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“I just want to congratulate you on kicking ass, I mean I just wrote the book, you actually did the work.” –Tim Ferriss, Best Selling Author, The Four Hour Work Week.

The 4 – Hour Workweek, In 60 DAYS

The Applied Case Study

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Introduction

Diagnosed with cancer, my life was about to change. I was the type of person who hadn't really been satisfied with my life, although positive; I wasn't really maxed to the fullest potential. I was also the type of person that, if sick, couldn't hustle to make a dollar and lost ground on my monthly expenses.

That said, when I came out of surgery in 2008, my sail was dead. I received a condolence call from old boss and mentor, Matt Thoren. "Aaron, you need to read this book." Matt knew damn well I hadn't read a book, ever, and the last thing on my mind at that time was reading. But the more he went on and on about it and the accomplishments the author, Tim Ferriss had made; I was hooked. Sad thing is, I couldn't even afford the book. I was in debt with medical bills, rent, and car payments I could no longer afford.

It was then I realized, how bad could it get. I was gifted the book and dug in. My story is quick and simple. That's my style. I will try to break it down as easy as I can, but try not to read too much into it. My journey was more risk than thought as I believe it takes one second to make a decision and the rest of your life to make it right. This isn't for everyone, but the skills and tricks taught in Tim Ferriss's book, I implemented in the most practical sense. I am not an internet-saving-person, and my interpretation of this work is based on my unique lifestyle. Hopefully, my example will enable you to create your own plan and not a carbon copy of mine.

I don't think most people actually live a four hour work week. I also don't claim to, myself. I do claim to have lots of free time, answer and wake up to my own schedule, and travel to any location in a New York second....and at an inexpensive rate. So here's to enabling you to free up your life, to the point, if you wanted a four hour work week a couple times a month, you could. So relax, open your mind, and take a deep breath, your plane is taking off soon, here is how my journey went....

The Starting Line

Here was my situation:

Expenses

1500 Rent in a 3 bedroom house by myself

800 Car Lease Payment

350 Office Rental

175 Insurance Payment

60 dollar food and expense for my 30lb Puggle dog

Income

Real Estate Appraiser Trainee, Loan Officer, and Real Estate Sales Assistant

(About 5,000 per month)

Schedule

8a.m.-4:30p.m. Traveling in the field or meeting with clients

My goal was to get back on my feet, eliminate medical expenses, and live a lifestyle different than the 9-5.

Dreamlining

If there is one thing I advise everyone to do from this book, IT'S THE DREAMLINING EXERCISE.

If you watch the introduction to my video, you will notice the medical bills are on the back of my dreamline exercise. When I did this exercise, I was so pumped up that I went over to my friends' house telling them I was going to follow the

directives in this book and then make sure the author new about it. This was a little over a year ago, and these friends, said, “anyone can write a book, what so special about it?” Little did they know they were adding OCTANE to my bonfire! I always had an idea of what I wanted to do, but I never really had a plan, the dreamlining exercise forces the undecided to find it. Here was mine...

Dreamlining (25 Days)

Step 1 (Having)

1. Patio Furniture for my house
2. Range Rover SUV
3. Personal Assistant

Step 5 (Cost)

1. \$105 per month
2. \$805 per month
3. 4 Hour

Step 2 (Being)

- 1- Tango Dancer
- 2- Saltwater Fisherman
- 3- Fluent in another language

Step 4 (Doing)

- Rent out a room in my house
- Let a fisherman use my dock
- Travel to Costa Rica

Step 3 (Doing)

1. Use the 4hww Story to give back
2. Visit the Seven Wonders of the World
3. Open a Tattoo Shop in Costa Rica

Step 5 (Cost)

- Free (use my own story)
- 3500 One World Alliance
- 1100, Rent plus Bus Lic

Ok, so big dream bucket list, right?!?! That’s what I thought too, but hey, Tim said dream big...and that’s exactly what I did. I was so confident, from the moment I touched the book, I decided to video tape my journey. I figured if anything I

would have something to look back on. At least for now. Here is the plan on the rest...

The Sprint

Here's what's great about this exercise, the things you want to have, end up being the things you have to do that can allow you to be who you want to be. When you put it all together you end up with the story of your life. This is how my steps played out.

