

(Seth Godin) On Freelancing

By Blas Moros



Seth Godin Freelancer Course

Section 1 - How to Move Up

- Lecture 1 - Why be a freelancer?
 - Chance to do great work
 - Chance to make your own choices
 - Makes you responsible for the work you do
 - Make a living by making a difference
 - Chance to become a professional
 - Reject the idea of being generic
- Lecture 2 - A Warrior Without A King
 - This is a course about seeing a path and working your way up the ladder
- Lecture 3 - Moving Up the Ladder
 - Need to see what other people are doing
 - Model it so you know what it would be like if you were doing it
 - Choose a behavior, a path
 - Build what you need. Very few things are simply there to be taken
 - Can start part time, start small and build your asset.
 - **The leap does not need to be quitting your job. It needs to be the commitment to build your asset that is worth owning**
- Lecture 4 - Weaving a Braid
 - What do you want to do?
 - Who do you want to change?
 - How much risk are you willing to take as you build this asset?
 - How much work are you prepared to do?
 - **Does the work matter?**
 - Is it even possible?
- Lecture 5 - Who are you? (Exercise)
 - What do you want to do? - This is a difficult question for me to answer at this point. The details I'm not sure about but I know I want to do something where I am continually learning, working with people smarter than I am, being pushed constantly and doing work that honestly and meaningfully matters and makes a difference. I want to build something that provides a lot of value and is easy to use

- Who do you want to change and how do you want to change them? - I don't know if I want to "change" anybody, but maybe change their behavior and/or habits. Helping people lead healthier, more productive, more efficient, more effective lives would be really cool. A life coach type deal but on a big scale (maybe? an individualized, personal coach would be fantastic too)
- How much risk are you willing to take? - A good amount I'd say. I wouldn't be willing to do anything for it, but quitting my job or making a financial/time investment is something I expect and if I truly believe in it, something I would look forward to.
- How much work are you willing to do to get there? - Again, I think it comes back to how much I believe in it. If I am choosing to do something I would think that I believed in it a lot and therefore would be willing to do any amount of work. Balancing this with things I enjoy and sleep and relationships is something I know I could figure out.
- Does this project matter enough for the risk and effort you're putting into it? - I can't answer this at this point since I don't have a project in mind but when I find this project, I'll make sure that the risk/effort is worthwhile
- Is it possible? Has anyone with your resources pulled off something like this before? - Again, same as above.
- Lecture 6 - 5 Kinds of Freelancing
 - Level 1 - Mechanical Turk
 - Lowly work that anybody can do
 - Services offered by Amazon and Uber (nobody cares who's doing it)
 - You are a cog in the machine
 - Level 2 - The Handyman
 - Get the gig because you are handy, easy to get a hold of
 - Level 3 - The Craftsman
 - Invested enough in the craft that they are at least a little better than the next person
 - People go out of their way to pick you
 - Level 4 - Unique
 - Extremely difficult but worth it
 - **Level 5 - Remarkable**
 - Someone who does work that must be talked about
 - Make yourself into a brand - make promises to stand for something which is unique

- Aim to become unmistakable - people know your work when they see it
- Lecture 7 - Are you Unmistakable?
 - **If you outsourced your work to someone else, would the client know?**
 - **If someone else saw the work, would they know you did it?**
 - **Is there something about the client's interaction with you that is bigger than the work itself?**
 - Interactions are far easier to have in a discernible way than merely doing the work
- Lecture 8 - What do you provide? (Exercise)
 - What do people buy when they buy something from you? - I'm hoping the interaction with me, the value I provide, learning, growing, opening new doors
 - What are you doing that's difficult? Nothing generic, easy. - Reading a ton, curating, simplifying things to their essence, balancing many different goals and projects

Section 2 - Building Assets

- Lecture 9 - Different forms of Merit
 - Must get over the fear of not being good enough
 - Merit does not come merely from doing something better, it is a commitment to deliver value to clients
- Lecture 10 - 10 Things You Deliver to Your Client (Exercise)
 - Knowledge
 - Self-esteem
 - Respect
 - Happiness
 - Health
 - Deeper understanding
 - Timeliness
 - Confidence
 - A new outlook on life
 - New priorities
- Lecture 11 - Fear of Rejection

