

# Kim & Jason interview



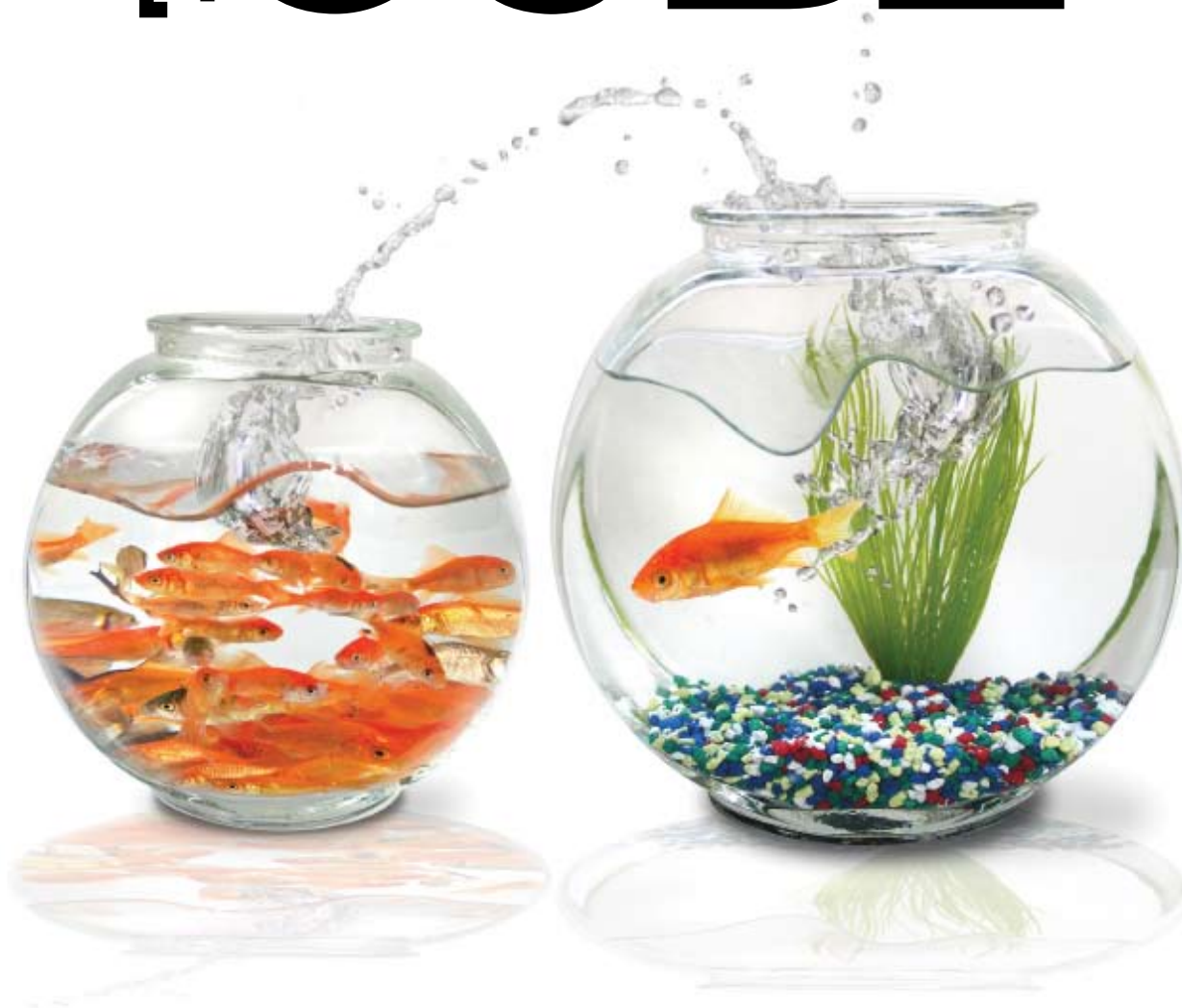
## Pamela SLiM

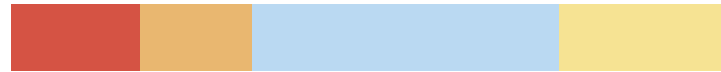
The author of *Escape from Cubicle Nation* on ditching your corporate job, balancing business and parenting, and the worst advice ever.

### PLUS:

- Are you in your dream job?
- Should following a dream be hard?

# ESCAPE THE CUBE

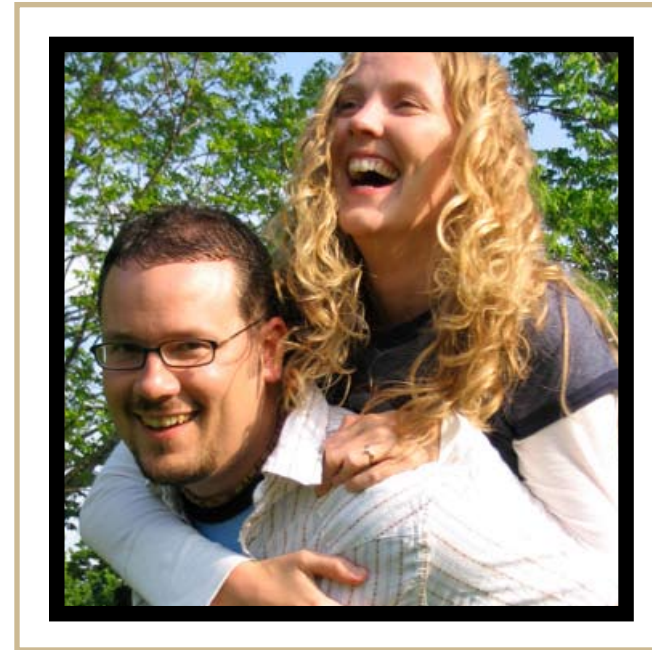




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Special thanks to Pamela Slim, who is one cool lady.

Designed by Jason Kotecki.



**Pamela Slim** is a seasoned coach and writer who helps frustrated employees in corporate jobs break out and start their own business. Her blog, “Escape from Cubicle Nation,” is one of the top career and marketing blogs on the Web. Her experience teaching martial arts for 10 years to thousands of students – including former gang members – has helped her clients deal with fear head on. A world traveler, Pam speaks four languages and has lived and worked in Europe and South America. Pam is married with three kids, and lives in Mesa, Arizona.

[www.escapefromcubiclenation.com](http://www.escapefromcubiclenation.com)

**Kim & Jason Kotecki** are on a crusade to annihilate Adultitis. The former kindergarten teacher and professional cartoonist, respectively, have a mission in life is to help people use strategies from childhood to create lives with less stress and more fun. As thought leaders in the arena of life balance and stress management, the duo uses their blog, books, speaking programs, and weekly TV show to offer you the real-world strategies, ideas, and inspiration for living the life you were meant to live. They live in Madison, Wisconsin with their daughter Lucy.

