, day out. Pun unintended.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

*Be honest.* Most everyone I know enjoys sex. But—all day, every day? Whew. I've never put it on my list because I can't imagine filling my days with . . . well, you get the picture.

Still—if that's really what you love doing, put it on the list. No one will read this list but you (and I really can't hear what you're thinking—that last one was a trick), so write it down if it's something you love doing, and you're sure you would like to do it more often, even for a living.

Here's Jenny's list, to help you see what I mean:

- Reading
- Shopping
- Sewing
- Listening to R&B classics
- Watching romantic movies
- Collecting Barbie dolls
- Traveling
- Riding horses
- eBay
- Teaching (I taught grade school before I moved to my data-entry job at Global Exterior Shelving.)

Jenny's list isn't in any particular order. Your list doesn't have to be, either. It's also okay if your list doesn't include anything Jenny's list contains. Every activity on your list could be identical to Jenny's, too—if you're being honest about it and that's the way it works out.

I just want your list to be truly *your* list.

It's important to point out that Jenny's list includes three activities she didn't think of at first. Forced to come up with 10 items, she wrote down the first seven quickly, without thinking much about it.

She added teaching, riding horses, and travel after staring at her list of seven items a long while, digging deeper, like I want you to make certain you do, too.

### **Fun Jobs, Too**

I hope you also noticed that your list can contain occupations you really loved or even your current occupation, if you're truly passionate about it and love doing it.



## The Sitcom as Life

Now—get going. Make that list. I'll see you back here in a few minutes. Take as long as you need. I'm stuck on this page until you return, so I'll just catch up on some reading and listen to some good blues while I wait for you.

Are you done? Good. I enjoyed the break, but I also love working with you so much I'm glad you're ready to continue.

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**NOTE:** If you're one of those people who reads books like this, but never completes the exercises when asked, shame on you. It's okay if you don't want to participate, but I certainly don't want to hear from you later that you read my book and it didn't help you.

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I'll also summarize my points and include exercises at the end of each section of this book. Once you've satisfied your curiosity and read the entire book through once, if you're the type who would rather skip the exercises for now, please do yourself a favor, go back through the end of each section and *work* the easy exercises when you've finished your first read. I want you to write me when you've established your FUN Money life, and you really do need to do the simple steps I've outlined to get there.

### IDENTIFYING YOUR REAL PASSION

Now—it's time to take a look at your list.

What *single item* on your list have you had the opportunity to do the most often? Rearrange your list, placing the activities you've been doing the least at the bottom and working up the list of 10 or more items, to the one you just identified as something you've done the most.

Remember—we're not looking for those activities you've been doing the longest time. We want to order your list of favorite activities, starting at the top, with the one you've done the most *often*.

Jenny's list, rearranged this way, looks like this:

- Reading
- Collecting Barbie dolls
- Listening to R&B classics

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

- Watching romantic movies
- Shopping
- eBay
- Sewing
- Teaching
- Traveling
- Riding horses

In Jenny's case, she's always loved reading, from the time she was a young girl. She got her first Barbie (which she replaced recently, buying another one exactly like it on eBay) before she could read. But, she reads every chance she gets.

This makes collecting Barbie dolls second on Jenny's list, because she's spent so much time studying them, looking for them, and admiring and caring for her collection through so many years—just not as much time as she's spent reading.

Listening to R&B classics is actually a close tie to collecting Barbies for Jenny. This is one of the items she struggled to discover while making her list. She likes to listen to music and, whenever possible, chooses R&B classics when she does.

Jenny's love of romantic movies came along in her late teens—but she's done a lot to make up for lost time by watching as many as she can, whenever possible. She says they make life as a single woman worth living.

Shopping isn't one of Jenny's *favorite* activities—but she's certainly had a lot of opportunity to shop, and she enjoys it when she does.

These days, when Jenny shops, eBay is her favorite place to be, because she's almost always on the site anyway, looking for rare Barbies, watching what they sell for, studying the descriptions to see if she can find a better example of one doll or another being offered, and noticing who the Barbie doll “power sellers” are.

Jenny took up sewing so she could repair Barbie clothes and, on occasion, make her own. This is another activity she had to think about a while before she added it to her list. She enjoys sewing, but she's truly “in the zone” with her sewing machine when she's working on something for her Barbies.

Jenny's list is rounded out with teaching, travel, and riding horses. She dearly loves all three activities, but she doesn't get the chance

## The Sitcom as Life

to pursue them often. She couldn't afford to live the way she does today on a teacher's salary. Even her new, considerably higher salary at her current job isn't enough to cover the cost of travel very often. And she only got to ride a horse a few times when she was very young.

She would love to have a horse and live on a farm but, in the heart of the city, that's not going to happen any time soon. At least, that's what *she* thinks now.

How do you feel about all the activities on your list? Any similar situations? My own has several, and I'll bet yours does, too.

Soon, I'm going to show you exact steps you can take to focus in on what you love doing the most and to create a lifestyle that allows you to pursue that activity as much as you want, adding a reliable second income in the process and possibly replacing your current income completely.

### A Second List Helps Clarify Planning

First, you need to make another list.

