

003 - Sean Ogle: How to Live and Work Anywhere

Grant: This is the How Did You Get Into That? Podcast with Grant Baldwin, episode three.

Voice Over: Welcome to the How Did You Get Into That? Podcast. Each week we want to bring you an inspiring interview or encouraging message to help you find and do work you love. Now here's your host, Grant Baldwin.

Grant: Greetings, my friends, what's happening? Thanks for hanging out with us today. Welcome to the How Did You Get Into That? Podcast, my name is Grant, and I'm honored, stoked, privileged, pleased that you decided to join us today. I've got a really cool interview with my friend, Sean Ogle. Sean runs a website called Location 180 where he just teaches people about building a business, teaching them how to live anywhere, how to achieve the freedom that they're looking for in life.

And I think at the end of the day that's really what we're all looking for. We do what we do, not necessarily for the—so that we can have a massive bank account, although that's lovely and a delightful thing to have, but I think we just want more freedom in life and so Sean is really teaching people how to do that. So today we'll talk about his journey, even going into like how he's dealing with some of the resistance of coming out of college. Even within a year he realized that what he was doing wasn't at all what he wanted to do with his life.

And I think—I know for myself and many others that I've talked to, they could really relate to that story of went to college, got the degree, thought I knew the path I was on, quickly realized it wasn't where I wanted to be, and really just how you kind of transition out that, so you'll hear some of that from Sean's journey today.

Also I love this part, this is crazy, but you'll hear about how he was kind of planning his exit strategy, how he was figuring out what he wanted to do and then he was completely blindsided by the company with some shocking news, so you're going to want to make sure you pay attention to that.

Also hear about how he met with a mentor, sort of talking—or just really kind of taking some little steps of action towards creating the life he wanted to have and by how just taking some of those small steps things really started to fall into place for him. And I think really that's the theme you hear through a lot of these interviews and you'll continue to hear is that these people don't have it all figured out. They haven't arrived, they're not on the mountaintop and they're teaching people the way, they're just people that are taking small, incremental steps of action, and how things tend to work out for people who are taking some type of action, even though if it may not always be the right thing, but I'm doing something to move the ball down the field there. And then also you'll hear about the three specific steps he teaches for others to live a location-independent lifestyle on your own terms.

So I think you're really going to like this, so without further delay, without further hesitation, I want to give you Sean—hang on, pause that. Before I give you that, as always make sure you visit www.GrantBaldwin.com, you kind find all the show notes for this episode at www.GrantBaldwin.com/SeanOgle, S-E-A-N O-G-L-E, www.GrantBaldwin.com/SeanOgle. So make sure that you stop by, you check that out. Alright, take two, without further delay, here's my friend, Sean Ogle.

Well today I'm hanging out with my friend, Sean Ogle. Sean, how are you doing, my man?

Sean: Fantastic, I'm glad to be here. Thanks for having me.

Grant: You bet, dude. Alright, so tell us, you run this website, Location 180. What exactly is this? What exactly do you do?

Sean: So Location 180's all about travel and entrepreneurship. So specifically I help people build small businesses, allow them to work from anywhere in the world.

Grant: Nice, like what kind of small businesses would someone be able to build and be wherever?

Sean: Generally online-based businesses. So whether it's freelance work, you know freelance copyrighting, SEO, basic web design, ecommerce, affiliate marketing, blogging, you know that's all kind of stuff that falls under the realm of things that I talk about.

Grant: Nice. What about—in all those things you kind of mention there it seems like a lot more technical-type of skills. Are there other things that maybe wouldn't tie into—if I'm not like a tech geek or anything that I would be able to do?

Sean: Well it's one of those things that it's not nearly as technical as you think. So for instance freelance writing, I'm guessing you're probably at least an ok writer, growing up in the United States, that kind of thing.

Grant: Sure.

Sean: So all of these things that seem really daunting, you know I would tell you, "Ok, you should start a website so that you can market your services." Well you might be thinking, "I'm not a technical guy, I have no idea how to start a website." But there's tools that actually make it much easier than you think and there's ways to find work that's probably quite a bit easier than you think. So that's a route a lot of people start with because it allows them to build confidence, it allows them to build income, and then they can start doing all the sexier projects that are maybe something they're passionate about or hobby-based or anything like that.

Grant: Beautiful. Alright, let's pause there, let's come back to that. Let's start by just going back in time here. You live in Portland today, correct?

Sean: Yeah.