[www.kimandjason.com](http://www.kimandjason.com)

# the interview



**Jason Kotecki:** The tag line for both your blog and your book is “From Corporate Prisoner to Thriving Entrepreneur.” I know you’re very passionate about entrepreneurship. Do you think that anyone can or should be an entrepreneur? How can someone tell if they’re cut out for it? Do you ever advise people that they should just stay in the cubicle?

**Pamela Slim:** Well, yes. First of all, I think we can all get really caught up in terms of looking for the perfect work configuration. Those that are happily employed in a job will say, “You guys are crazy! Why would you quit a job?” and those people who may be longtime entrepreneurs, especially in this economy, can look longingly to those in a cube.

So my foundational feeling about work, in general, is that really what it’s about is understanding yourself, your interests, and your passions, and the kinds of content and topics that you’re interested in, and then finding a work configuration that really matches and enhances who you really are.

So for some people that’s going to be working in a corporation because they really like to have that structure. I wouldn’t really say “stability” because these days what is stable, right?



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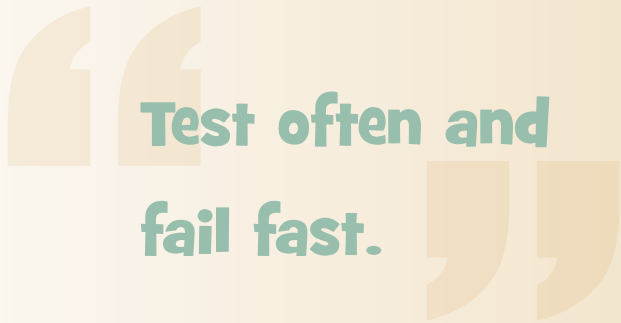
**Kim Kotecki:** Yes.

**Pamela:** I think that's, again, a strategy that each of us can use in managing our careers - not assuming that one is more stable than the other, but if you think about it, you have a whole bunch of different options available to you. One of them is working for yourself, and then in working for yourself you have tons of different configurations.

It could just give people different ways of looking at how it is that they want to take care of themselves and their family. So I think if we look at it that way, then it's more the question for people at which points in their lives are they ready to take on some of the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship. I've seen people from a huge variety of different backgrounds be very successful at that, and also people from a huge variety of backgrounds not be so successful.

**Jason:** So say maybe we have someone that is trying to figure out what she wants to be when she grows up. Maybe she recently lost her job, or is maybe toying with the idea of launching out on her own. She's hopeful but, of course, there's that fear thing going on. She's scared to take the leap. She's unsure she has what it takes. What advice would you give to someone that thinks she wants to move in that direction?

**Pamela:** My advice for anyone these days that is thinking about starting a business is to test often and fail fast - to think about



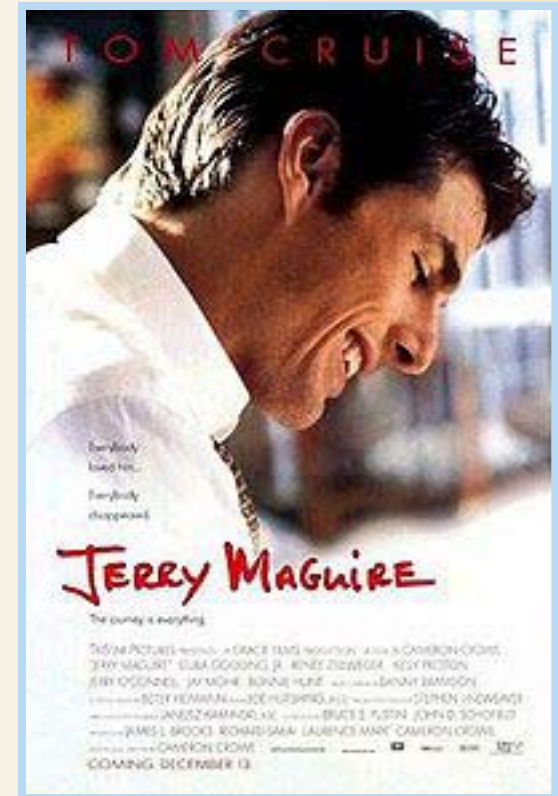
**Test often and  
fail fast.**

doing things in really small, little turtle steps, as opposed to taking a gigantic leap off of a cliff, which is often how we think about things.

You're employed, you have a job and you think, I'm going to make the big Jerry Maguire exit. If you've seen *Jerry Maguire* - you grab the goldfish and stand on a desk and never work for The Man again. It's great. I think we all have those fantasies at different points of our life.

Maybe a little more prudent approach is to just keep that as a fantasy in your mind, and begin testing and trying your business idea on the side in little tiny bits.

Some examples of that are: a lot of people who I know that might be looking at consulting or in coaching. They might be actually learning in a certification program, or really interested in studying something about consulting. One of the best ways to start to test it is just to do it. Start to work with some small projects on the side. See A, how it feels to actually do that work, and B, see if you feel like you're really delivering something of real value to the people that you're working with, knowing that when you first start, there's no way you're going to be perfect. It's going to be clunky, it's going to be awkward, but the way in which you both gain expertise and experience, and also test the waters to see if you do have a viable business idea, is not by spending all your time planning - it's by actually getting out in the market and testing and trying. It goes hand-in-hand with planning. It's not that you don't do planning, but you make an assumption in your plan, and then you go out there



## Did You Know?

Tom Hanks was originally offered the title role, but turned it down. The producers also approached John Travolta. The score for the film was composed by Nancy Wilson, director Cameron Crowe's wife and guitarist in the band Heart.

([Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Maguire))

and you test and try it.

And that, to me, actually ends up breaking down a lot of the fear because you're not worried about that huge leap over the cliff. You're just worried about, "Can I identify one person that I can have an hour-long consulting conversation with?" and then stop at the end of that and not have an expectation of success or failure. Just make a specific goal to have that conversation and see how it goes and that can reduce a lot of anxiety. And it's actually a way to get your business up and running quicker and more successfully in the long run.

**Kim:** It seems like a lot of people that had companies that are successful you look back and think, oh, they started in their garage from six to midnight.

**Jason:** Or it was a hobby on the side.

**Kim:** Our thing is all about looking at life through the lens of this childlike perspective. What would you say is the most important childlike trait that an entrepreneur needs to possess in order to be successful?

**Pamela:** Yes, I completely believe in that perspective, and one of the things I talked about in my book is "Beginner Mind," which



is, of course, not my concept but something that is a perspective where you're thinking about it through the eyes of the child.

I have a four-year-old, Joshua. And when he sees something new for the first time, he just gets so excited. It's like, "Wow! What is this?" and gets really excited.

We were driving down the road the other day and he goes, "Mom, why is the sky blue? Why are the stop lights green? Why are cars yellow?" and of course for the parent, it's the classic question. How the hell am I going to answer this question? But it really is with that wonder and it makes me really stop and say, "Yes. Well, why are they? How did that actually happen? That's really interesting."

And that perspective, that beginner mind, that childlike vision, is so, so important when you're an entrepreneur because what you want to see is the wonder in the world and the opportunities.