Don't worry—I'm not going to do this to you throughout the entire book. I'll do my best to keep it to a minimum—but this is important, right now. Don't complain. Just do it. The potential rewards will be huge.

This is all-important preparatory work. These are steps you must take before implementing my simple three-step formula for maximum results. You could just dive right in—but these steps will help you make certain you're diving into a pool filled with water.

Your second list is more like one you might need for a resume. Each item on this list should be a job you've held in your life. List every job, regardless of how long you held it or how unimportant it might appear at first.

Here's Jenny's list:

- Clothing store clerk
- Third grade teacher
- Assistant School Librarian
- Data-entry clerk
- Candy striper
- Fast food salesclerk

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

Unlike the other list, your list of jobs you've held can be as long or as short as your work experience happens to be. Don't forget to include volunteer positions—these count as jobs, too.

Jenny put in a stint as a candy striper and enjoyed it, but hospitals make her ill at ease, so she quit after a short while. She also didn't last long as a fast food salesclerk and didn't care for the job at all, but it's still on her list. She only worked at the clothing store during one holiday season rush, but this was her first job ever. She truly loved making her own money and getting a discount on clothes her mother would never have bought for her at the time.

Her stint as an assistant school librarian, also voluntary, ran during her tenure as a teacher. Naturally, she loved it, because she loves teaching and kids and books, and she considered it perfect—even better than teaching, in many ways. But, it paid almost nothing.

Today, she's a data-entry clerk. She doesn't like it at all, but the pay is good, and she sees it as necessary.

I'll wake Jenny out of this self-inflicted trance soon. You, too.

First, reorder your list, putting your *favorite* job at the top. Then, work through to the bottom, where your least favorite should go.

Jenny's re-ordered list looks like this:

- Third grade teacher
- Assistant school librarian
- Clothing store clerk
- Candy striper
- Data-entry clerk
- Fast food salesclerk

Now that you're getting to know Jenny a bit better, the reordering she did on this list is fairly self-explanatory.

Notice, the *only* job she disliked more than the job she holds today is working the register in a fast food restaurant.

Chances are, you may feel the same way about your current job, but you see no way to get out of it any time soon. Maybe you run your own business, but it's not the source of joy for you that you hoped it would be. But, you keep doing it anyway, because you rely on the money to pay your bills and to remain a responsible member of society.

### Live like You're Retired—Right Now

After I've shown you how to completely redefine work, and how to put work in its proper perspective, you'll see how to easily free yourself and start living the life you hoped you might live when you retire—and start living that life *right now*.

First, I have one more task for you.

You need to create a sublist, below each job you've held, on your reordered jobs list. Each of these sublists will be made up of your favorite things *about* each job. Items on these sublists should include favorite duties and tasks you were required to perform. It can even include the types of people you got to work with as part of the job, or new things you got to learn while working. You don't have to have *liked* the job itself to find something that you liked that was a part of it.

Try to find at least one item for each job on your list.

Here's what Jenny's list looks like, after she's added her sublists:

- Third grade teacher
  - Helping the kids “get it” on any subject and seeing their eyes light up when they did
  - Hearing from parents that what the kids learned at school was affecting them positively at home
  - Knowing I'm making a real difference in people's lives
- Assistant school librarian
  - Helping kids find the perfect book
  - Knowing my job helped kids appreciate books and hopefully learn to love them for their entire lives
  - Sharing my love for books with the kids
- Clothing store clerk
  - Helping customers find the *perfect* clothing for their situation
  - Getting great discounts on the latest fashions my mother would never buy me
  - Learning how the retailing business works from the other side of the counter
- Candy striper
  - Making peoples' lives more comfortable
  - Knowing that what I'm is doing is really helping people

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

- Seeing the “inside view” of working in a hospital, even though it eventually made me queasy
- Data entry clerk
  - Gloria, Tom, and Albert—the best friends I’ve ever had
  - Starting out in a big company, so I was anonymous, unknown, and had no limits on making new social contacts
  - Learning and using the new technologies involved in the business
  - Being pretty much left alone to do my job my way, as long as it gets done
- Fast food salesclerk
  - Free food at a time in my life when it didn’t matter what I ate
  - It got me out of the house during my teen years, when it mattered so much to me that I not be home
  - I got to meet a lot of people—customers *and* fellow employees

The secret here is that we’re not looking for *jobs* you especially liked, so much as the *tasks* and *duties* that appealed most to you while you were working those jobs.

### Is This Really Important?

I’m sure you’ve heard the old adage that if you do what you love doing most, the money will surely follow. There are plenty of extremely popular self-help books that make this point with fervor.

I heartily disagree.

You can’t truly experience the exhilaration of FUN Money without being passionate about your work. This part *is* true. But, when you properly *combine* what you love doing most with the things you have the most *experience* doing, this is when the *fun* really begins.

Since we’re aiming for FUN Money, you should first go through your list of interests—those things you most enjoy doing or have enjoyed doing most—and compare it against your list of job tasks that you’ve also enjoyed the most.