- A client saying no does not mean you are a fraud or you are not good enough. No often means that the client has decided to save money, I'm distracted, I've misinterpreted, etc...
- **"No" just means that your pitch didn't work**
- Your pitch should be like a dance - both there to solve a problem and you go back and forth with your client to connect and figure it out
- Lecture 12 - Building Your Assets
 - Better off picking customers who want to buy what you sell. So much easier to sell someone who already needs what you have than persuade clients that they need what you have
 - Three assets that any freelancer can invest in:
 - Brand - the promise you make and the expectations people have, what you stand for
 - Permission - privilege, not the right, to deliver anticipated, personal and relevant messages to people who want to get them
 - Expertise - often the least important of these three, how good you actually are at your craft. Be radically honest about how good you are
- Lecture 13 - Rank Yourself (Exercise)
 - Reputation - 8/10
 - Knowledge - 6/10
 - Expertise - 3/10
 - Tools - 4/10
 - Handiness - 5/10
 - Which will you invest in developing?

Section 3 - Managing Clients

- Lecture 14 - **Choose Your Customers**
 - Move up the ladder of freelancing:
 - Find a customer who has money
 - **Find a customer who has a problem and *knows* they have a problem**
 - Find a solution that only you can provide
 - Do it in a way that makes the customer eager to tell other people like them what you did
- Lecture 15 - Firing a Client

- Realize when it's not worth it and walk away and be generous if you decide to walk away
- If they don't trust, respect you then it is not worth it
- Lecture 16 - Questions to Ask a New Client
 - Never take for granted what the client wants
 - Ask very specific questions that get to the heart of what they want
 - Example of a caterer - give client 3 options and ask to choose or ask them to tell you about a wedding they loved and why they loved it
 - Able to extract much more and more important information from these types of question
 - What emotions is the person seeking?
 - Be confident enough to allow the silence to seep in - the client will begin talking and give you valuable information
- Lecture 17 - How to Increase Demand
 - Remind people of their needs
 - Satisfy existing needs
 - Initiate a need (most difficult by far) - people who don't know they have a problem are much better at ignoring you
- Lecture 18 - When a Client Disagrees With Your Vision
 - **Who cares what your vision is?? If the client came to you to solve their problem, then solve it how they see fit**
 - However, if you are the fringe case where you are so good and so famous and everyone acknowledges that you are the expert, then you have the luxury of executing on your vision
 - Picking clients is so important because you don't want to fold to the client's vision if it will make your work generic/something you are not proud of
 - St. Luke's ad agency example - fantastic ad agency who made a rule that they would not hire more people or take on new client's unless an old client left. Complete power shift since they can now act on their vision since they have a long list of potential clients. Create scarcity

Section 4 - Strategies You Choose

- Lecture 19 - Right Place Right Time

- A strategy of being at the right place at the right time is a poor strategy but if you do, you need to work extremely hard because almost anybody can be at the right place at the right time
- Lecture 20 - Get subscribers
 - Getting subscribers is the ultimate form of permission - you've built an asset
 - You've earned the privilege of building a regular client base
 - 4 steps - standing on the corner, ringing bells, going night before or do you have subscribers (shoveling snow example)
 - It must be a given that you are good enough at your craft
- Lecture 21 - Two Words in "i"
 - Imminent
 - When something is about to happen, the way people make decisions completely changes
 - Instigate
 - Do not be reactive, go out and make things happen
 - Combining these factors gives you a lot of leverage
- Lecture 22 - Building a Name as a New Freelancer
 - Get great at what you do and then share it - give it away for free in your given craft and give it away
 - Ask for a project so you can prove to the client that you're reliable
 - You acknowledge that a professional wouldn't charge for the work you are doing but want to prove yourself

Section 5 - Storytelling

- Lecture 23 - The 4 Principles of Storytelling
 - The story is the narrative you have when you encounter the client
 - You are telling a story whether you want to or not
 - Most freelancer's stories are desperate
 - If selling to businesses, the client is not spending their own money - question they are asking "what will I tell my boss."
 - Focus the story and make it specific, relevant to that context..."this will make you look good in front of your boss..."
- 5. Desire for gain - if you buy this from me you will get ahead
- 6. Fear - if you don't buy this from me, you will get in trouble