A few years ago I was standing in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles. I was in San Francisco but probably any Department of Motor Vehicles around any part of the U.S. has the same kind of thing, which is this horrible thing where you're standing in line and it doesn't make any sense why you have to spend three hours away from work in order to renew your driver's license or something. And when you're standing in line, you can just get totally frustrated. Or, you can stand in line with beginner mind and say, "Why is it that we have to stand in line and what could actually make this a better experience?" Or, "How could we streamline this?" Or, "How could things be helped?"

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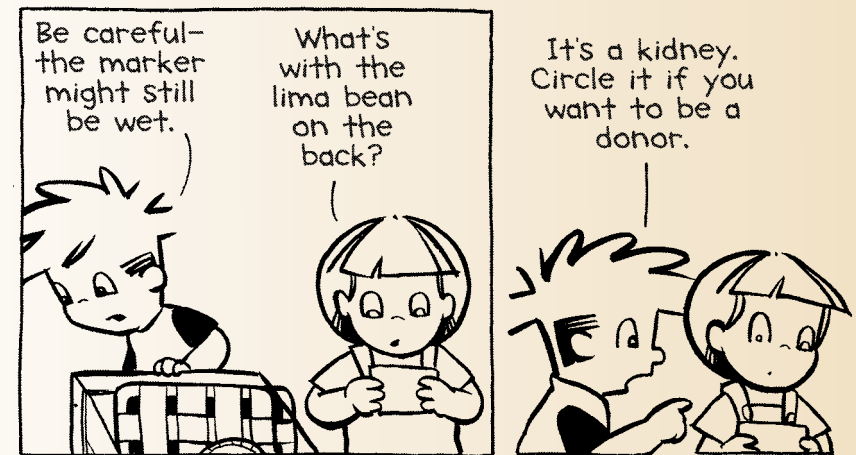
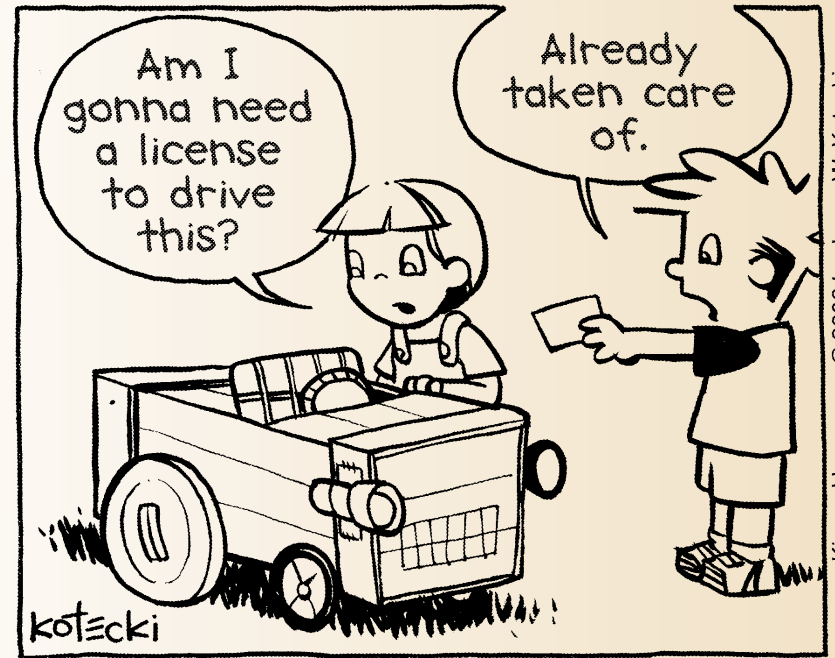
I think it was somebody that had that kind of beginner mind that started to move a lot of the transactions from the Department of Motor Vehicles onto the Web. Where now, for most of the things you have to do, you can do them remotely, which, of course, helps them out as an organization, and it also helps the experience at the Department of Motor Vehicles to be better.

So it's such a mundane experience but you can look at anything in your market, in your field, and just wonder.

And also have that joy and delight. It's something I really try to keep myself grounded in when I'm working with clients. It's really easy to get caught up in numbers or a certain success matrix. Like I want to have this number of clients and I need to be doing this, and as soon as I write the book or build this program it's on to the next one.

When you stop sometimes and think about it – like even just after having one conversation with somebody where they truly get a really deep insight or they make a major breakthrough in their thinking – I mean that's pretty darn profound and that can actually impact everything about their life. It can impact how it is that they parent, it can impact the course of their whole life and generations to come.

Think about how you might have had certain shifts in thinking in your life that really started a whole new direction. When you think about it from a perspective of wonder, it's from a very calm place,



it's very present-focused, it's not looking at things the way they have been done, but looking at possibilities and looking at the newness and excitement of things. That's, I think, a perfect perspective to have as an entrepreneur.

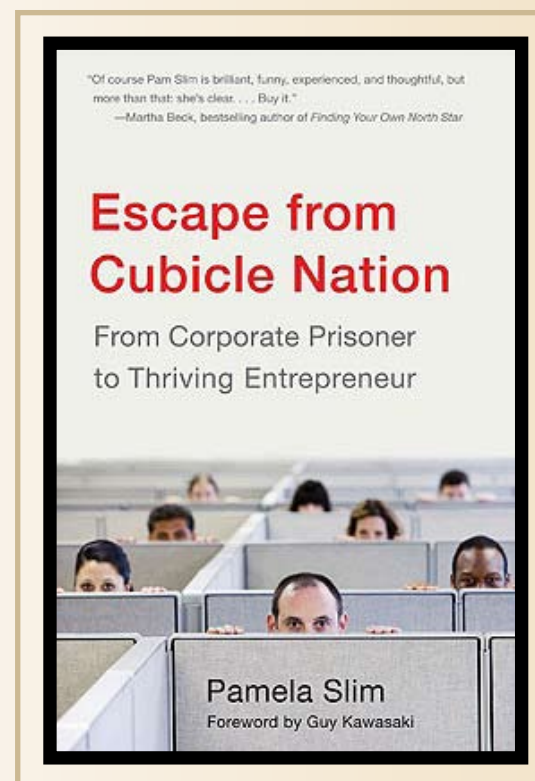
**Jason:** Your book, "Escape From Cubicle Nation," came out earlier this year and I want to congratulate you on that. I would say if anyone reading has ever considered escaping the "corporate prison" as it were, this is the book for you. What's cool is that it not only deals with nuts and bolts how-to stuff, but it also deals with the scary, emotional issues, which you already touched on. So congrats on that.

Writing a book is definitely a labor of love. What's turned out to be your favorite aspect of your book when it was all said and done?

**Pamela:** I think my favorite part was being able to share stories. That's something to me that's just the funnest part of what I do - being able to just be a small part of a lot of people's lives at a certain moment when they're trying to do something, and there are just so many great moments and so many great stories.

One of the stories in the book was about a conversation that I had with a coach who was trying to put some focus on branding her coaching business, which sounds like kind of a boring thing. Right? Nothing too terribly exciting in that.

