

# SUMMARY

## BORN FOR THIS

CHRIS GUILLEBEAU



# **Summary of “Born For This” by Chris Guillebeau**

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Written for those who are yearning to find the career of their dreams, Born for This (2016) is your guidebook.

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# Introduction

Would you say you feel like you were born to do the job you're doing right now? Probably not, right? Because when we were kids, most of us had dream careers like zookeeper or marine biologist or astronaut; we chose our future jobs because they were the things that we genuinely imagined wanting to do every day for the rest of our lives. It's pretty unlikely that any one of us said, "I want to be an insurance agent because even though I hate it, it pays the bills." And yet, sadly, that's where many of us end up as adults. Why? Maybe we felt pressured to take the first job we were offered after college. Maybe we woke up one day to find that the career we went to school for isn't actually what we want to do. Or maybe it's because we're holding ourselves back through our belief that you can only find meaningful work if you're super talented or creative. But nothing could be further from the truth!

In fact, a great job is out there waiting for you-- the job you were actually born to do. And not only do you have all the right skills for it, this job will combine all your greatest interests, thereby allowing you to pursue work that truly makes you happy. But sometimes, outdated career advice keeps us from realizing just how accessible our dream jobs really are. And that's where this summary comes in! Over the course of the next few chapters, you'll learn how to update your career roadmap, along with some other practical tips like:

- How to build a small business on the side (in just a few weeks!)
- What a 100 People Project is and how it can help you, and:
- Why you don't have to settle for one of the jobs that are already out there

# You Won't Find Your Calling Through a One-Size-Fits-All Plan

At some point during your time in high school, a career counselor probably came to talk to you about your future job opportunities. And chances are, they spouted a lot of predictable and prescriptive advice about finding your future career. But as well-intentioned as it might have been, that isn't always the most helpful advice. Because, sure, that might help you find any old job-- but the path to the work you were born to do isn't clear cut and it can't be neatly packaged as a five-step plan for career day.

Fortunately, however, understanding this is the first step to getting on the right path. So, if you don't know what you want to do, that's not a handicap-- it's actually a good thing! In fact, you can use this as a tool for developing your open-mindedness. Because you might not realize it, but a persistent willingness to pursue new opportunities is exactly how you find your true calling. How does it work? Well, let's say you think your dream job is to join the circus, and you finally get to do it. But after a few months, you come to the conclusion that cleaning up after the elephants isn't your favorite thing in the world and you're pretty sure it's not what you were put on the earth to do. But because you still believe your calling is something circus-related, you transfer to the box office to sell tickets, thinking you'll find meaning here.

But if cleaning up after the elephants was a little too mucky for your taste, this job is a little too clean and removed; far from the action in your little box office, you don't really feel like you're part of the circus and you get bored pretty quickly. But sadly, there are no longer any openings at the circus, so you resign yourself to a boring office job somewhere else. As you expected, that's getting on your nerves too, but just when you least expect it, you meet a new client who owns a clothing line. And that's when you realize that, actually, you've wanted to design circus-themed t-shirts all along!

Now, that might sound like a rather round-about way of achieving your career goals, but the truth is, that's how it happens sometimes and that's okay! In fact, you don't need to follow an established career path at all. So, instead of adhering to the age-old "rule" of jumping at any career opportunity because it might be your only one, you can re-write the rule and assert that, "If I don't feel good about a job opportunity, I can pass it up!" Because that's how you find the work you were born for.

# What Does Your Ideal Job Look Like?

If you had the opportunity to win the job lottery and choose your ideal job, chances are, that dream job would look different for each of us. But no matter what your ideal job entails, it should contain a few of the same basic ingredients for everybody: joy, money, and flow. That's because your ideal job should be one that pays you to do things you genuinely joy! So if, for example, you love working with children and you're passionate about shaping young minds, it follows naturally that being a teacher is your ideal job!

However, with that said, it's important to acknowledge that happiness can't be the only factor in your job search. It might be nice to get paid for playing video games all day or tasting new menu items for your favorite restaurants, but those options aren't necessarily practical and neither are they infused with the sense of meaning your true ideal job will bring. That's why you also have to consider the issue of money, even if you're not necessarily aiming to become a billionaire. And lastly, your ideal job should also help you find a state of flow. Flow is the experience of being totally engrossed in an activity that's pleasantly invigorating, one that infuses you with such passion and fulfillment, it doesn't feel like "work."