- 7. Opportunity - This is the ground floor, do you want to be part of this?
- 8. Left out - Losing out on something that is imminent
 - Must acknowledge which of the 4 principles above is relevant to our client and why they are hiring us
- Lecture 24 - B2B Sales (Exercise)
 - What is your client afraid their boss will think if they say yes?
 - Spent too much money, not the right approach, are you not capable yourself...
 - What would your client tell their boss to explain why they bought from you?
 - Expertise, timeliness, professionalism, quality
 - What would *you* like them to tell their boss?
 - Quality, nobody does it better,
- Lecture 25 - The Story is What we Hire
 - **What emotions do you want people to take away when they interact with you?**
That is what they will remember when you walk away
 - Choose your customers!
 - The easiest customers to reach tend to be the worst customers
- Lecture 26 - Excuses are Part of the Story
 - Take the time to make it very clear with the customer what the story is going to be, what is expected and what is important and what is not
- Lecture 27 - Importance of a Contract
 - Email is a contract, an exchange of values and promises is a contract
 - What story do you want to tell with your paperwork? - I have bigger/better lawyers than you (more appropriate for one time gigs), I trust you
 - Contracts can be marketing
 - Everything about you and your craft tells a story. Be aware of that
- Lecture 28 - An Aside About How You Buy
 - Extremely difficult to change people's minds so go after the customers who believe it's worth spending a lot on freelancers
- Lecture 29 - When a client has a budget
 - Find out if the budget is flexible or not and respect it either way
 - Either decide to ask for more or decide to join them and figure out how to make something happen with the allowed budget
 - Once they've seen what's on the table, then give them the option to add on and since you've been flexible they are more likely to choose more

Section 6 - Scarcity, Value and Your Choice

- Lecture 30 - Choose the right business
 - You are not entitled to the business that you want. All you are entitled to is to understand what is working in the market
 - Just because you like doing something doesn't mean you are entitled to get paid fairly to do it
- Lecture 31 - Local Expert vs. Wider Reach
 - Sometimes more important to be a geographic kingpin but specialization more important than ever before
- Lecture 32 - Product Adoption Lifecycle
 - Determine who your clients are - laggards, the average or the early adopters
 - Avoid asking the question "what do you want?" instead ask, "this is what I have, and seek those out who want it"
- Lecture 33 - How to create scarcity
 - Six things which can create scarcity
 - Expertise - can do something better than others
 - Knowledge - know things more than others
 - Connections - strong and loyal network and know what they want
 - Reputation - what do people say about you before you walk into the room
 - Tools - can provide a barrier to entry (for a while). When you have the tools, the people who need the tools will find you
 - Handiness - you are ready to answer the phone when someone needs you
- Lecture 34 - Understanding Customer Lifetime Value Analysis (LTV)
 - Have to understand how much clients are really worth. If lock down clients for 10 years, it is much different than if you turnover customers every year
 - This is so important - you can charge less and understand that you don't have to get all the profits at once if customers stick with you
- Lecture 35 - Different ways to go to market
 - If only service customers once, can figure out other ways to go to market (write a book to give away your knowledge)

Section 7 - Pricing

- Lecture 36 - What your craft is worth
 - **Are you charging based on what it costs or based on what it's worth. Professionals charge based on what it's worth**
- Lecture 37 - Working for free
 - Is "free" only in terms of money or also no chance to gain exposure, reputation, prestige, etc
- Lecture 38 - Working for exposure
 - Exposure builds your credibility
- Lecture 39 - Questions worth asking yourself
 - Do they pay other people to do this work?
 - Am I learning enough through this interaction to consider it part of my education
 - Is it public work with my name on it?
 - Is there a history of people who worked for free and were then taken more seriously?