But we had this conversation. Her first thought was that she was going to call it "Stop and Smell the Roses." That was something



## Freebie Alert!

[Download a free chapter](#) from Pam's book, *Escape From Cubicle Nation*.

that was really important to her as a concept as a coach.

And I always tease my coach buddies, being a trained life coach myself, in that we have some of these happy, fluffy, coach terms. We love to kind of trip through the tulips with the unicorns and the rainbows and have fun. That's part of being a life coach. We have a right to do that.

But to the outside market, it's not as provocative and exciting. It's not going to drive people in droves to come work with you.

So we were having a conversation about "Stop and Smell the Roses" and I said, "What happens when somebody stops and smells the roses?"

She said, "Well, they kind of pay more attention. They're more present."

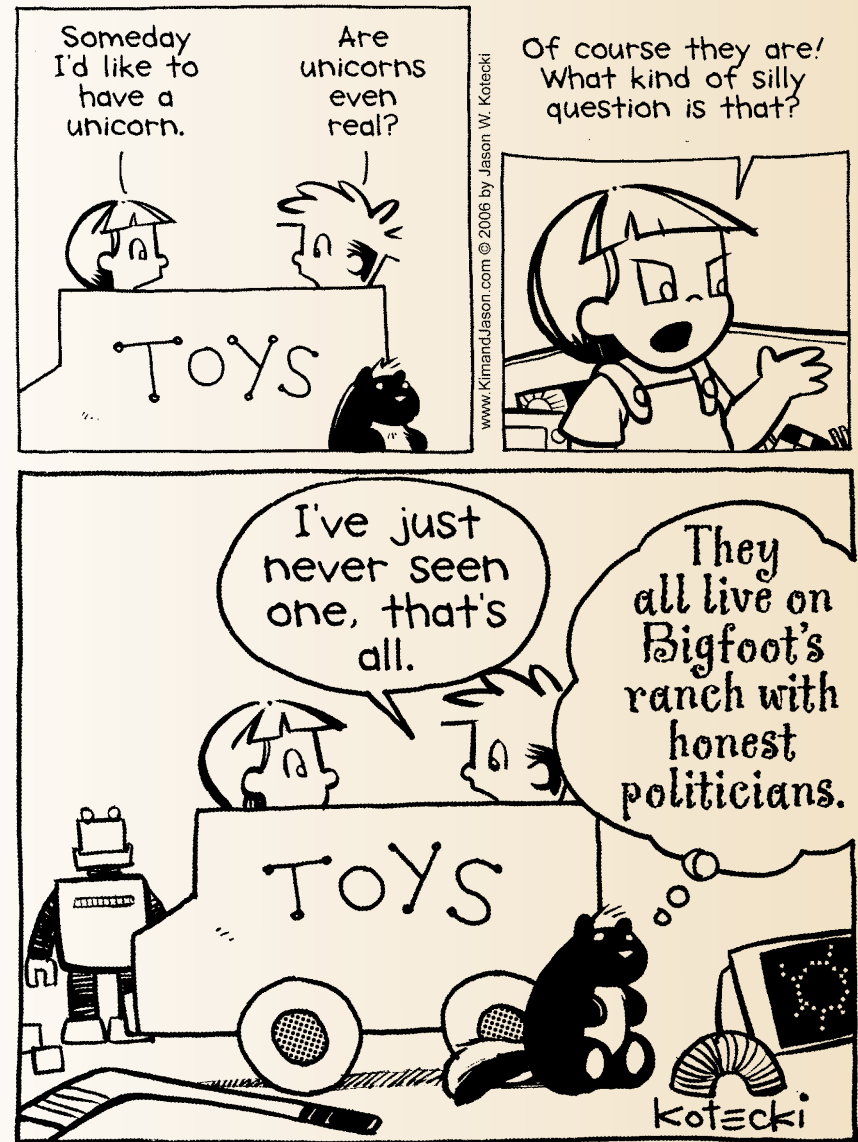
I said, "Yes. Then what happens?"

She said, "Well, they kind of live with less regret."

I was like, "Okay." I got a little chill when she said, "Regret" because that was a powerful word.

I said, "Tell me more about that regret. What are some examples of people that you work with that don't want to live with regret?"

She said, "You know what? I work with a lot of men that are in their



50s and basically they don't want to be that guy in the *Cats in the Cradle* song."

If anybody from my generation – I'm 42 – remembers the Harry Chapin song *Cat's in the Cradle*, it's this whole song about a father who was really not present for his kids and then his kids grew up and all of a sudden he wanted to be with them and they weren't available anymore.

It has such power, and it has such connection with that particular segment of the market that she wanted to work with.

And I remember when I was having the call with her to talk about this topic, it really gave me the chills and I got that feeling like, "Oh, my God. I have to share this. This is an example that perfectly typifies what it is that I'm trying to tell people."

It's one thing to say, "Try not to have a happy, fluffy song," but when you can really zoom in and say, "This is the difference that it makes when you start to get to the heart of what's really going on in your target market, and you really want to understand what are they truly concerned with. And how are you really going to provide relief to them and do something that's valuable?" That's where you really have to dig deeper and do something on their terms.

It's hard to describe, but sometimes just little stories like that, little shifts that people make, were the most delightful part of writing the book. I just like being able to share all these stories of bravery.



## Did You Know?

*The lyrics to the verses of the song "Cat's In The Cradle" were originally written as a poem by Chapin's wife, Sandy. The poem itself was inspired by the awkward relationship between Sandy Chapin's first husband, James Cashmore, and his father, a New York City politician. More than a year later, after the birth of his own son, Harry added the music and the chorus. Label executive David Geffen selected the song as a single, over Chapin's objections. ([Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat's_in_the_Cradle))*

The way I wrote the book wasn't just about business, it was also about some earlier life experiences that I had teaching martial arts and things like that, so it was fun to be able to capture them in one place.

**Kim:** Now, Jason and I are always talking about how the media and the feel in general right now, especially in the United States, is that doom and gloom over the economy is everywhere.

We're not turning on the news too much these days, just to keep ourselves positive. With all the negativity out there, what do you see as the biggest opportunity resulting from this tough economy right now?

**Pamela:** I think the opportunity is all that everything we're facing right now is just a different series of constraints. We're really forced to look at our life and our business with a specific set of constraints and that it's not as easy to just jump into a pool of money and kind of do something half-hearted that can make a living and be okay with it. You really have to be very focused on what are the real opportunities in the market. Who are you *really*? What are your very, very strong gifts and how can you make absolutely sure that you're providing value in your work, either as an employee or as an entrepreneur?

Now that can be scary, right? When it means that there's scarcity, there aren't as many jobs, or theoretically there aren't as many people to purchase your products or services.

“What are your very strong gifts and how can you make absolutely sure that you're providing value in your work?”

But from a developmental perspective, from a learning perspective, what better parameters could there be to amp up all of our games? To make us really take seriously what it is that we're doing and really focus on value?