Day 1-3 Read Book and Dreamlined

Day 4 (Steps Now), ***Craigslist***

If I wanted to do this, now, I needed to reduce current bills. I decided the best way to do this was by renting out the rooms I had. For me, it was an immediate solution. To each their own. I rented out the dock to a local fisherman for a reduced cost in order to get him to take me out every so often. I ran an ad to rent out the rooms in my house, asking for a trade for discounted rate. "Looking for a Tango instructor willing to give private lessons for reduced rent". Two separate rooms on Craigslist as opposed to one ad renting out the whole house. I have used Craigslist to sell everything. Although I always get a couple of characters, I have been able to move things quickly off of it. My ad for the other room started by saying, "No Credit Check / Month to Month". No Credit Check has always been the winner for me. After all, I am offering a temporary solution to test things and the ultimate goal is to try this experiment, so not being picky about some one's credit will get it done on my 25 day schedule. Most of the people using Craigslist for rentals can't go through a regular process due to money down or credit. That's why I ran it there.

Day 5

I received a deposit from the ideal candidate, a tango instructor! I also rented out the other room to another candidate, it's actually the guy on the video, Jeff Weiss (the intro video). I made him tape it before I left, " I am Aaron Carotta, and I am going to be the first person to do the 4hww on video, and I am going to do it in 25 days." Sometimes things just fall into place when you put yourself in the right situation.

The Tango instructor paid a first and last month down payment of 900 each. Allowing me to use 300 for furniture and the rest to cover rent for the month I would be gone. Jeff put down 800 and gave half of a month's rent as a deposit. That knocks out the number ones on being and having (dreamline). Just a note, my ad generated 7 different interviews in one day. There is a ton of listings on Craigslist for "rent", "house", try "rooms" instead. There's less competition and more demand. I also contacted people in the "rooms wanted section." I forwarded my link on Craigslist to them. If you run numerous ads in Craigslist that are the same, the site will kick them off. This is based on total word count. So adding dashes at the bottom of each additional post will prevent this.

I also ran an ad on Elance, saying the following; "I need someone to send an email to 250 tattoo artists with the following job descriptions; Tattoo Artist for Montezuma Costa Rica Wanted. Must have own tools. Willing to relocate to Costa Rica, Spanish speaking a plus. Interviews will be over the phone."

My ad cost me 50 dollars. I also spoke with my local amigo, Armando. More on this later.

Day 6

DEPARTURE! Remember, one of my goals was to open up a tattoo shop in Costa Rica. I am applying an idea on something I know. My first trip to Costa Rica was in 2006. It was also the first time I ever went international, and the beginning of my fascination with the idea of traveling. It seems as that there is always a wise man in every village, and in Montezuma, it's Armando. (see post on "Private Tour") The local Indian, wears no shoes and knows everyone. He was in need of a GPS system for his boat. I decided to bring him two GPS systems that I could use

as a bartering tool. Most of the villages in these countries do a lot of bartering. In return, I was going to get a first hand real estate tour guide, who spoke Spanish, as mine was not good. Armando ended up showing me a local store spot that was owned by one of the major families in the village. They also had an apartment for rent. If you can rent the store and apartment from the same owner, your rate will be less. He was also one of the best fisherman on the island. That was an added bonus , getting free lessons, and knocking off another item on the dreamline list.

As I was packing my bag, one of the best tips I have seen yet was making copies of passport and IDS, then emailing them to yourself. That way, if lost, you could go online and print copies to show to the U.S. embassy.

I ended up with 12 interviews on the phone for a tattoo artist. Mostly over email and the phone, finalizing the perfect candidate, frp, my assistant Atif from India. I also had him email my former boss, Matt. Saying “Matt, Aaron is off to Costa Rica to open up a Tattoo Shop, if you would like anything, please let me know and I will arrange it with Aaron. Regards, Atif (Aaron’s New Assistant). Matt had recommended the book about 7 days before and this was after I got out of surgery for cancer; the email was a complete shock and positive surprise for Matt.

As I was driving to the airport, fear really set in. I had tried to get some of my friends to come with me, but they all thought I was crazy. I had only brought the additional rental income that I had from renting out the rooms, minus the furniture I bought. About \$1500. My flight was \$220 off Spirit Airlines. What I didn’t realize is the fear was more about getting stuck in another country with no money and not being able to come home. So I arranged to pay for my hotel room before I left, leaving about \$900 for rent deposit, business license, food, etc...

Day 7

The hardest part was getting on the plane. The best part was the arrival in another country with all the worries of work left at home. In order to get to Montezuma, Costa Rica, you have to travel to Los Suenos (Jaco Beach). Here there is a great resort with a normal rate of \$400 I ended up paying \$99.00 and here is how I got it. When you call reservations, you can often ask for a fantastic

fare rate. This tends to be for people or friends of employees or actual employees. It often requires travel with them or a certificate. When outside the states, especially at this one, they don't ask for that. So when you book the rate over the phone, they will inform you that you will need to bring it. When I checked in they didn't ask for it. I should mention that they did do it at a different location, to which I told them I was not an employee, but instead a Rewards holder. This is something I filled out, for free. I asked if they could still honor that rate, they said yes. Some things fall in place, and it doesn't hurt to ask. Once I got to Los Suenos, my amigo, Armando picked me up on his boat at the beach. The boat is about 10 feet long, and your bag goes in a trash back in case it gets wet. So hopefully you can imagine the village we are going to. Once I arrived at Montezuma, Armando showed me the locations of the shop and the cabana on the beach, both of which are documented in the video. As I mentioned above, the total I needed to put down was one month up front, \$500 and \$300 for my cabana.