Section 8 - Unique Voice

- Lecture 40 - Famous to the family
 - **Being famous in your group leads to trust and credibility**
 - Become known for your unique voice
- Lecture 41 - Stories of family fame
 - Wesley Knight - hand crafted glasses
 - Can quite easily become famous to a small group of people
 - Abbey Ryan - paints an oil painting every single day
- Lecture 42 - Your brand is human
 - Competence is way over rated
 - Showing you're human at times helps people relate
- Lecture 43 - Finding your edge
 - Don't wait for clients to tell you what to do. Become famous to the group of your choosing
- Lecture 44 - Develop a unique voice (exercise)
 - If you could choose an archetype or extreme (edgecraft), what do you want your brand to be known for? (confident, edgy, dignified, knowledgeable, passionate, trustworthy, loving, etc.)
 - List 5 ways you could express these attributes

- Lecture 45 - Making a Living as a fiction writer
 - **Being generic, average is a choice**
 - Only outliers can make a good living by freelancing
 - What kind of outlier are you willing to be?
 - For a book, print it to PDF and email it to 100 people. If it's good enough, they'll share it with others and you can soon have a big following. If they don't share it, maybe it wasn't that good

Section 9 - Reputation

- Lecture 46 - **The testimonial book**
 - **Do not enter a game where it is a race to the bottom (low cost producer)**
 - Godin hired someone to fix his heater - the guy came in and gave him a notebook with Godin's neighbor's names, numbers and testimonials. The guy then asked that if he was lucky enough to be chosen, if Godin would add to the testimonial book
 - Where is your testimonial book?
- Lecture 47 - It costs too much to shop around
 - Become the best provider, not the cheapest
- Lecture 48 - SEO of a kingdom of one
 - Put yourself in a category of one (Jill Greenberg) so that people ask for you by name
- Lecture 49 - Seaweed and permission
 - Larch Hanson harvests seaweed and over the years has built a following of people who look forward to his harvest. Larch, over time, has gained the trust and permission to interact and deal with these people
 - **How many people eagerly look forward to connecting with you? Will they miss your email if you forget? Will they miss you when you're gone?**
- Lecture 50 - Permission (exercise)
 - How many people would complain if you didn't send out your newsletter or brochure?
 - Clearly articulate promise you make to those that give you permission
 - A clear and concise summary of books, curation of great books, tools, hacks, videos, articles, etc.
 - What makes your marketing anticipated, personal and relevant?

- Provides knowledge, wisdom, insight and is a good curation of articles, books, videos, interviews, etc.
- What could you promise that people would look forward to
 - Continued book summaries and great other content, tools, challenges...
- Lecture 51 - Competing with cheap labor
 - Being generic will always make you feel like you are being treated unfairly
 - The alternative is not to whine about fairness, **it is to stop being generic and then people cannot undercut you**
 - You want to get to the point where you can say, **we only work for these clients and we are the only ones who can do this**
- Lecture 52 - Too expensive despite experience
 - You will always do better when you are thankful for having the clients that you have. Never be dismissive
 - **Customer will always be right. Difficult part is getting customer to decide, not to insist that we are the right answer**
 - Enroll customer in a conversation, what they dream of and then you can start helping to eliminate their fears and reach their goals

Section 10 - Promotion

- Lecture 53 - Promotional choices
 - Most freelancers should not begin their careers by promoting but if you way overpromote, then you build an asset
 - Take on certain projects, books, interviews, etc. just for promotion
 - Can be a shortcut to becoming famous
- Lecture 54 - drip by drip
 - Never change your promotion when you get tired of it
 - Only time you should change your promotion is when your accountant tells you to
- Lecture 55 - Stepping out of invisibility
 - Define your unique voice and build a following - become famous in a group no matter how small
- Lecture 56 - (Don't) become an insider
 - The problem with becoming an insider is that you're always worried that you're not inside enough

- Be a leader in your field and you will gain a following of clients who want someone to follow
- Lecture 57 - Taking the leap as a strategy
 - Invest enough to be noticed (Xerox leasing space in Kinko's building so if they ever have an issue they are right there)

Section 11 - Organize and Connect

- Lecture 58 - Defining communities
 - Being the one who organizes and connects people to a community is a huge value-add
- Lecture 59 - 500 disconnected people
 - **What would it take to "un-isolate" your customers? Write it down and define who the most important people are and how you can connect them**
- Lecture 60 - Organize and Connect (Exercise)
 - How and what can you organize and connect
 - Tennis players by creating a website to organize playing time
 - Athletes at EY
 - List people within your sphere who are disconnected. What do they want? Who do they want to be recognized by, trusted by or learn from?