I think if we look at any group of people, any generation that has been faced with hardship - like some of our grandparents that lived through the Depression. People that I know in my work traveling through South America that often can live in what many people would consider the most dire consequences, but have a totally creative perspective on life about how to actually make things happen and how to make things grow.

I never want to downplay the difficulty and the pain that it can cause when you're dealing with an economic challenge.

I've shared in the book that within my own family my husband has a construction business and it's been a hard year. I mean it's been very hard, and it can be very scary, so I don't want to downplay that and say, "We have it good and it's good for all of us just to get a big jolt and realize how the rest of the world lives." In the big picture, compared to most of the rest of the world, we're still really doing fine.

But it doesn't help when you're sitting back and you've never faced a situation where you can't pay your mortgage. Or, for some people, who have always had a job, they've always been employed, and they truly do not see where it is possible to get another job. That can be very scary and it's life altering.

**There are about  
2 Billion  
children in the world.  
1 Billion  
of them live in poverty.  
640 million live without adequate  
shelter, 400 million have no access  
to safe water, 270 million have  
no access to health services. 10.6  
million died in 2003 before they  
reached the age of 5 (or roughly  
29,000 children per day).**

Source: [State of the World's Children, 2005, UNICEF](#)

The choice is, how do you want it to be the defining moment of your life? Are you going to reach out and get support, which I think is out there, in order to make it be one of those wonderful points of challenge where you end up growing in a good way? Or, are you just going to completely collapse under the fear and totally shrink and not meet that opportunity? That's a choice that all of us have, and the world is going to pretty much line up and demonstrate for you whatever perspective that you give it.

So if you think, "There's scarcity, we're all screwed, there are no jobs, there are no opportunities," and you're thinking that all the time, that's pretty much how it's going to end up for you because that's how you're going to be. If you have that thought, it's going to make you feel pretty crappy and shrink back.

And it's going to make you act in certain ways. Where if you're anything like a lot of folks I run into, you'll be more tentative, you won't be as secure, it will make you feel a lot more maybe suspicious or competitive as opposed to being collaborative, and that means that you're going to have fewer opportunities.

As opposed to saying, "Wow. Okay, we have huge constraints. How can I be creative? How can I start to connect with people maybe I haven't connected with before, and find the pockets of opportunity, and find the places where I can really make a difference?"

And maybe – and I've found this for a lot of people that I've been

**The world is going to pretty much line up and demonstrate for you whatever perspective you give it.**

talking to – for some it's really been that moment where they say, "All right. I'm not going to wait anymore. This thing that I've been working on and that I've wanted to do for a long time, I'm going to do it. What else do I have to lose?"

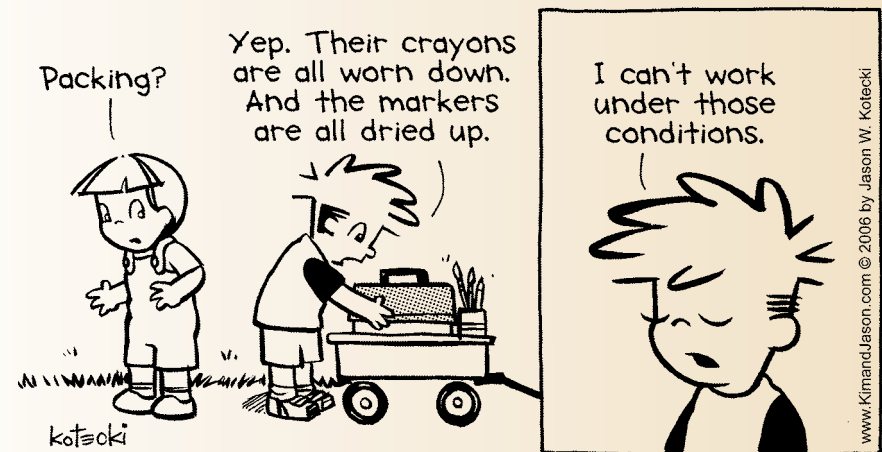
**Jason:** That's great advice. The idea of constraints is actually so important. As an artist, it's one of those things that people think people who are creative love to have carte blanche. You walk into an art supply store and say, "Create art."

But it's actually more effective to have some constraints like, "Okay. I'm going to use this medium. I'm going to try to paint this or capture this emotion. And I have to have it done by this certain time." That jumpstarts the creative juices to actually move in a positive direction. So I think that's a great point about looking at the constraints that we're living under as a positive.

**Pamela:** Exactly. Yes, I really see that and you're right. That is sometimes where the most fun creative things come to be. Unless I have a deadline, nothing is going to get done. So all of a sudden having a deadline or knowing that I have to deliver something within a certain budget, it means that I actually get it done. So yes, that is the opportunity.

**Jason:** As a coach, you're dealing with advice all the time. What is the worst piece of advice you've ever been given?

**Pamela:** Oh, the worst piece of advice? I have to kind of dig for that and the reason I say that is because I've had some really pret-





ty fantastic mentors in most of my career as an employee.

Probably the one that springs to mind was a client who I loved dearly. He taught me many, many things about business, but he would often tell me that I was just too nice. Like I was just too collaborative, that I should have a little bit harder edge.

I was teaching a presentation skills class along with another teacher who was, in my opinion, pretty brutal. She would give feedback to people and they would leave cowering, with their tail between their legs, and my perspective is that's not an effective way to learn. We can certainly go to the boot camp school of learning and it can scare some of us straight to get something done, but to really anchor in learning, it should be very clear and specific. It's not just skirting it and saying, "Yes! You were great. You did a great presentation," when it really wasn't, but I don't think that it ever needs to get to the place of actually scaring people or tearing them down. He spent some time saying basically that I really needed to do that. To act more in that strong, brutal way in order to be more accepted in business. I just felt in very fiber of my being that that was not the right direction to go, so I didn't follow that advice and it's panned out really well.



Of course, in poetic justice, a number of years later he came back and said, “You know what? I think you were right.”

**Kim:** That’s pretty rare that you get that moment.

**Pamela:** Well, he was a dear friend. We had a really great relationship and we could kind of banter back and forth.

He had great financial success, but not always the same kind of success in life, such as in friendship or in marriage. So that’s the big picture where he started to see the connection sometimes between things.

**Jason:** We’re new parents. Any advice to offer in regards to balancing a family and a business? We’re about seven months into this so far and we’re doing okay, but you have three kids, right?

**Pamela:** I do. I have a 21-month-old, and a 4-year-old, and then Jeffrey is 23 and he’s my bonus son. I call him “son” even though he came as a package deal when I married my husband. But he’s very much part of the family. Parenting a 20-something is a whole different ball of wax, and it’s wonderful, but there’s challenging components to it. So I get to see both sides of the parenting extremes.

What I’ve found is, especially when we’re in businesses where you’re actively using social media as a way to connect with your people and share information and get people to know who you



Read Jason’s blog post, [\*\*\*“Some Things I Learned Traveling with a 3-Month-Old”\*\*\*](#) which includes this tip:

*“If your baby is having trouble sleeping at night and you can swing it, you may want to try installing a jet engine in his or her room. Works like a charm.”*

are - that it is really easy for it just to bleed into your overall life. It's easy to not really make a distinction between family time and work time because if you're not clocking in and out as an entrepreneur like you would at an office, you might not physically be going to an office so you work from home. The advantage is that you can be physically present for your kids, but you might have your laptop downstairs in the kitchen or when you're doing other stuff.