Are there any similarities? Is one of your jobs also on your list of favorite things to do? Most people rarely place a job on their favorite

## The Sitcom as Life

activities lists, but you should ask yourself if there are any jobs you've held that might belong there. Add them if you have.

And count yourself lucky. If your current job fits on your list of favorite things that you've done, you are extremely lucky—but keep reading, anyway. There is nothing wrong with having *two* FUN Money sources.

What about favorite tasks and duties on the sublists beneath any of the jobs on your jobs list? Are any of them already on your list of favorite activities? Do any belong there?

If you feel they do, add them.

I assure you—there's a method to this apparent madness. The lists you've just created (or those you will eventually create, after you've read completely through this book and you go back through to do the exercises) are the most important lists you could ever make.

They're much more important than any grocery list could be. They're more valuable than any to-do list. These are actually lists of the gold that already resides within you. This is gold you can exchange for a life of fun—the life you wish for while working right now. The life you pray one day you can afford to enjoy.

It's the start of the new life you'll soon be living.

Now—read through your favorite activities list again. This was the first list you put together. Put a star next to each item on your list that you could do all day long, that you would most likely *never* tire of doing. These will be the things you already do every chance you get—even without earning money doing them. Chances are, you even pay to do them.

There should be stars on half of the list, if not more.

If your list of favorite activities is gold—the items you just starred are pure platinum. Each starred item is a “most likely suspect” in your quest for FUN Money.

## WHERE YOU ARE NOW—AND WHY

If you have a job that you love, congratulations. You're already earning FUN Money. Unless, of course, there are *other* activities that you love doing even more. As I said, there is no rule you can't have multiple sources of FUN Money.

To determine whether or not your dream job is also a great FUN Money vehicle for you, pay careful attention to your thoughts and

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

activities through a couple of days at work. Do you find yourself thinking about other things? Are you anxious to get off the clock and head home? Do you have problems getting up in time to easily get to work on time?

Or—do you jump out of bed each day, eager to get started?

Would you do what you now do for a living, even if you weren't being paid? Would you still do it, even if you had to do something else for a living, just to pay the bills so you could continue?

These are all signs that you and your job were made for each other.

There are always at least a few people in every job who are totally happy to be doing what they do for a living. You can consider yourself extremely lucky if this is you. It might not feel like it, but you've won life's lottery.

Some police, schoolteachers, attorneys, lawn care professionals, sanitation engineers—you name it—are perfectly happy with their work, love every minute and look forward to each new day.

But, usually, they're far and away the exception to the rule.

Even if you love your current job or profession, the question still stands: would you do it every spare moment possible, even if you didn't get paid?

Or, perhaps you're absolutely head over heels in love with your current job—but it doesn't pay enough to cover the bills, let alone provide you with some fun time for doing those activities you love doing most.

Jenny would be a schoolteacher at this very moment—but schoolteachers, sadly, are of the most underpaid groups of professionals in America and throughout most of the world.

If you love your job, but never can seem to save enough to ensure a happy retirement and to pursue some of your other favorite activities, you still need to find your source of FUN Money.

FUN Money is your key to true fulfillment and happiness. Even if you love your current job or profession, even if you don't care that your current job or profession doesn't make much money. FUN Money is about having *fun* doing what you do to live *and* turning what you think is most fun into something that pays you better than most jobs would pay.

That's why, regardless of how you feel about your job today, regardless of whether or not you already own a business of your own—you still need to make those lists and work through this process with



## The Sitcom as Life

me. It could be a process of discovery for you, pointing out where you would *really* be happiest.

Even if you are one of the rare few lucky ones—include the job or profession or business you love on your list of favorite activities. Then, go through the list. Star the item or items you would be more than willing to do all day long, every day, even if you didn't earn any money doing them.

### It's More Important than You Might Think

For the *rest* of us, FUN Money is even more imperative. It's essential to our well-being and to our chances for a future that's worth looking forward to living.

The vast majority of us work at whatever job or profession we can find that will best pay the bills. Paying the bills is most certainly required, if you intend to be a productive member of society.

Sadly, however, we tend to give up the bulk of our lives just to stay alive. Often, we're left with very little energy or money when it comes time to enjoy what little time is left when we're not at work—if there's any additional money to have some fun with and *if* there's any time in which to have it.

Even worse, most of us wind up with jobs we despise or running businesses we don't find fulfilling because of a completely wrong-headed notion about the very nature of work. This notion forces us to believe that work that's too easy or too much fun isn't *really* work at all. We actually feel better when we're working if we're *not* enjoying the work, because it feels *right*—and we've been taught all our lives that work isn't *supposed* to be fun *or* easy.

Today, thanks to the power of the Internet, you can easily start an information-based business or add information publishing to your existing business, and start a home-based business doing what you love doing most.

It's so easy, I have to laugh when I hear someone say they want to get out of their job, but they simply don't know what to do.

But—it's not really your fault that you feel this way.

You are where you are right now because you were misled from childhood. You were raised to believe that the only way to get ahead in the world is to go to school, study hard, get a degree, and work for a major corporation.