Section 12 - Leverage Content

- Lecture 61 - Your own publishing platform
 - The internet has given you an amazing advantage over people in the past - build a platform that gets better every day, somewhere people flock to and get value
- Lecture 62 - Debunk and inform
 - **Give away every secret in your industry** - creates trust with consumers as you are being transparent
 - Can publish best practices, buying guides, price lists, etc.
- Lecture 63 - Leveraging content (exercise)
 - 5 blog topics your market would find surprising, insightful, provocative, useful
 - How much I actually work
 - The things people have expensed

- The challenges I have done
 - The books I have read
 - Best hinge practices
- 5 blog topics they are sick reading about. (are you writing about these?)
- Industry report you could write 50 pages about
 - Summary of books
- **Infographic - an infographic that doesn't exist yet but should**
- Lecture 64 - In public or for competitors
 - Do your craft in public - tells a story by doing your work in front of customers. Demystifying what you do
 - Become the "dean" by organizing your competitors - amazing forum to learn
- Lecture 65 - Organize your competitors (Exercise)
 - How can you organize your competitors to do a thing together? (NY book packagers example)
 - Lunches, dinners, meet ups of some sort, lessons of some sort
- Lecture 66 - Opportunities to consider
 - Consider starting a school
 - Spec work is usually a bad idea (doing free work with no commitment from customer)
 - Need to be famous enough and connected enough so customers find you
 - However, doing spec work can be a great idea if you can sign your name on your project
 - **Publish an anthology**
 - Ask influential, smart, important, whatever people one question and compile into a book
 - Issue an industry report
 - Figure out what people in the industry need to read right now and publish it
 - Contribute to the community in some way and then customers will be more likely to search you out (example of somebody watching the lines at Apple stores to determine when people are waiting - automatically retailers want to know what you know)

- Lecture 67 - The fear of buying
 - Everyone is afraid of buying. The act of saying yes is painful
 - When people say just looking they just want the salespeople to go away
- Lecture 68 - Sales (Exercise)
 - Practice selling to willing strangers
 - Volunteer to fundraise for a non-profit you care about. It's not you on the line, you're selling something you care about. Explore how it feels to close the sale. How does the donor shift posture or action?
- Lecture 69 - The obligating question
 - Making a sale means helping the client overcome their fear
 - Make it easy for the client to say yes by creating a story that resonates with them
 - It's too expensive does not mean it's too expensive - it means that the story/benefits you have laid out is smaller than the pile of money you are asking me for
 - The obligating question - a good response to "it's too expensive" is to say "if it were less expensive, would you be ready to say yes right now?"
 - The answer is usually no
 - **Never make your product cheaper based on replies of "it's too expensive."** Making it cheaper won't make the client happier
 - **There is a mismatch between the promise you make, the story you tell and the price you're asking for**
- Lecture 70 - Positioning
 - Owning a spot in someone's brain where everything else is compared to
 - 7UP didn't have enough money to displace Coke in our brains so they positioned themselves as the "un-Coke." Used Coke's prominent position against them
 - People buy the story they tell themselves - the position of the product
- Lecture 71 - Patience and choosing your industry
 - Understand the price (time) you need to pay in order to get where you want to get. Misalignment of expectations can be disastrous
 - **"You are not entitled to be successful at the freelance gig you pick. You are merely deserving to be successful in a freelance gig the market respects."**
- Lecture 72 - Pricing and coupons
 - Handy to have a standard discount when someone asks for it (senior citizen discount)
 - Offering a discount to a group of people who's story is I am old and cheap, is a great move if you want that type of person as a customer

- Lecture 73 - Displaying prices on a website
 - By listing the price you are showing people that they can afford it, that your product/service is accessible
 - The price is always part of the story - make sure you know what the typical story of your customer is
- Lecture 74 - Thriving on free
 - If you can find a way to do something for free that nobody else is, you can build trust and later turn that trust into income
 - Publish your eBook and send it to everyone you trust instead of putting it on Amazon and charging for it
 - **When you give something away for free that is not expected, it is likely to spread and improve your reputation**