Each of these ingredients are vital for the pursuit of anyone's ideal job, but the priority you place on each one will vary from person to person. You can keep this in mind as you seek your ideal job and a bit of introspection can help you determine which categories are most important to you. But you should also consider your working conditions, because your satisfaction with your daily work environment can have a big impact on your ultimate happiness in your career. If, for example, you love your job and the daily tasks it requires, but your working conditions are poor or you're mistreated, it follows that you won't be happy in your ideal job after all.

So, how do you prevent this from happening? Well, for starters, you can take time to evaluate the working conditions that are right for you. For



example, is it important that you have the freedom to set your own hours? Or are you happy to work a traditional 9-5 job? You'll also want to consider the social conditions that matter to you. Do you prefer to be left alone in your own office or would you be happiest in an open-plan office, collaborating with a team? The last criteria to consider is reporting and accountability. Put simply, this measures whether you'd prefer to work independently with little monitoring or whether you want to be managed. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, but you can't pursue your ideal job without them. So, take some time to answer these questions for yourself and then you can move on to the next phase: brainstorming a strategy that will help you meet those goals!

# Is Your Fear Holding You Back?

For many of us, the answer is yes. And if that's true for you, then you'll find that taking risks and trying new things can help you boost your confidence. You can jumpstart this process by making a list of everything that could go wrong and how likely each of those potential outcomes are. This can be helpful because in most cases, you'll find that your fears are either unrealistic or unlikely and therefore, you don't have to worry about them! Once you've put your mind at ease, you can move on to the next step: eradicating your FOMO. Fear of missing out (often abbreviated as FOMO) is a common problem that holds many of us back and it's especially toxic when we allow it to guide our career decisions.

Why? Well, let's say that, hypothetically, you have an interview at a company's headquarters. But when you get there, not only does the workplace look bleak and dismal, every employee you see looks scared and nervous all the time. However, despite your lingering doubts about the atmosphere, the interview goes great and you're offered the job. Now, if your career decisions are guided by FOMO, that means that in this scenario, you'll feel pressured to accept the job because it's the only offer you have on the table, even if you have some significant apprehensions about the work environment. And if you make your decision based on that feeling, you might start a new job that's actually worse than being unemployed!

But conquering your fears can help you make realistic plans by anticipating risks and crafting a safety net. How? Well, whenever you make a decision, whether you expect it to be positive or scary, you can return to the method we discussed earlier and evaluate the possible outcomes. For example, in the scenario described above, you could list your possible outcomes as, "I could start a new job and it might go well" or, "I could start a new job and be miserable." You could then list the likelihood of those outcomes based on the information you have, paying particular attention to the fact that

every employee you saw looked miserable. This can help you make a rational, informed decision.

You can also create a safety net by employing the following method. Let's say you want to send out some bold new advertising emails to hype up your business. Working off that scenario, you can then draw up an "if-then" sketch which would look something like this: If the first recipients of the email love it, great! You know you've got a winning ad campaign on your hands and you can go from there. But if the feedback you receive isn't so positive, you can tone it down by sending a tame mailer with a coupon out to the next prospects on your list. You can tailor your "if-then" sketch to any scenario you encounter; the trick is just to make sure that your back-up plans are specific, solid and reliable in every case.

And lastly, there are three generic ingredients you can use to create a "career insurance policy" and help you with damage control in the event of tragic circumstances like losing your job. Firstly, you should maintain a network of supporters-- people who can help you rebuild your career if you need to. These might be connections you've met through a networking event, a colleague, or a friend of a friend, but whoever they are, they all have some means of helping you further your career. The next thing you should do is secure an additional or backup source of income that you can rely on if need be. This will come in handy if you lose your job because it means you haven't lost your only source of income. And lastly, this is a bit of a no-brainer, but you should always spend less than you earn to create a financial security net.