Day 8

Before I left, I had Atif, my assistant from India set up over 12 different phone interviews. I finally selected one manager for the shop, who brought all of the equipment including tools. I met him on Day 8 and we began decorating the shop. The good thing about opening up a tattoo shop in a small village is, decoration can be done very inexpensively. I also went with Armando to establish the business permits and license with the local attorney in town.

Day 9

I spent most of my time promoting the shop, meeting with local backpackers at the bar, and buying drinks for all of them. It was only \$1.50 for a beer, so I could afford it.

Day 10

Reality set in again. I was actually on track to establish the four hour work week in 25 days. I really only had to set up the automated system which I will get to next. The problem was, I was diagnosed with cancer, and this wasn't something I

was going to jeopardize. I got a call from my Dr. offices, informing me that I needed to monitor the tumor markers and come back to get blood work done. Unfortunately that meant I had to go back to the states.

Days 11-50

I spent this time going to the doctor's office. The only real good thing is that I had a new roommate who owed me tango lessons and a fisherman renting my dock who owed me a couple of morning rides. Both of which I used. During this time, I spent most of it via email with my tattoo manger who was doing tattoos and getting the shop going. I realized that the automation part of this was really the only part I didn't have set up yet. Keeping track of how much business was getting done, would be expensive and may cut the profits to the point that I wouldn't make money in the shop. After all, my goal was one shop with less profits and no maintenance is better than another with great profits and high maintenance. If I could just make the shop work with profit and low maintenance, I could recreate the system in other locations I wished to travel. That's being said, it was time to go back.

Days 51 and 52

I spent getting back to Montezuma.

The Finish Line-Automation

Day 53

I came up with the ultimate security system. I used Atif, my assistant from India, to monitor my shop. Best part is, it cost me \$8 dollars a day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and \$160 per month. Remember, Atif gets \$4 dollars an hour. I set up a webcam and an account on Yahoo. He would simply log in 10 minutes at the beginning of each hour and record how many people were in my shop at that time. He would then email me the report. Atif, works for a company. So when he is gone someone else is there. I am only paying \$4 dollars for 60 minutes or per hour. Ten minutes per hour is a total of 4 dollars by 2 p.m. I realized it takes an average of 90 minutes to do a tattoo. Therefore, I can determine how much revenue, I

should expect. Similar to a bar or restaurant, it's not perfect, but certainly cheaper than higher a local Tico (Costa Rican) to sit in the shop.

Days 54-56

I sat in the shop and got a good feel for how much traffic I should expect.

Day 57

I set up a business account with HSBC, also in the states. This is easy to do once you have a business license.

Day 58

I set up relations on various other items. For example, there were a couple of new ventures I had brewing. The internet cafes were not on a high speed connection. Setting up a tower in the village became easier than most thought.

Day 59

I went home and finalized my video with Tim.

Day 60

I began my Seven Wonder Tour plan.

The Next Race

Turns out managing a tattoo artist is a difficult thing. After all, they are artists and your idea of a shop and the way it is run, is a just an opinion to them. That said, I sold the shop to the manager. It was the ultimate exit strategy. All he had to do was put it on his credit card.

For me, it wasn't the amount of money I could make, it was changing the lifestyle to attain a better goal that was more suitable for me. Getting the cash from the sale of the shop was nice, and it did allow me to get another item I wanted on my dreamline. But make no mistake about it, it wasn't better than the day I set foot on the beach in Costa Rica. The feeling of being free trumps it for me. This feeling gave me more satisfaction than what any employer could pay me. I am currently working on selling the tickets for the Seven Wonders Tour. Tim has recommended starting the blog and offering help to others. Many including myself ask, how does a blog make money? It's becoming clear, that helping others for free with the blog, will allow those with money (advertisers, corporations, etc..) to compensate for it. Getting the video to Tim and having him acknowledge it was a highlight. I went from losing most of the things I worked from 9-5 to get, to getting them all back and working at my own schedule. After all, I have read the doubts, walked passed the doubters, and dined with the doers. The best part is, it was Tuesday at 2 p.m. on some secluded island, and there I was living the life of my dreams. So put your bucket list in the well and drink up, you won't be kicking that bucket anytime soon. Your next...

Hacking Life, Once Country at a Time,

Aaron

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