Grant: And so you were born and raised, lived in Oregon your whole life. What was life like growing up for you?

Sean: I was the epitome of average middle-class white kid. I mean that was my life, I went to elementary school, middle school, and high school in Eugene, Oregon, I knew since I was probably in sixth grade I was going to go to Oregon State with my best friend, we were going to live together. Six months before I graduated I got a job as a financial analyst, I was a finance major, so I got the job, moved up to Portland, and it was just very, very traditional. There wasn't anything super exciting, you know we took the family vacations, I grew up playing competitive tennis so I'd play tournaments on the weekends and lessons after school and all that kind of stuff, so it was very much just kind of average suburban childhood.

Grant: Yeah, the type of stuff that Lifetime TV shows are made of.

Sean: Yeah, there you go. Exactly.

Grant: Exactly. So you do that. When you were in high school and even just growing up did you always want to be a financial analyst or you just knew, "I wanted to go to Oregon State, what I do beyond that, I'm not really sure, yet."

Sean: No, I knew I wanted to run my own business, and so when I studied finance it was like ok, I can do business management, I can do marketing. I chose finance because I thought it was going to be harder to learn after the fact. So it's like I'm paying all this money for an education, well management, marketing, those are kind of personality-based skills. Finance, it's like you've got a lot of formulas and numbers and that was the stuff I wanted to learn. Looking back I should have studied accounting, it would have been much more beneficial to my goals as an entrepreneur, but you know that's just kind of the path I chose.

Grant: Got you. So you're studying finance and just knowing you want to do something with it. When did it start to kind of like crystallize and you just figured out, "I've got to hone in on what I want to do with this."

Sean: You know the only reason it worked out the way it did is because I had like a distant relative who came up to me six months before I graduated, he said, "Sean, we're moving our business," they worked for a big finance firm and they said, "We want to start our own business and we need somebody that we can trust to come in and help us out with this move. So we're offering you a job six months before you graduate to come and do this."

And so I wasn't sure what my plan was. My plan was to travel and you know then figure things out. And so before I knew it I was thrown into this analyst position that wasn't necessarily what I was looking for, but it was the first opportunity, and when you're a senior in college and you're the first one of your friends to get a well-paying job, I mean that's pretty exciting. So I was like, "Sure, we'll try this, we'll see where it goes."

Grant: Nice. So really, like no intention, you weren't even really looking, you knew you wanted to have your own business, but weren't really sure what that looked like, opportunity comes along, let's just take it, and it buys you a little more time to figure out what you want to do?

Sean: Exactly. And so you know I took a trip right after I graduated with a bunch of my best friends. It was supposed to be a three month trip through Europe and I had to cut it down to eighteen days to start this job. And so I think that was one of the things—like that was like the one of the things that planted the seed, it's like, "Wait a second, I wanted to have this adventure. I didn't get to have it. Now I'm starting this job." So you're kind of starting out on a sour note, because I never got to do those things that I had been planning for four years. You know I got to do a little bit, but eighteen days is a lot different than three months.

Grant: Had you been plotting out any type of business ideas or things that you would have done had the analyst thing not fallen in your lap?

Sean: All through college I had kind of a variety of businesses. So my very first one is I scalped concert tickets.

Grant: Oh, heck yeah.

Sean: So I'd buy concert tickets to shows I knew would sell out and I'd resell them on eBay; so I did that for like a year. My main business was I painted houses all through college, so that was how I paid my way through school. So I was like, "Well I can keep painting houses and make some money and kind of figure out what to do from there." Probably three months after I started my position as a financial analyst I had a T-shirt business with a friend of mine, we sold high-end T-shirts, and that lasted for about a year.

So I always knew I wanted to run a business of some sort, I just never kind of quite found the one that was going to be the really long-term venture.

Grant: Yeah, it's funny, I think a lot of entrepreneurs like ourselves, even when you look back at their early 20s or so or college, we all like dabbled in these random things, we were just fascinated by them. My wife and I, we had an eBay business for a while where we bought and sold purses.

And dude, I knew my purses, I knew my diaper bags, I knew all that stuff, because it just worked, it was just kind of one of those things like, "How'd I end up here? This is really weird, but we're making a little bit of income on the side, it's kind of fun, we're doing our own deal." Whatever we can find to scratch that itch is what we go for.

Sean: One of my best friends, the guy I actually did the house painting business with, he used to have an eBay business selling women's purses, so that's really funny.