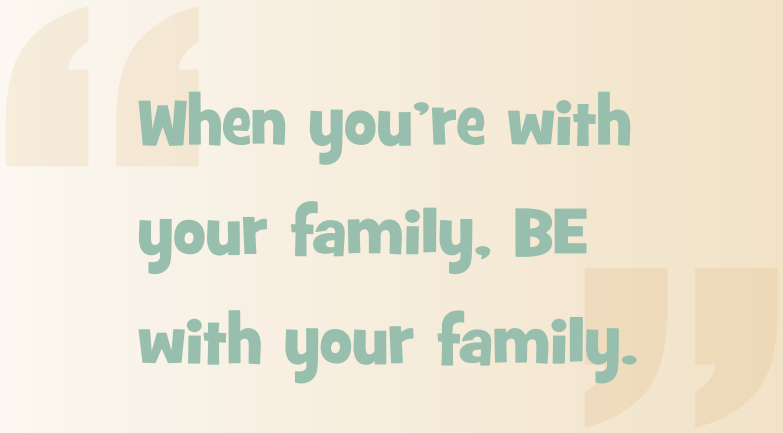
What I've found, and I've talked to other parents about this, is you can start to get that split attention, so you're actually not fully focused on your business, and you're also not fully focused on your kids.

My son, Josh, is the perfect beacon of truth because he comes out and says very specifically, "Mom." When he was younger, he would take my face and physically move it towards him. Like, "Mom, look at me."

What I learned is sometimes I could have that nagging feeling like I should be doing something - I should be checking email or be on Twitter - and yet what he really taught me is when I am with my family to be with my family.

I personally have very rarely, in 13 years of working for myself, worked on the weekends. I've always made that a pretty clear thing. Nowadays I might check in a little bit on Twitter, or on email, but I make it clear to my clients I don't work on weekends.

Even when I had big corporate stuff going on, save the occasional



**When you're with  
your family, BE  
with your family.**

drama that we all go through - some big thing needs to happen and so you're at Kinko's for 18 hours straight or something - for the most part I like to set really clear boundaries and say, "When the workday is over, make it over." For example, when the kids go to sleep, then that's a time where I personally did a lot of writing or checking up on email and so forth.

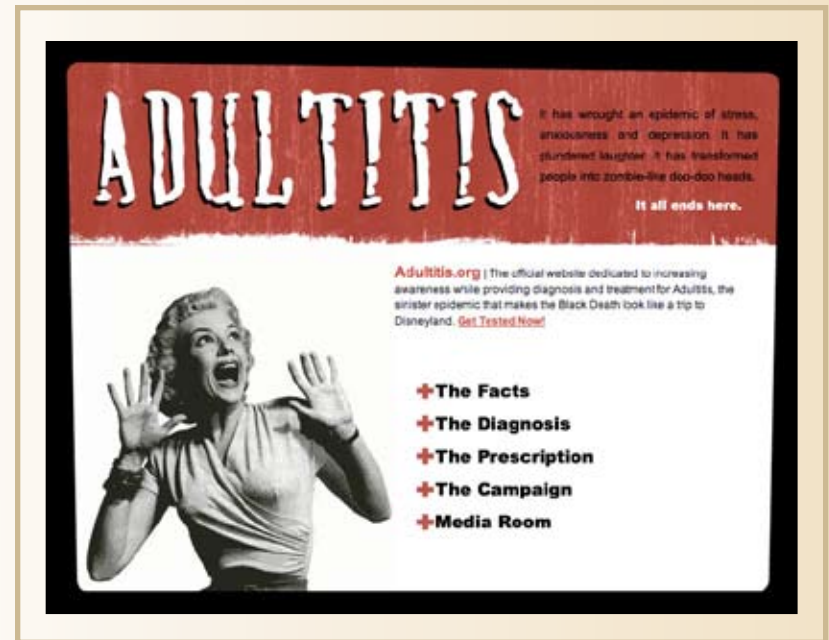
So that's the biggest thing to watch out for. When they're really little they don't necessarily pay attention as much, and that can be a wonderful thing - you can get a lot done and still be in the same room.

But that would be my advice: Don't just let it bleed over into everything, so you have half attention to your business and half attention to your kids. They really start to notice it.

**Jason:** We talk a lot about this disease called "Adultitis." As most of us get older, Adultitis depletes a lot of the passion, creativity, and enthusiasm that we had when we were kids.

You obviously strike us as someone who has done a really good job of holding on to her childlike side. What is your favorite way to escape adulthood and how do you manage to keep the "adult out of your soup," as we like to say?

**Pamela:** Well, I do love that childlike perspective. For me, I love to write. I always loved to read when I was little and I have always loved to write, so when I can really just escape creatively into my work and kind of channel that beginner mind, that openness, that



**Do YOU have Adultitis?** Find out for sure by taking the **free intake** at [adulttis.org](http://adulttis.org).

excitement, really having fun, having some humor in what it is that I'm doing, that's where I feel like I'm really bringing my childlike self.

It's also the perspective of trying to really just speak truthfully, and share whatever it is that's on my mind in the way that children often do; not necessarily censoring everything, or trying to put a specific spin on things. Certainly, we all have our filters. You don't have to completely let it all hang out. Some things you maintain just for your own private life and so forth, but I like to keep that perspective.

And then to be engaged in creative activity. Certainly having little kids, that is a perfectly great way to stay involved with childlike activities: reading children's books, doing creative projects. I like to be right alongside my son if we're doing something - he loves to paint or play with clay or do things like that - and just really let myself get in to that space and see it from his perspective.

I think I've been a little bit too much of an adult this year just because it's been quite a year pace-wise and with things going on in my husband's business. I've been at a clip of activity that's a little bit more than I would like, but I normally really like to do other things that connect me with my body. I don't think I've worked out in four years since I had my child. But normally I used to love to kickbox and do Pilates, and just kind of enjoy being physical and having time for myself. That's probably the way that I stay connected.



Read Pam's blog post "[Let The Wild Rumpus Start](#)" for some great ideas on how to clean up your writing (and presentations and customer service) so that you evoke the spirit of a well-written children's book.

But I feel it - I feel that child-like joy when I'm doing something that I love like writing, and where I'm able to just tell the kind of stories that I really enjoy telling. That's when I feel my childlike voice.

I'm actually looking right now at a picture I have on my wall above my computer. It's a picture my dad took of me - my dad's a photographer - that my mom sent to me on my 40th birthday that I hadn't seen in so long. I am probably about two years old and I'm sitting at our dining room table with a piece of paper and a pencil, writing.