And it's not *supposed* to be fun—or it's not *really* work.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

The only acceptable substitutes to this theory appear to be attorneys and doctors. It seems it's okay to dream of being a doctor with your own lucrative private practice. Just don't be so foolish as to assume you can also have fun running that private practice.

Small wonder two of the largest groups of clients that I work with on a regular basis are doctors and lawyers looking for a way to get into online businesses, so they can start *enjoying* their work.

### **You're Building the Perfect Dream Business**

In this book, we're putting together the perfect dream business that you'll absolutely love to be a part of—one capable of completely changing your life. I guarantee, as you move forward and your life starts to change, you'll start getting a *lot* of strange advice—and even stranger quizzical looks—from your friends and family and neighbors.

That's because everyone else was misled, just like you were. They simply don't "get it." They fail to understand how anyone wandering outside in her bathrobe to pick up the morning paper at noon—just as they're pulling into the drive for a hurried lunch before speeding back to the office—could *possibly* be doing anything constructive.

They'll think all sorts of bad things. They'll assume you're breaking the law. Perhaps they'll whisper that you must have inherited a trust fund.

Let them whisper. That's part of the fun.

My mother (God love her) *still* wishes I'd just go and get a "real" job, so I can have a "secure" future, even though my business has been generating average revenues of \$1 million every year for the past 23 years.

There's nothing wrong with any of these people. They might give advice that, after reading this book, no longer makes any sense—but don't blame them. Most likely, they genuinely care about you and want only the best for you, but they simply don't know any better way.

Even my mom was misled.

Most of us were led to believe that there is simply no way we could possibly have enough experience or enough money or enough time and energy to start a business of our own, let alone create valuable information products that people will eagerly buy.

But—that's exactly what you're going to be doing *very* soon. (Please—turn off your own "internal skeptic" and trust me here—it's

## The Sitcom as Life

really so very easy to do, you'll find yourself laughing out loud when we get into the nuts and bolts of it all.)

Soon, you'll be able to shake your head in pity at these well-meaning naysayers. For now, you'll just have to trust me. I have faith in you, and I know you'll be able to carry out the simple tasks required to change your life forever.

In years past, these well-meaning folks were exactly right. It wasn't that long ago that starting any business required a minimum of \$10,000 cash—more often \$100,000 and up. And the odds were horrifically against it working out.

Thanks to the Internet, anyone capable of navigating the World Wide Web, typing, and cutting and pasting on a computer can launch a business following my system, with little or even no money. And they can do so with a reasonable expectation that they will earn at least enough money in that business to comfortably pay for all the fun activities they love doing most. It's entirely possible to *replace* a middle-class job in the process, so fun becomes your full-time profession.

### The Impossible Is Now Possible

In the past, it was impossible to focus on a tight niche, such as one of your favorite hobbies or activities, and make significant money, if you made any money at all. Before the Internet, most businesses were almost entirely focused on a single locality. The city in which you started your business had to be able to support the niche your business served, or you had to broaden your business, to appeal to more people.

If you loved working with stained glass, and you lived in a town of only 15,000 people, you were most likely out of luck. There wouldn't be enough other people interested in your niche to support a business supplying that niche.

The only alternative was to enter the risky world of mail order. This was, before the Internet explosion, the one way brave souls could expand their markets beyond a locality and reach more people with a more specialized niche interest.

Mail order is a far less expensive way to start a business than opening a brick-and-mortar store. It definitely expands the size of the market you can reach with your sales messages. Direct mail is also an extremely effective way to make sales. But it's still expensive by most standards. And the resulting risk can be tremendous.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

Even a simple direct mail sales letter and order form with a return envelope can easily cost upwards of \$1 to print and mail these days. Catalogs and more elaborate sales letters can cost much more. Sending that \$1 letter to 10,000 people had better return at least \$20,000 in orders, or you're going to start feeling pinched very quickly.

Today, thanks to the Internet, anyone with any amount of money and with very limited skills can pick an extremely focused niche and launch a business serving that niche in a way that no other business is serving it—then reach an audience of more than one billion people, all of whom are potential prospects.

I've got clients earning a great full-time living selling to just 500 or 1,000 online customers. Out of the more than one billion people currently online, I feel strongly that anyone can find a way to attract enough customers to make virtually *any* business niche work—and realize tremendous potential for profit.

### Three-Step Formula for Success

Just use my simple three-step formula, and you can launch or build *any* business—home-based or brick-and-mortar, part-time or full-time:

1. Publish an e-book (an electronic book).
2. Publish an e-zine (an electronic newsletter).
3. Tie the two together and give them away for free (the easiest sale you'll ever make).

Yes—that's all there is. Only three steps. I realize that “publish a book” might sound hard. And “publish an e-zine” could seem a bit daunting, as well. Giving them both away free? It's probably a bit hard to see how that will make you any money—yet.

Keep reading. There are, admittedly, several substeps involved in each of these three main steps. I'll explain them all as we go along.

I'll even explain how you'll make great money giving all this away for free.

For now, just keep that three-step formula in mind as we move through the steps of building your FUN Money business. You can apply this three-step formula and guarantee your chances of success, because this formula works for literally *anyone*.