Grant: That's funny. That's cool. So you got the analyst gig and that's with your uncle? Is it business or a different corporation?

Sean: So basically it's like my dad's cousin, so he's my great uncle or some distant relative.

Grant: However that works out.

Sean: So he was working for a big financial firm and wanted to start a smaller RA firm. So instead of being a stockbroker where they're working on commissions, they're managing people's accounts based on assets under management. So they'll charge them—you know if you've got a million bucks they'll charge you 1% annually to manage your fees, so that was what I went to work for.

Grant: So for you that job comes up and it's not really like, "Oh, this is my lifelong dream," it's like, "Eh, I guess I'll do it. They're going to pay me and I'll figure out what I want to do in the meantime."

Sean: Well at the time I was actually really excited about it. You know it was one of those—I don't think—you know coming out of college you don't know what you really want to do. And so I'm like, "Sweet, I've got an office with a view, I get to wear a suit and tie to work, I—you know it's going to be cool, this is going to be my thing." They were talking, they wanted me, I mean there's only four people in the business, the two principals, our administrative assistant, and me, so you know they were talking about having me there for the long-term, being a partner long-term, when he retires I'd come up. I mean it was really a pretty sweet gig that a lot of people would kill for in my position.

Grant: So you saw this as a potential—like, "This is a potential long-term opportunity, this is not like a passing through. I could see myself here."

Sean: Oh, absolutely. Especially because you know they were starting the business, I was coming in on the ground floor, I looked at this as an opportunity to be entrepreneurial with a real business. Unfortunately, it turned out to be more of a job—no, it was completely a job and I didn't really have much in the entrepreneurial part of it, at least not in the three years that I was there.

Grant: Alright, so you get into—how quick into it are you realizing like, "This is not what I signed up for. This is not for me."

Sean: You know for the first six months or so it was—things were crazy. We were—have you seen the movie Jerry Maguire?

Grant: No. Of course.

Sean: Where you know he's getting ready to live and him and Jay Mohr or whoever, they're on the phones, calling all the clients, trying to get people to like go one way or the other. I mean that's how the first few months of this job were, it was like calling clients, "Hey, we moved our business, come over here," so it was like lots of frantic—setting things up, learning new things.

So that was pretty exciting, but after about six months things kind of settled down, I started settling in to this analyst role, and about a year into it that's when I was kind of like, "Ok, whoa, how did I get stuck doing all of this stuff? This isn't interesting, this isn't something I like." And my boss was also very old school, you know he's the kind of person that doesn't like digital records, everything's got to be on paper, and he doesn't like the internet and things like that.

So I'm trying to push them kind of into the 21st century based on my background, and they didn't really want that to happen. So there was kind of a battle that was starting about a year into it, as I was kind of trying to help them modernize some of the things that we were doing.

Grant: So you're there for a year, starting to hate life, starting to hate the gig, but you're there for three years. What happened those next two years?

Sean: A lot of uncertainty, doubt, terror, trying to figure out what I'm going to do, because it's family, so there was this sense of obligation. They took a chance on me out of school, so it's like obviously I'm going to spend the rest of my life with him. And so it was just this kind of like I owe it to them to stick around longer. It's like maybe things will get a little bit better.

And also keep in mind this was in 2007, so we opened up the business, the stock market was at 14,000, everything was thriving. By like May of 2009 the stock market was at 6,400, all of our assets are down, our revenue was down, he's coming to me saying, "If you can think of any creative ways to save the company money let me know."

And so the real catalyst came in February of 2009, because I took—I had saved up all of my vacation time for a year and begged my boss for months to let me take a trip down to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for Carnival with my best friend. And it was on that trip, that's when I said, "Alright, something's got to give. I've got to set some timelines to this and start making some changes, because the longer I stay in this position the more difficult it's going to be to make a transition out of it."

Grant: It's crazy how many people have that kind of story where it was like I can look back at one defining trip, moment, instant, conversation, something that just triggered it where you're like, "That's

it, I can't keep doing this." So for you it was that trip to Rio. Was it anything specific where you're on the beach, you were walking around, or what happened where you're like, "I've got to get out of here?"

Sean: Oh, there was a very specific moment. So we were down there for two weeks and we had a friend that we actually met on that Europe trip right after I graduated. She lived down there and she is very well off in Rio, so she showed us around, we danced in the Carnival celebration, we went hang gliding over Rio, we went to Iguazu Falls, I mean we had like the most amazing Brazil trip you could ever have.