It hit me so strongly when I saw that picture because for years I never even considered myself a writer. I didn't even know that that's what direction my path would take me, but that's the way it took me when I started my blog. So it's kind of a reminder to me that that truly is my childlike self - really being absorbed in writing.

**Kim:** Well, maybe that kind of answers our final question. We always like to ask those that we interview the same last question, and it ties in to your childhood. When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**Pamela:** I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. My mom was trained as a teacher - she didn't teach for very long - and my grandmother was a first grade teacher. I remember when I was in first grade I was the helper for the kindergarten class, so I would go over and help. That was always something that really excited me, and that's really been woven in to much of what I've done through time.



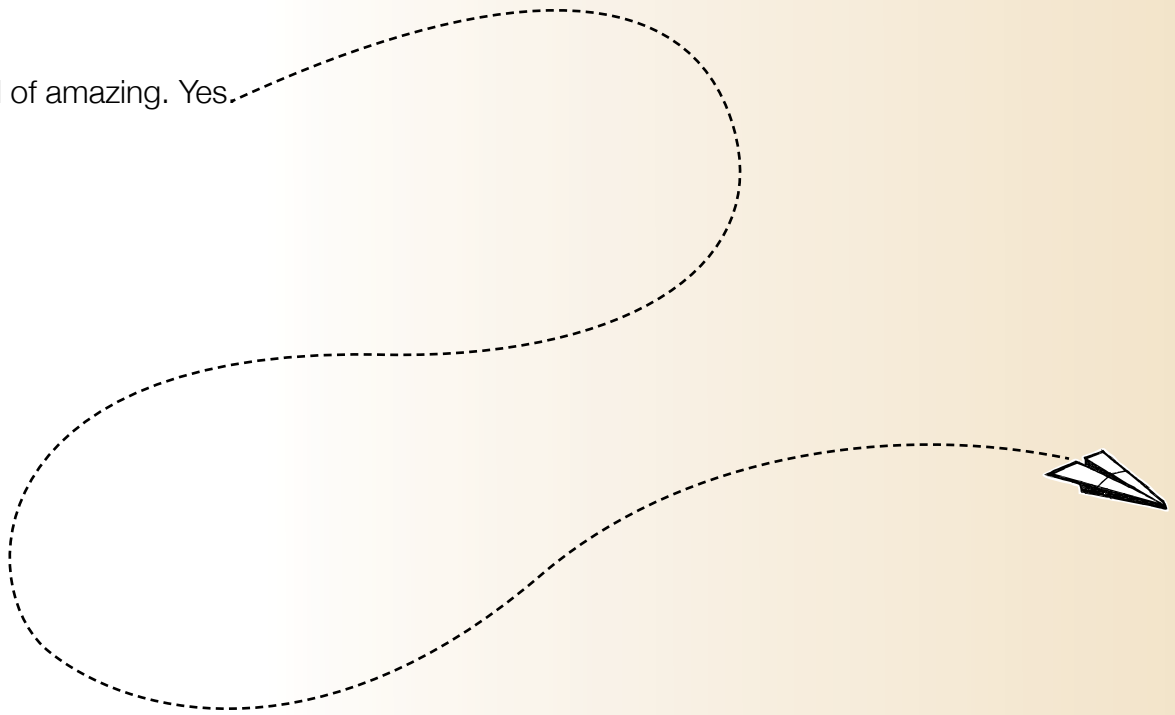
Ever wonder what teachers REALLY make? [Watch this passionate and inspiring video](#) from slam poet Taylor Mali.

I mean teaching, coaching – to me it's all kind of the same part of the picture of working with people and sharing what it is that I know and helping people make progress. So I think that was an earliest memory that I have, is of being a teacher.



**Jason:** So that whole coach-and-writer thing's working out for you pretty good then.

**Pamela:** It's working out pretty good. It's kind of amazing. Yes.



# ARE YOU IN YOUR DREAM JOB?

■ by Jason Kotecki



© David Cowles

I would have to say that I'm in my dream job. I write this blog post from a hotel room in Pleasanton, California (near the San Francisco/Oakland area.) I had a speaking gig this morning where I was able to encourage a gym full of people to make their lives a little bit more fun and fulfilling. We sold prints and comic books featuring funny pictures I've drawn over the past six years. Kim and I will be able to spend the next few days in San Francisco, while collecting some footage for our new project, Escape Plan TV. I draw, write, talk (and travel) for a living. Certainly not a typical job by any standard. There's a good chance it may not even be that appealing job to many people. But if I were asked what my ideal dream job would be, I'd have a hard time topping this one.

Sometimes people remark about how lucky I am to be in this position. Blessed, yes. But lucky? No.

I remember years ago when I worked for a car dealership while I was in high school and college. It was a pretty good job as far as flexibility goes. But I hated it. I hated sweating my butt off during the summer when I had to vacuum hot cars. I hated cleaning the yellow-filmed interior car windows of heavy smokers. I hated breathing car exhaust because the lazy mechanics wouldn't always put the hoses on the tailpipes. I hated brushing the snow off the cars in the winter. I hated coming home dirty and smelling like oil. I hated having wet socks from washing cars all day. And I hated one of the shop foremen — he was a real jerk.

I remember working there one day when I made a promise to myself. I decided that no matter what, I was not going to get stuck in



a dead-end job I couldn't stand. I was going to make something of myself. I was going to finish school, chase my dreams, and never give up, no matter how hard it would be.

Well, so far, it's been a LOT harder than I thought it would be. Kim and I have made a lot of sacrifices (a kindergarten teaching salary does not go as far as one might think.) We've gone through a lot of air conditionless summers. (Thank God heat was included in our rent!) And I'll never forget the slew of disappointing craft shows where we unsuccessfully hawked some of the very same prints that now sell like hotcakes at my speaking gigs. (One particular show in Milwaukee cost us over \$250 in fees and expenses, and we sold a grand total of three greeting cards in two days. That was good for a whopping \$7.92 in revenue. Take that, Trump!)

So what is the point of this long-winded tale? The point is that finding your dream job is more about making choices and being persistent than it is about waiting for the perfect opportunity to fall in your lap. It's about evaluating your talents, dreaming big, following your heart, and trusting God to guide your path.

Are you in your dream job? If so, I applaud you. But you are in the minority. According to a **CareerBuilder.com survey** released on January 25th, more than four out of five U.S. workers are still searching for their dream job. One way to begin the search is to **look back at your own childhood**. I find the comments by one of the CareerBuilder.com representatives interesting:

*"What defines a dream job is surprisingly reminiscent of child-*

*hood wishes for many workers," said Richard Castellini, vice president of consumer marketing at CareerBuilder.com. "Workers said they want to enjoy their work experience, apply their talents and feel like they're making an impact. Having fun at work was the most important attribute of a dream job for 39 percent of workers, which heavily outweighed the 12 percent who said salary was most important."*

Salary was one of the least important factors in determining a dream job. Money ranked third (12 percent) compared to having fun at work (39 percent) which topped the list, followed by making a difference in society (17 percent).