Yes—I said anyone, including you. You've already started by making the lists. You're already starting to move through the microsteps.

And—what we’ve done so far is about as tough as the work gets. You’re doing fine.

The good news is that the steps *and* microsteps involved are all so simple even a 10-year-old can do them. I don’t believe following these simple steps is a lot to ask in return for a complete financial and emotional makeover . . . do you?

### **First, Find the *Perfect Niche***

First, we have to determine the very *best* business for you to launch. To discover this, let’s carefully study both of the lists you just created.

On your two lists, examine the relationships between your past work life and the fun things you truly enjoy doing. You should see that you already possess experience and knowledge—even genuine “insider” know-how—on one or more subjects.

We’re going to apply that experience and knowledge to build your business on the Internet—a business that’s capable of feeding eager buyers who are willing to pay a premium for whatever it is you’d like to sell. I’ll even help you decide what to sell.

Looking at Jenny’s lists, I can see several strong repeating themes and connections that could be capitalized on. Her love of reading and teaching stand out clearly. These skills are very valuable when it comes to running an online business. Throughout her lists, I also see a love of helping people over and over again. Even when she was working as a clerk at a clothing store, she most enjoyed helping people.

This exposure to retailing can be of some help, too, although Jenny probably doesn’t realize how much information about the actual workings of the retail business she might have picked up while she was there.

Then there’s Jenny’s love of Barbie—and shopping and eBay.

The horseback riding might just have to wait a bit. She’ll have plenty of time and money to enjoy all the horseback riding she wants to enjoy later—after her business is up and rolling, automated, and bringing in money round-the-clock, even while she hits the stables.

Believe it or not, there’s also a way to work Jenny’s love of horseback riding in, if she really wanted to. There honestly are no limits to what you can do with your own business when you conduct business online the way I’m showing you.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

Me? I wish there had been a book like this when I was starting out. I naturally gravitated toward what I truly loved doing. I hated working for someone else so much that my life was doomed if I didn't find a way to turn my fun into money—so I just jumped in with both feet and figured it out as I went along.

My early attempts at FUN Money were expensive lessons. Before computers and online communications networks started connecting the world, my FUN Money was almost always eaten up by typesetting, printing, mailing, and advertising expenses, leaving very little room for profit and adding a lot of risk to my endeavors.

Fortunately, I was a househusband and my wife at the time was a professional, bringing more money into the household than I could ever pull in working at any job I was qualified to hold. This enabled me to stay at home and raise my kids (a blessing), but it also meant I could only work at businesses that I could operate around my kids' schedules.

This news should please any stay-at-home parent reading this. Yes, my system will work for you, too. Your situation is perfect for bringing in FUN Money.

I knew the formula, but the vehicle that made it a nonstop never-fail formula didn't appear until the advent of the early dial-up computer bulletin boards (BBSs) that predated the World Wide Web by more than 10 years.

That's when I took off like wildfire, writing and publishing online, following my passions, and often generating more money in some single months than I ever imagined I would make in a lifetime.

Even though I had the benefit of my love of reading, writing, and publishing going for me, it took years for me to finally put them together, before the FUN Money could begin.

You have this book—the benefit of my 23+ years of FUN Money experience to guide you. During all this time, I've also discovered a multitude of ways to easily apply the FUN Money principles I'm teaching here, to launch a successful business without spending *any* money, part-time or full-time—and without writing a word, if you don't want to.

I think I said this before. At the risk of repeating myself: Lucky you.

You can choose to sell physical or digital products. You can provide consulting services. You can even bring people together, broker deals, and take a slice of *their* combined profits.

## The Sitcom as Life

*How* you ultimately apply the principles taught in this book is entirely up to you.

There is an endless amount of money to be made on the Internet today. And the pot of gold at the end of the Internet rainbow only continues to grow exponentially. Don't think for a minute that you don't have the skills or knowledge to pull it off, either. You've already taken the first steps. You should already know of at least *one* niche interest area where you have some experience and knowledge that other people would pay to access.

Put both of the lists that you just made in a safe place. We'll return to them again.

### GETTING WHERE YOU WANT TO BE—FAST

I said this is easy and it really is. Let's take a closer look at each of the three steps in my system, and you'll see what I mean:

1. Publish an e-book.
2. Publish an e-zine.
3. Tie them both together and give 'em away for free.

Notice, in these three steps, I said "publish" an e-book (a digital book), not "write" an e-book. Writing *any* book can be difficult and time consuming. Even if writing a book is something you'd *love* doing, you could spend several months struggling with this task. FUN Money is *not* about struggle.

Don't even *think* about writing an e-book yourself.

Don't worry. I'll show you some ways that you can quickly put together an e-book that people will value in three or four days—one week tops.

The same goes for an e-zine. Writing a newsletter is not only difficult and time consuming—it's a routine that you have to keep up, week after week or month after month, on deadline.

I'll be showing you ways to easily put together a *great* electronic newsletter people will anticipate and look forward to reading each time you release a new issue.

Again, I'm going to show you how to publish this e-zine without writing a word, unless you're just dying to spend some of your time putting your own words on paper. (I'm not out to *stifle* creativity

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

here—but I do want you to see that there is *no* creative “talent” required for my system to work.)