And it was on the very last day, we were sitting on Copacabana Beach, holding a coconut, looking at crystal clear water, and it was just like, "I should be able to do this whenever I want. My boss shouldn't be able to dictate when I can take vacations or when I can go get my oil changed or when I can have doctor appointments. I should have full control over that."

Grant: Nice.

Sean: And so we came back and my buddy that I was with, he left his job three weeks later, a month later he was living in Hawaii where he was for like eight months while he was just basically biding his time, getting by so that he could start his world trip, traveling around the world in January of 2010.

So that became my deadline, by January of 2010 I've got to figure something out. I've already got to deal with this guy living in Maui and having to hear about it all the time, but if he's off traveling around the world and I'm still in a job that I didn't like, simply because I didn't have the guts to leave, then I'm—that's something I'm going to regret for the rest of my life.

Grant: For sure. So tell me the timeline then. When did you go to Rio?

Sean: That was February of 2009.

Grant: Alright, so you've got about a year to work with before January arrives, I'm just figuring it out.

Sean: Yeah.

Grant: So what are you doing in that year of preparing to make that leap?

Sean: So basically what happened is—well first off, the day I got back, March 1st I got a 20% pay cut. So I'm having this great trip, I'm already thinking about leaving, I come back and one of the first things that's happened is, "Sean, I'm just going to throw this out there, we're cutting your pay by 20%. It was either that or fire somebody and we didn't want to do that."

So already it's like things are starting to kind of crystalize a little bit like with how much I need to make a change. Within, it was probably a couple weeks after that I stumbled across Chris Guillebeau's blog, The Art of Non-Conformity, and I had never heard of a blog, I didn't know what that was, like the terms like location, independent, or lifestyle design, I mean nothing—that meant nothing to me.

But I started reading this guy's site, I'm just like, "Holy crap. This is what I want to do. This guy's got it figured out." And it turns out he had just moved to Portland, so I sent him an email and said, "Hey, here's who I am, this is what I'm doing, I'm looking to make a change, any chance you'd be willing to meet me for coffee?"

And he said yes, so I went and met him for coffee, and he was the one that encouraged me to start a blog. So I did some research, I started looking at WordPress and all these things, and in May of 2009, it

was actually almost my five year anniversary, this week is my five year anniversary of starting Location 180.

Grant: Sweet, congrats.

Sean: So that's—that was kind of what started pushing me in this direction, was starting the website.

Grant: Nice. It seems like a lot of people have that—again, just kind of a similar story and similar track where, "I don't really know what I want to do, I just know I don't want to keep doing this." But a lot of times we know it when we see it. Like we connect with someone, we see someone, we come across a website, we see someone doing the thing, we're like, "Dude, that's it." We just have that light bulb, eureka moment, like, "I found it. This is great. I've got to figure out how to do that."

And it's crazy how so many times find that person who's doing that thing and when we reach out to them they're often times extremely helpful and extremely generous and kind to say, "Here's how I did it." And you know ultimately that's kind of part of this show is being able to say for people that are looking at the Sean Ogles of the world going, "Ok, this dude gets to travel around and teach other people to do the same. How do I get into that?" And it's the same thing that Chris was able to do for you.

Sean: Oh, absolutely.

Grant: So when you meet with Chris what's that conversation like? How does that go?

Sean: So first off I had—I think I lied to my boss, I said I had a doctor's appointment. I'm over on the east side of Portland in like hipster central wearing a suit and tie.

Grant: Fit right in.

Sean: Go into Starbucks and Chris is just like, "Oh man, you obviously need to make some changes here."

Grant: You've got to get out of this world.

Sean: Yeah, and so you know we're talking and you know he made some recommendations for other sites that I should check out, some personal development sites. The one I specifically remember was Steve Pavlina's site at the time, and he's like, "Go look at some of these blogs and consider maybe starting one of your own."

So I was like, "Ok." So I'm looking at these things and you know finally I was like, "Ok, I'm going to do it." So a month later I went back, I said, "Chris, alright, I've started a blog. Can we meet again, because I'm not sure what's next?" And I actually got an email from someone last week saying, "I wanted to go back and I wanted to see what your first blog post looked like. And I was reading it and I saw that your first comment was Chris Guillebeau, I thought that was the coolest thing ever." So it was kind of funny how it all worked out.

Grant: Very cool.