I have been accused of being an idealist, but I can't help but wonder what our country would look like if EVERYONE was in their dream job. Heck, I'd like to see the effects of even three out of five folks working at their dream job! Are you one of those people who think that it would be impossible for everyone to be in their dream job? *Wouldn't everyone want to be Donald Trump, or Oprah, or a movie star?* I'm not so sure about that. (After all, across all professions in the survey, police and firefighters reported the highest incidence of feeling they have their dream jobs (35 percent), followed closely by teachers (32 percent.) Everyone I know has such a unique mix of skills and interests and passions that I like to think that somehow, everyone would fill a specific need and there'd be plenty of dream jobs to go around.

So what about you? Are you in your dream job? If not, what would it be? 

A vibrant blue sky filled with soft, white, fluffy clouds. The clouds are scattered across the frame, with a large, prominent one in the upper left quadrant. The overall mood is bright and aspirational.

# **WHO SAYS FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS SHOULDN'T BE HARD?**

**BY PAMELA SLIM**

**I was on a coaching call with a client.** We were reviewing his target market, business model and strategy. At about halfway through the call, his voice got choked with emotion.

“I have just put so much effort and energy into this and am not seeing the results I expected. I know I am meant to do this work. I love it. Why does it have to be so hard?”



My first reaction was to comfort him, and to search for a quick solution that would start the flow of clients his way in just the manner he desired.

Then I thought, *who said anything is wrong with things being hard?*

I have come to the realization that we cause ourselves a lot of stress by believing that if we just choose the right business, or quit our loathsome job, or find the perfect internet marketing system, or get that book deal that things will become easy.

### **Why is easy desirable?**

Anything I have done that I consider worthwhile in my life: building a martial arts organization, finding the man I truly love, mentoring youth, writing a book, creating a remote coaching business and having children have all been extremely difficult at times.

I think it is the difficulty that makes the success juicy sweet.

In technology-fueled modern business, we are addicted to immediate results. We jump at anything that will take something complex and make it appear simple. We believe the hype when internet marketers promise instant six figures a year when you sign up for their limited-time 4-figure program (at least you know *they* will hit six figures this year!).

There are some tricks to setting up an efficient business with mini-



mal effort. And there are some really great people out there who have good information to share that will be worth the investment.

But you will only get the return on your investment when you *really work the process*. In my own experience, I have invested in classes that had a very poor return not because the information wasn't valuable, but because I didn't take the time to do the homework. And I have absolutely killed results when I applied myself and took the content in other classes seriously.

The process of hard work vs. quick tricks makes me think of my initial reaction to a few stories in **Four Hour Workweek**. I really like and admire **Tim Ferriss**, and think he has fantastic advice in his book. But as a former serious martial artist, what bothered me about his story of technically winning a martial art championship by interpreting rules instead of studying for years is that I felt he missed the discipline, stamina and growth that comes from doing thousands of push ups and sit ups, training when you would rather stay home on the couch, and getting your face smashed on the floor hundreds of times. This, in my own experience, is what deepened my understanding of and love for the art.

I don't think that Tim meant to say that scrapping together a victory on the dance floor or martial art ring was his end game. He has demonstrated with his incredibly detailed blog posts and rigorous speaking schedule that he believes at working hard *at the right things*.

And the *right things* are different for each of us.



Here is my take on “bad hard” vs. “good hard”:

### **Bad hard**

- Trying as hard as you can to appear smart, professional and accomplished in a field you secretly loathe
- Trying to force someone to love you, who doesn't
- Spending twelve hours on an administrative task that is complex, boring and not your strength when someone smart could do it in 30 minutes for fifty bucks
- Doing lots of standard processes manually (like sending 6 emails back and forth to set up a meeting instead of using an online scheduling tool)
- Working with people over an extended period of time who are not your ideal clients
- Scattering your efforts over multiple projects so that you don't have the proper time and attention any one of them deserves


### **Good hard**

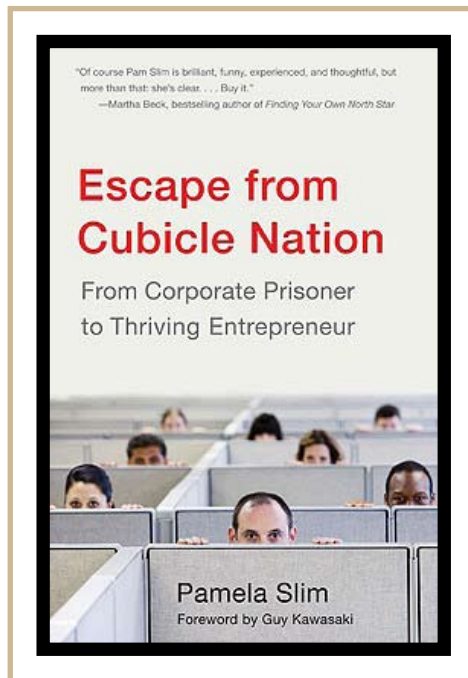
- Trying as hard as you can to get a business you love off the ground, running into unforeseen snags and getting different results than you expected
- Spending days, weeks and months and sometimes years figuring out your ideal customer and working like a dog to serve them great stuff
- Taking on big challenges that push against emotional, mental and physical boundaries
- Sharing your project, or idea or product with people you admire when you don't feel it is quite ready for prime time in order to get feedback that will make it useful and effective



- Meeting unexpected life challenges with both pragmatism and optimism. As Jim Collins shared so eloquently in Good to Great, illustrating what he calls the Stockdale Paradox: “You must maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulty, AND *at the same time*, have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they may be.”

What I am going to tell my client next time if he says “This is hard!” is “EXCELLENT! When you are doing the right things, leading your tribe, tackling tough problems and creating truly useful products and services, it shouldn’t be easy.”

But it sure will be good. 



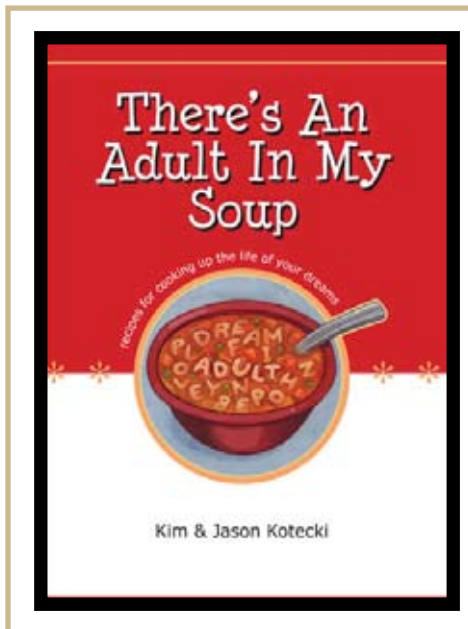
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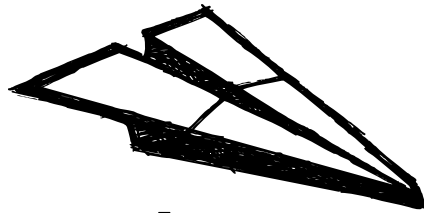
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# The End

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