Actually, the hardest part of the process is simply deciding what you’re going to focus on, so you know you’re setting up your system to create real sales from your efforts. Implementing the system itself is so easy you’ll probably find there are ways you can do it in your sleep.

### Getting Started: Some Easy Research

And—it all starts with some of the easiest research you’ll ever do. Those lists I had you start working on are the first phase of research you needed to do, to discover your true passion and your areas of expertise. And to see where they might intersect.

If you didn’t create your two lists, you might want to do that now. It’s up to you—but it really will make the rest of this process a *lot* easier for you if you follow along and start getting things set up now.

Do this, and you could easily launch your system shortly after finishing this book.

Back to the lists.

You now have two lists. Study both of them. Hopefully, you’ll map out some direct connections between your favorite activities and interests and your personal experiences and skills. In Jenny’s case, it was obvious the first time I talked to her that her first choice should be something related to collecting Barbie dolls.

Soon, we’ll put her system together. I’m betting, because of the lists I know she’s put together, that she heads in the direction of Barbie collecting. Her love of Barbie is too prevalent to ignore.

But—it goes deeper than that.

Jenny not only loves collecting Barbies—she reveres them. She loves nothing more than fussing with them; researching their history; and buying, selling, and trading them. And she’s never let her fascination with them falter since she was first introduced to Barbie at a very early age.

It’s a natural for her. She’s been collecting Barbies, devoting so much time to her passion that, to almost any other Barbie collector, she’s an *expert*. And she doesn’t even realize it. Yet.

All we’ll need to do is focus on that interest and *establish* Jenny as an expert, then she’ll be off and running.

Of course, I’ll show you the process, too.



## The Sitcom as Life

Is there anything on your lists that fits this pattern? You want to look for activities you've already devoted a lot of time and energy to. If they're things that you already know a great deal about, these activities and interests are worth investigating deeper.

This is, most likely, the one you should go after.

### **You Are an Expert**

You're going to use my system to establish yourself as an expert in your niche interest. Believe it or not, you are an expert if you've been doing anything longer than a month. After that, there's always someone just getting started who could learn from you.

Of course—the longer you've been doing something, the more you presumably know about it. This broadens your market. But—seriously—I've seen clients take up a brand new hobby, learn all they can about it for a month, then turn around and start making money helping other people who are just getting started in that same hobby.

Even better, when we look at Jenny's lists, there are a number of *other* complimentary skills—activities and tasks that she not only enjoys doing, but that she also has invested some considerable time doing.

These skills—some of the other items on her list—will come in extremely handy as I work with her to build a profitable Barbie-based business.

Can you imagine the reaction Jenny's in for when she tells her mother she's planning to start a full-time Barbie business? I'm pretty sure she'll be in for some serious ribbing from Tom, Gloria, and Andy, too.

Your lists might differ quite a bit from Jenny's. The lists Tom, Gloria, and Albert will put together later don't match Jenny's, either.

### **Find the Money**

Because it's tough to have fun when you have no money, the first step to FUN Money is discovering which of your number one favorite activities you can turn into a *profitable* business. You don't want to be a starving artist. The arts are a blast. Who hasn't watched their favorite musician and dreamed of the life he or she must lead? The good news is, if you love painting, drawing, writing, or music, for example, you're

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

already in perhaps the best position possible from which to launch a Fun Money business.

But, I've found that hunger can get in the way of even the biggest fun you could imagine—every time.

You *must* turn what you love doing most into money.

What you're learning right here will enable you to turn whatever artistic endeavor you ever wanted to pursue into cash. Remember, though—it doesn't matter how good or bad you are. It doesn't even matter if you can't write or paint or take pictures or play music. It's easy to launch a profitable online business around your favorite pastime, whether you can write or paint or sing anything.

You can find out everything you need to know with some simple Internet research.

This is easy to do. You can do it in your spare time, at home, or wherever you have access to a computer and an Internet connection. It only takes a short time to determine which of your passions is potentially most profitable, so it's definitely worth the small effort required.

### Niches within Niches within Niches

In the process, you'll also determine the perfect niche area within your passion (something I call the "niche within a niche"). This is your "sweet spot" for maximum online sales and profits. The Internet is ripe with subniches that you can dominate quickly, for maximum results.

If you plan to start any business on the Internet, it's always best to first check out how many search engine pages relate directly to your passion. Then, you want to look at the number of people who are actually typing keywords and phrases that relate to the niche business you hope to start into the search engines, to find information and products they want.

A quick visit to Google shows that there are more than 2,240,000 pages online, indexed by Google, related to the search term "Barbie collector." 2,660,000 pages show up when you enter "Barbie information." "Rare Barbie dolls" brings up 1,130,000 pages. There are 1,410,000 online pages referencing "Barbie doll club" and 2,360,000 pages referencing "Barbie doll clothes."

It's interesting to note this simple search for "Barbie clothes" turned up as many related pages as our search for "Barbie collectors."

Wow. That's what I call a fat, potentially profitable niche within a niche.