Sean: So he kind of took a little bit of a mentor role for me in that first year and beyond. So we'd meet for coffee like once or twice a month—or once every month or two, and I'd kind of be like, "Ok, I've got

some blog posts." It's like, "Ok, I did my first guest post. Ok, I made my first dollar online." And he would kind of just provide feedback along the way.

Grant: So leading up towards January, by the time January 2010 hits do you have any savings in place? Do you have any plan in place or where are you at with the blog that made you confident you could or couldn't make the jump?

Sean: Yeah, so the real catalyst happened in August of 2009. So I'd been doing the blog for a couple months, I was starting to formulate some plans, but didn't have anything set in stone, but I'd talk to Chris about them and at one point he did a meet-up and there was 40 or 50 people there and I remember walking across the street and he yells at me, "Hey Sean, by the way you better follow through with all those things you talked about because I don't have to rewrite your chapter in my book."

So in his first book, The Art of Non-Conformity there's a chapter where he talks about me compared to somebody else. So this other person that he's seen multiple times in the last couple years and every time it's like, "Hey Chris, I want to do this. Hey Chris, I want to do this." And it's the same conversation every time and he takes no action, and then me who takes action based on his advice.

So I was like, "Ok, I've got to do something now."

Grant: No pressure.

Sean: Yeah, and so this was at the time where my boss was like, "Hey, if you can think of ways to save the company money I want to hear about them." So that September I submitted a remote work proposal. I told my boss that I would take a 50% pay cut if he let me work on a trial basis for three months from Hawaii where my best friend was. I'd open us up to new business, we'd make the company more secure and allow them to travel, because we'd have to figure out how to do that security-wise. So I had this whole elaborate five page proposal.

And a month later, after multiple meetings talking about it, I went in, they said, "Hey Sean, meeting, conference room, we want to talk about your proposal." They sat me down, they said, "Sean, we've decided not to accept your proposal, but we will accept this as your resignation."

Grant: Wow. Were you just blindsided?

Sean: Totally. I didn't see that coming at all.

Grant: Holy crap.

Sean: It was one of those—he's like, "We'd like you to stick around for the next two weeks, you'll make a little bit more money, you'll teach us everything that you know and help us with all your processes and everything, and then you'll go on your way."

And we went back and forth and in the end I could have saved my job, there was a position—there was a way to do that, but I kind of said, "You know what, if this is how you're going to treat me maybe this is what I need to do and get out of here." And so it was probably—you know realistically it was probably a year earlier than I really wanted to, even based on my timeline, just because you're always waiting for that perfect time that never really exists.

So at the time I ended up having—I had about \$10,000 in savings, the blog was starting to gain a little bit of traction, a week later I wrote a post called "My Last Day", so I wrote the post where I actually left my job, and a couple days after that opportunities just kind of started showing up. So Chris offered me a job as his affiliate manager and that's something I still do today. Dan Andrews of the Tropical MBA, who at the time had absolutely no brand, nobody knew who he was had this creepy sales page of a video of him in the Philippines saying he wanted to bring an intern out to Asia to work with him. He's like, "I'll pay your basic living expenses and you work part-time and I'll teach you internet marketing, you help me grow my business."

So he reached out to me, sent me an email, it said, "Hey, I think what you're doing's great. You should look into this, I want to bring you out here." So two months later I'm on a flight to Bangkok, meeting this random dude from the internet at 1:00AM at the airport. And it turned out to be the best thing I ever could have done.

Grant: Wow, that all happened very quickly it sounds like.

Sean: Yeah, between like you know September, October, and January, you know a lot changed. I sold my car, I started taking things more serious with business, I decided I was going to move to Asia for seven months. You know I still wasn't sure how I was going to make a living, I still wasn't sure how I was going to start a business in all of this, but I knew that I was going to get the adventure I wanted, I knew it would give me an opportunity to write about interesting things on the blog, and so both of those things seemed like a pretty good idea at the time.

Grant: Yeah, for sure. So whenever your boss—and they sit you down and they say, "Hey, we're going to accept this as your resignation." Are you feeling pissed, are you feeling ticked, are you feeling hurt, are you feeling relieved?

Sean: Oh, I'm feeling all of the above. I was terrified. And it was the kind of thing—I went back the next day and I was like, "Ok, I just want you to know I view this as involuntary termination, I plan to collect unemployment," all that kind of stuff, and that really pissed him off, because he thought that it was more of a mutual thing than it was, and I looked at it as, "Hey, you're firing me."