# Identify Your Skills and Weaknesses to Discover How You Can Meet a Demand

When brainstorming future careers, many people make the mistake of hyper-focusing on careers they've already studied or know a little bit about. For example, if you've previously worked as a data scientist, you might be tempted to fixate on careers that have to do with statistics. Don't limit yourself like that! Instead, you should evaluate all your strengths and weaknesses to identify the variety of options that might be a good fit for you. You can start by simply making two lists. One list should focus on all the things you do well, while the other should detail the areas where you struggle.

But again, don't limit yourself to one area of your life like your education or professional experience; take note of everything, including your personal strengths and weaknesses.

This is crucial because all areas of your life are relevant for the purposes of this self-assessment and because your weaknesses are unlikely to magically transform into your greatest strengths. Once you've made your lists, you'll get your first complete picture of the work you're best qualified to do. Then you can move on to the next step: figuring out how you can make money by optimizing these skills and using them to meet a demand.

This can actually be simpler than you might think! In fact, your daily life might hold some answers you need to listen to. For example, if your co-workers are always turning to you for advice with computer issues, relationship problems, or public speaking tips, you've already gotten some cues about your skills in relation to a potential demand. This, in turn, can help you identify an area where people are willing to pay for something you can offer. Once you've identified this area, you can move on to your 100 People Project. Here's how it works:

Let's imagine you've discovered that you're awesome at giving weight loss advice. Now that you've identified your niche, you can move forward by

selecting 100 people from your contact list and social media and get in touch with them to offer free 15-minute consultations. This will improve your writing, speaking, and marketing skills while also helping you to promote your future business. These skills are critical, no matter what business you have, because you'll use them over and over again to sell your product, connect with others, and make a difference. So, it's important to sharpen them daily! After all, the need to persuade others that you and your ideas are valuable is never going to go away, so you need to be confident in your ability to sell yourself.

# Don't Quit Your Day Job

At the beginning of this summary, we mentioned that we were going to talk about ways to start your own business on the side and that's exactly what this chapter is devoted to. Launching a new startup can be daunting, especially if you think you have to dramatically quit your "real" job and embark on a bold new adventure with no start-up capital, as many successful people have done before. But just because that model has worked for some people, it doesn't mean you have to follow it. In fact, it's completely possible to start a new business on the side during your free time, so long as you do it in a systematic way.

You don't have to do it all at once, either! In actuality, just a single hour a day-- or even an hour a week-- can be enough to help you brainstorm your business and raise it from idea to execution over the course of a few weeks. So, don't stress yourself out by thinking that you have to dive in with one bold new business plan from the start; you can afford to take it slow and start by answering specific questions like: What kind of product or service do you want to provide? What does your target market look like? Who will your customers be? Or, put simply, who needs this product and how will you market it to them? What does your budget look like?

These questions are perfect because they're not only crucial to the future development of your business, they're also bite-sized chunks that you can easily accomplish in an hour. In fact, you can even take an hour apiece to answer each question; the more detailed your answers are, the better! Once you've successfully addressed each of your foundational questions, you can graduate to using your daily hour to execute the business plan you've established. Starting task by task, one hour at a time, you can begin to launch your business. For example, one great use of a daily hour might be advertising your new product through social media.

So, no matter what product or service you hope to provide, this is a safe and foolproof way for launching your startup. By following this method, you can

rest assured that you'll always be able to rely on the income you're generating through your primary job, and that you have a safety net that isn't dependent on the success of your startup. And when you remove the pressure of feeling like you have to succeed or you won't be able to pay the bills, you'll find that you're freed up to think creatively and plan efficiently. Plus, you'll get the added benefit of safely learning and growing with your business along the way!

## Final Summary

Often, we feel pressured to take the first job we're offered or the first job that pays the bills and that's how we get trapped in a career that's unsatisfying or actively detrimental to our mental health. But you don't have to stay there! Everyone has a job they're born to do-- a type of work that's satisfying, original, and helps you find your state of flow. All you have to do is find it! Fortunately, however, it's not like searching for a needle in a haystack; you have a toolkit at your disposal.

If you're simply willing to keep an open mind, pursue the possible opportunities that come to you, and use them as a way to discover your true calling, you'll be well on your way to unlocking the work you were born to do. You can enhance your chances of success by relinquishing your fears, evaluating your worries to determine what's truly in your control, and making a list of your strengths and weaknesses to identify a demand you can meet.





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