We'll look deeper into these web pages in a moment. Next, we want to visit one of Google's competitors in the search engine world—Yahoo—and take a look at the number of people who are actually typing keywords and phrases related to Barbie into the search engines.

### About Those Keywords and Phrases

First, in case you're not familiar with the term, *keywords* are the *exact* words and phrases people type into a search engine when they're seeking either free information or products and services to buy on the Web.

Whether you knew it or not, you were using keywords every time you looked for web sites using a search engine. Keywords are those words or phrases that you type into the "search bar" on a search engine, to find what you're looking for.

This might be basic information for some of you. Too bad. A lot of people still don't know what a keyword is, and this is essential to setting up a profitable FUN Money business, so bear with us.

Yahoo has a service that's a lot like Google's Adwords program. Adwords is the driving force behind Google's enormous financial success. It's the place where companies and individuals doing business on the Web can place ads on Google that will then display in the search engine's web site lists, as "sponsored listings." They normally appear to the *right* of the search engine-generated list of sites that comes up when you enter selected keywords. We refer to this as the "organic" listing.

Sometimes these sponsored links also appear *above* the free listings in addition to the list that appears to the right.

You buy Adwords ads on Google by bidding on them. First, you write a small ad (smaller than most classified ads) that you want to have displayed on Google, following Google's guidelines for creating sponsored listing ads. You then apply as many different related keywords and keyword combinations as you can come up with to each ad that you create. Your ad will then appear in the "sponsored links" area whenever someone types in the keywords or combinations you selected for your "campaign."

Advertisers choose the amount of money they're willing to pay Google for each time someone clicks on the ad they've entered into their campaigns. The higher you bid, the closer to the top of the

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

sponsored links listings your ad will appear. It all depends on the number of other people bidding for the same keywords and how much they're willing to pay.

Sponsored links on Yahoo work pretty much the same as they do on Google. But, Yahoo offers a free tool that you can use, to see which keywords are being searched and how many people typed them into the search engine during the past month. The tool also shows you *other* keywords that might be related to the keyword you're researching, plus the number of times these alternate keywords have been typed into Yahoo in the past month.

This is extremely useful free information.

You can access this free tool at: <http://inventory.overture.com>.

On Overture, we find that, in the past month, as of this writing, "Barbie doll collector" was entered into Yahoo Search 1,146 times.

This is a good number. More than 1,000 people typed "Barbie doll collector" into the Yahoo search engine in the past month. I'd be happier if there were more but, as long as it's not *less* than 1,000, it's worth noting this keyword phrase.

Because this number is a little small, you also want to back it out a bit and search on a more general keyword. Let's try "Barbie doll."

This brings up the following list:

44,869	Barbie doll
4,923	Barbie doll house
4,336	Dress-up Barbie doll game
1,916	Collectible Barbie doll
1,730	Barbie doll picture
1,539	Vintage Barbie doll
1,146	Barbie doll collector
977	Barbie doll clothes

Notice that "Barbie doll clothes" has less than 1,000 searches, but I included it anyway. It's close—and there were so many other search terms related to Barbie dolls with less searches, I fudged a little.

### **This Is a Science That Can Be Duplicated**

This is a science that can be duplicated—but there's a bit of art involved, too. In the end, you'll be good going with what feels best, but this simple research will assist you in focusing.

## The Sitcom as Life

From this first list, I can see a *perfect*, strong subniche for Jenny, in addition to Barbie doll clothes. Can you guess which one?

Notice that “collectible Barbie doll,” “Barbie doll collector” and “vintage Barbie doll” are searched more often than “Barbie doll clothes.” These three point directly to a subniche that deserves careful consideration.

I have *no idea* why “dress-up Barbie doll game” has more than 4,000 searches a month. This is the kind of thing that can crop up during this part of the process, and it can easily point you to possible profitable niches that you might never have thought of without this research.

That’s why this research is so important. It’s absolutely the *least* fun you’re going to have with this entire process—but it’s vital to getting the process started, so you don’t unwittingly walk into a “profit-free zone.”

If every artist in the world would follow this process before they created anything, there would no longer be such a thing as a starving artist.

Before we wrap up our research, let’s also check out the other search terms we entered into Google:

### Barbie Collector

- 3,823 searches for “Barbie collector”
- 1,146 searches for “Barbie doll collector”

This is good stuff. There is definitely a market for Jenny’s expertise here.

### Barbie Information

- 34 searches for “Barbie general history information vintage” (notice the misspelling of “history”)
- 30 information barrie (*another* misspelling—both of these are pretty much worthless, however)

### Rare Barbie Dolls

- Nothing

### Barbie Doll Club

- Nothing

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I'm baffled by the total lack of searches for "Rare Barbie dolls" and "Barbie doll club," when there are so many searches for "Barbie doll collector" and "Barbie collector."

Usually, this is where your own intimate knowledge of your chosen niche will prove to be one of your most valuable assets in this process. I'm not a Barbie doll fanatic. I don't have *any* intimate knowledge of the market for information, products, and services of interest to other Barbie fanatics.

