

BARE BONES BUILD A BELOVED BUSINESS BOOKLETS
Number One: Clarifying the Basics

Mary-Elizabeth Harmon

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PART 1:

Clarifying your desired feelings first.

Have you ever felt unhappy working toward or reaching a goal? I have and know I'm not alone. Whether we're on the selling or buying side of a service or product, we're doing what we're doing because we think we'll feel good or better in some way.

When preparing to create something new, I got smart and started thinking about how I wanted to feel in and after the process *before* thinking about what I was going to do.

I've wasted time, money and effort by not doing this, like when I started and quit a life coaching course that felt worse as I progressed. In time, I realized that was because I was learning to build a business that clashed with how I wanted to feel in my work.

How do you most want to feel while building your business?

Here are the top 5 ways I want to feel while building mine:

- as if I'm making a difference.
- a sense of enjoyment / creatively satisfied.
- self-directed / free to determine and manage what I do.
- mostly in charge of my schedule.
- well compensated.

If you're not sure about your top 5 list, think about the leading ways you DON'T like to feel in your work—we tend to be clear about that—then write down the opposite.

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PART 2:

Mining your desired feelings for data.

My desire to feel free to direct what I do suggests that self-employment and / or a leadership role as an employee might work best for me. It also suggests my need to be careful about taking business funding from people who could later pull the strings.

Are your top desired feelings and plans for building your business aligned?

The coaching program I quit was teaching me to fill my time with clients. That clashed with my desire to feel mostly in charge of my schedule and felt as restrictive as the 9-5 work hours that had partly inspired me to want a coaching business in the first place.

There are many things that you can do to build a business.

Pick things that feel how you want to feel unless you want to build a jail for yourself.

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PART 3:

Giving voice to your dreams.

In my childhood, I dreamed about running a community center. But then I asked myself what the world needed and took the path of HIV researcher. Once I found the courage to stop doing “impressive” but draining work, my community center dream reignited.

Write a story about your ideal workday or a list of your dreams without censoring yourself. Think about WHAT you’d love to do without worrying about HOW.

I dreamed about gathering people to make friends and do fun projects. I dreamed about designing programs to promote healthy living. Caregiving for my parents inspired new dreams around caring for caregivers and older adults.

It finally occurred to me that a community center is a place where people gather, and an apartment building could serve as that place. That’s when I got the idea of fostering vertical villages, or “community centers” where people live and get medical care.

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PART 4:

Matching “doings” with desired feelings.

Like I said, I want to feel a sense of enjoyment / creatively satisfied while I work. Even in times of high stress, writing stories delivers those feelings. Designing things—graphics to bare bones documents to games to community programs—has the same effect.

Have you ever felt any of the top 5 feelings you want to feel while building your business? If so, which feeling(s) and what were you doing at the time?

Feeling good is my goal, so storytelling and designing are the core activities of my business, [A Village for Life](#). If you haven't felt your desired feelings before, the following questions can help to reveal some ideal “doings” for you.

a) What do you love learning about?

I love learning about alternate care and business models, mobile clinics and micro manufacturing to name a few. I plan to design offers around all of these eventually.

b) What are your natural strengths / talents?

The CliftonStrengths assessment measures the presence of talents in 34 areas. Discover your most dominant talents and how you can use and develop them [here](#).

c) What do people ask for your help with?

People ask me for help with writing and designing. And distilling: friends have asked me to read books and give them the highlights. I'm distilling years of learnings for you now.

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PART 4...

Matching “doings” with desired feelings.

d) What work have you enjoyed doing for free?

I researched information and shared it with my neighbors. I also hosted events. These activities are part of what I do now or plan to do for free and for a cost in my business.

e) Whose work have you ever envied and why?

I once quietly envied Anthony Bourdain's and Malcolm Gladwell's work: Malcolm turns his curiosity into fun projects, and Anthony gathered folks around good food.

f) How can you weave enviable work into your business soon?

These days, I love my work and don't envy anyone else's. But if that weren't the case, I could gather folks around food by hosting potlucks and turn my curiosity into a blog.

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PART 5:

Exploring who you might serve and how.

Our hardships can help us serve people facing challenges we've overcome or are overcoming. Though I experienced post-traumatic growth—positive transformation after adversity—I've had major tough times in my career and as a family caregiver.

a) What hardships have you overcome / are you overcoming?

My past struggles have inspired me to help aspiring career changers to discover work that soothes the soul, and to help elders and family caregivers get needed support.

b) What breaks your heart or are you indignant about?

Heartbreaks and indignations can help us gain clarity. My heart breaks thinking about people who feel forgotten or alone, so I'm working on fostering villages of neighbors.

c) What are you most grateful for / is your most meaningful experience?

I'm most grateful for family, friends and health, and my most meaningful experience was helping my father to pass peacefully at home. All that shapes the village work I do.

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PART 6:

Putting your insights together.

Fold a sheet of paper into quarters or section off a page in a notebook to make a business overview sheet with insights you've gained thus far. Mine is below. Make sure that how you want to feel and what you can do now align with each other.

<u>How I want to feel</u> • as if I'm making a difference • a sense of enjoyment / creatively satisfied • self-directed / free to determine and manage what I do • mostly in charge of my schedule • well compensated	<u>What I love to do / do well / dream about</u> • storytelling • designing • learning about alternate care and business models, mobile clinics and micro manufacturing • developing my natural strengths, especially my top 5: Connectedness, Empathy, Individualization, Maximizer, Futuristic • distilling research • community building • running a community center • activating villages in multifamily housing
<u>Who I want to serve</u> • aspiring career changers • overextended caregivers • older adults • anyone who's feeling lonely or wanting to make friends	<u>What I can do now</u> • tell stories—through blogging, interviews and design-driven ad campaigns—to spread the idea and benefits of neighbor-grown villages • distill research into tools to make growing villages fun and doable for neighbors, and to attract support from leaders in various sectors, like faith communities, business, funding circles and more • connect with partners across sectors to design creative neighborhood village models • host events and throw parties!

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PART 7:

Picking the best “doing” for now.

Looking at your business overview sheet, which thing in the “What I can do now” section are you most excited about starting or are you already doing and want to continue? *OR* is there something your intuition is calling you to do even if it’s not on your sheet?

Which activity do you want to continue or start to build your business? The goal now is to make a choice that will help you gain momentum and clarity more than anything else.

But if you pick something and feel any sense of disappointment, pick something else.

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PART 8:

Vowing to market your “doing” by email.

There's a saying “if you don't have an email list you don't have a business.” You can dispute that but commit to growing a list anyway. You can choose an approach that works for you. If not, you'll be leaving cash on the table. According to Omnisend...

- There are over 4 billion email users in the world.
- 42% of people check their email 3-5X a day and 19% check it over 20X daily.
- 50% of buyers made a purchase directly from an email in the past year.
- Email marketing ranks as the most effective channel for 41% of marketing professionals. Social media and paid search tied for 2nd place at 16% each.
- Email marketing generates between \$36 and \$40 for every dollar spent.

Be aware that you can grow an email list by starting a waitlist for a service or product. Simply send updates occasionally to keep your subscribers interested and ready to buy.

That ends Bare Bones Build a Beloved Business Booklet No. 1. Was this helpful to you? Not helpful? Please email me to let me know. In the next booklet, we'll begin clarifying your “domain” as well as your ideal customers or clients.



Thanks for reading,

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