Section 14 - Going to Market

- Lecture 75 - Be the impresario
 - Impresario - takes imminent to a whole new level; this event is happening, do you want to come?
- Lecture 76 - Overspecialize
 - Gives you more data, expertise than anyone else
- Lecture 77 - Go outside the system
 - Helps you develop your niche and avoid becoming a cog in the system
- Lecture 78 - Get famous
 - Become the "one and only" in a community no matter how small
- Lecture 79 - The poor man's _____
 - The people at the top are really busy. What if you became the poor man's _____? Just a little cheaper than the guy at the top but provide same product / service

Section 15 - Turning Pro

- Lecture 80 - Making time
 - **Your job is not just to do your job** - as a professional, you make time to teach other people, improve in your craft, focus on business development, etc.
- Lecture 81 - Consistently generating qualified leads

- Your goal is to consistently generate leads - **must spend time every day trying to generate new leads** even when have a lot of projects going on
- Lecture 82 - Financial hygiene
 - **Deal with money on purpose, not only when you have to**
- Lecture 83 - Be smart
 - **Major topics covered in this class**
 - Is your work truly good at what you do? Find people who will be honest with you
 - Do you want to be generic?
 - Do you want to fit in?
 - Can you own it?
 - Can you become the "one and only" ?
 - Can you work your way up the ladder
 - Can you become famous to the family?
 - Choose clients that serve your goals
- Lecture 84 - Words in -ent
 - Development - be proactive in your own development
 - Moment - people who buy from you only buy from you for the moment
 - Management - who is your boss? You are. Need to figure out how to manage your career
 - Department - sell to the right department
 - Movement - turn your work into an ever more professional movement
 - Agreement - answer is joining with clients who want you to succeed
 - Environment - pick where you will work
 - Persistent - being persistent, not annoying
 - Consistent - customer won't be surprised by the next thing you do
 - Potent - near the edge, what people remember
 - Statement - what is your point of view? what do you stand for? can the client tell it was your work?
 - Investment - what are you investing to improve in your craft?
 - Argument - arguments helps flush out what the true goal is
 - Equipment - equipment is meaningless, only the final outcome; how you make people feel
 - Element - make sure you are working in an area you can flourish in
 - Comment - what do people say when they talk about you?
 - Document - write down what you do and how you do it; make it very clear

- Excrement - you will hit obstacles, how do you react to this?
- Assessment - professional figures out what the problem is
- Improvement - an opportunity, not a threat or obligation
- Achievement - what do your achievements look like? Make a list
- Instrument - everyone has an instrument they are meant to play
- Lecture 85 - Make a timeline (Exercise)
 - Create small steps and actions and assign a date to each one
- Lecture 86 - Readings
 - *Guerilla Marketing* by Jay Levinson
 - *Secrets of Closing the Sale* by Zig Ziglar
 - *Tribes* by Seth Godin
 - *All Markets are Liars* by Seth Godin
 - *Free Agent Nation* by Dan Pink
 - *Ignore Everybody* by Hugh Macleod
 - *Escape from the Cubicle Nation* by Pam Slim
- Lecture 87 - One Last Thing
 - Find a freelancer you care about and teach them what you just learned

Teacher's Reference Guides

My “teacher’s reference guides” are deep dives into a subject, theme, person, or idea which are then distilled into (hopefully) clear, concise, and helpful resources. My goal is to effectively share what I think are the most actionable, impactful, and noteworthy takeaways of the topic at hand.

There isn’t much rhyme or reason to how I choose these teacher’s reference guides. Sometimes I want to dive deep on a specific concept such as complexity and spend months reading about that and sometimes I simply stumble across a person or topic randomly which captures my attention – trying to balance serendipity and chaos with routine and order.

You can find a full sampling of my [teacher’s reference guides](https://blas.com/teachers-reference-guides/) (blas.com/teachers-reference-guides/) on my blog, blas.com.

If any of this is of interest, you can subscribe to the [monthly newsletter](https://blas.com/newsletter/) ([http://blas.com/newsletter/](https://blas.com/newsletter/)) and you can always reach out to me directly at rabbithole@blas.us

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Blas