Jenny holds this piece of the puzzle. I'll have to tap her for that later. You hold this key to your own FUN Money path as well.

For now, get started. Make a list of keywords. Play with Overture's free keyword lookup tool. See how many related phrases and words you can find . . . track them for traffic and start the comparison process, so you can identify your true path.

I said this is the hardest part of the entire process. It's only difficult at all because *some* of it relies on instinct. You have to examine your two lists, create keywords for *all* of the possible niches and niches within niches you discover in your research, see how many people are looking for the terms you've discovered—and make a determination as to the viability of any given niche or subniche you wish to pursue.

The good news is that the "gut" reaction portion of this process is almost completely *your* gut—based on your intimate knowledge of the niche or subniche you've decided to go after as you continue to dig your own FUN Money mine.

You don't want to rush this part of the process. But, don't allow paralysis by analysis freeze you up, either. It's possible to switch your niche after you've chosen one—if it doesn't work out. I want you to get through this process quickly and painlessly—so you can move on to the FUN Money *fast*.

## FUN MONEY PROFILE

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## The Sitcom as Life

**Previous jobs held:** Restaurant waiter, bartender, retail store manager, delicatessen manager, landscaper, designer, web designer, creative director, marketing director.

**Least favorite thing about working for someone else:** Being tied to a set schedule and a set dress code, being a slave to the paycheck, and also not being able to make larger-scale decisions regarding positioning, packaging, marketing, hiring, promotion, and sales.

**Favorite thing about working for someone else:** The interaction with other coworkers, the sense of camaraderie.

**Single pivotal moment or thing that helped make the switch to pursuing a FUN Money lifestyle:** I've always been an entrepreneur. I only usually took a "real" job when I felt pressure to do so. In high school, I sold airbrushed jackets for money. In college, I sold paintings. I sold my paintings for several years and had several shows. I've worked for myself, as a webmaster or design contractor—mostly from home—on and off since 2000.

In 2002, my wife and daughter and I moved to the Caribbean. It had always been our dream to live in the islands . . . and we did it. For almost three years, we lived the slow life under the sun. Category 5 hurricane Ivan hit the Cayman Islands on the 11th of September, 2004. Our condo was gone. The jobs, the cars, all of our belongings . . . all of it was gone. We ended up in Miami, homeless, feeling very lucky to be alive, and very disappointed to have our island lifestyle come to an end.

Believe it or not, though, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I ended up meeting a few people in my personal life who introduced me to Internet marketing, which has changed my life dramatically. I got back on my feet. I learned the industry. I launched my first project, and I met some amazingly talented people.

**Emotional reactions when making the decision to quit the day job:** As you get older and have kids and mounting responsibilities and a bigger monthly "nut" to make, it becomes much harder to take chances on new businesses and moves to other countries. It's always accompanied by fear, worry, excitement, "can I really do this?" and so on, and so on. I'm lucky to have a very supportive wife.

## WILL WORK FOR FUN

**Reaction of your friends, family, and loved ones to your decision:**

Most of it was, “Here goes Erik with another one of his cockeyed schemes again” type stuff. I’ve been involved in (and walked away from) several failed businesses and partnerships.

**Time required to attain the FUN Money lifestyle:** Six months . . . if that. I’d been reading a lot about the laws of attraction, and I knew what I was doing would work.

**What you do now:** I work from my home in southwest Florida. I spend my days on the phone or writing e-mail. I do a lot of Internet marketing, product development, and promotion. I work when I want. I find that, despite all these freedoms, I actually work just as hard as I ever did . . . probably because I enjoy it so much.

**Your life today:** We are enjoying life, that’s for sure. I have two kids under the age of five, and it’s a pleasure to spend more time with them. It’s summer here in Florida, as I write this, and we’re taking a lot of time off. We’re swimming a lot. Next summer, we’re going back to the Caribbean—to the Cayman Islands, where we used to live—for a month.

**Advice for other FUN Money seekers:** Don’t give up when everyone doubts you. Just take that doubt and turn it into motivation.

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### *Wrap-Up*

- Change your attitude about work.
- Make a list of at least 10 things you’ve loved doing most and could do all day, given the opportunity.
- Reorder your list, arranging the things you’ve done the most at the top.
- Next, make a list of jobs you’ve held in your life. Every job you’ve held, good or bad.
- Reorder list number two, putting the job you liked most at the top, and working down the list.



### The Sitcom as Life

- Below each item on your reordered list, build a sublist of the things you most liked about each job—at least one item per job on the list.
- Compare your list of things you love doing most with the list of job experiences you enjoyed.
- Look for past jobs you've held that you can add to your list of favorite things. It's rare—but it happens.
- If your current job fits on your list of favorite things—keep going. There is nothing wrong with having *two* FUN Money sources.
- Star the items on your favorite activities list that you could do all day every day.
- Look for connections between your favorite activities and the work you've done.
- Any interest that meets the other criteria and has connections to your work is strengthened by that connection, providing background experience and knowledge.
- Look on Google.com for search words related to your interest.
- Visit <http://inventory.overture.com> and test keywords related to your chosen niche.
- Drill down to the perfect niche within a niche.