So you know it was—it was tough, because you know again, we were an office of four people, so—

Grant: Right, and family.

Sean: And family. And so you've got this guy I've known my whole life who in a lot of ways has kind of taken a father figure kind of role. You know I see him every day and I know he kind of looked at me the same way, it's like take you under your wing and kind of teach you the business and all that kind of stuff. And you know I still credit a lot of where I'm at today to things that I learned from him, but I didn't see him for—I saw him at my sister's wedding last summer and that's the first time I'd seen him since 2009. So it was—there was definitely some hard feelings afterwards in both directions.

Grant: Sure, so you head out to Bangkok a couple weeks later. What happens from there?

Sean: So I got an apartment in Bangkok, I meet Dan and immediately he's basically like, "So what do you want to do?" He's like, "How do you—what do you think about going down to the islands for a while? You want to go down to the islands?" I was like, "Sure, that sounds great."

Grant: "I guess?"

Sean: And I remember I was standing on—this was like three days after I arrived in Thailand. We hopped on a flight, I'm standing on a beach in Krabi, Thailand, like looking up at these massive cliffs and the ocean, it was like a Wednesday or something, I was just like, "How did I get here? Like somewhere along the way, even if none of this pans out, I made some really good life decisions to end up right here at this moment."

Grant: Yeah.

Sean: And so I convinced my buddy Ryan, the guy living in Hawaii, I convinced him to start his world trip in Thailand, so he met us out there, we spent like two weeks hanging out in the islands. Ian, Dan's partner with Tropical MBA and the podcast, he came out, the COO of the company, he came out, we all hung out and traveled around, and after like two or three weeks he was basically like, "Alright, I'm going back to Manila, you can come with me if you want, you can stay down here in the islands, or you can go somewhere else in Asia and work remotely."

So I popped back up to Bangkok, I got an apartment there and that was kind of my home base for the next six months.

Grant: So at this point you've been away from the company for what? A few months now or so?

Sean: Yeah.

Grant: And Location 180 is up and running. Are you making revenue from that? Where is your income coming from?

Sean: At that point I was making \$800 a month from Dan for my basic living expenses and that was about it. You know I had a little bit of money coming in from the blog, I think my first big win with the blog came in May of 2010, so you know four or five months after I arrived in Thailand. And so making a little bit of money here and there, but not a ton necessarily, and luckily Thailand's a cheap place to live, and so that was kind of part of the benefit, I could go, I could learn these skills, I can build up the blog and I can do it in a place that not only has adventure, but is cheap for me to do it and cheap for me to live.

Grant: But it sounds like—I mean it sounds like you're saying too that, "I'm willing to live on \$800 a month knowing that I get to dictate the terms," versus, "I'm living in a lifestyle I don't want making good money, but having to wear a suit and hating my life."

Sean: Oh, absolutely. And there was a period of about nine months there where I made—it was great, it was one of the most enjoyable, exciting times of my life, but I made a lot of sacrifices. I mean have had a long-term girlfriend who I'm now engaged to, but I said, "Hey, I'm moving to Thailand for seven months." It's like, "I'm unhappy doing what I'm doing and unless I do this now I'm going to be unhappy for the rest of my life. This is a jump that I need to take."

And so that was really hard. I was very selfish in that regard. And—

Grant: Would you do that differently today, looking back?

Sean: No, I wouldn't. It's one of those things—as hard as it was at the time, we broke up for a couple of months in there, but I also knew that if I'm not happy I'm not going to be able to help anybody else achieve their goals in life, and I would probably stay in that job that I didn't like and just kind of continually grow bitter. And so now I think that we've got a fantastic relationship and I think a big part of it is because I took the leap and I took that time to be selfish and focus on my business and my goals and what I wanted, because that essentially is just building the foundation for what the rest of my life is going to look like.

Grant: So when you're over there—you're over there, you wrap up with the Tropical MBA stuff, you're starting—Location 180 is kind of getting going, what kind of doubts, fears, insecurities are you wrestling with?

Sean: I'm terrified with just how am I going to support myself long-term. You know at this point I've been spending months in Thailand, I was traveling around, I went down to Bali, I went to the Philippines, you know having a great time, and the thought of another cubicle desk job is scary for some many reasons.

Because now I've been advocating this location-independent lifestyle and the power of entrepreneurship and all of this stuff, and so that would be the worst thing ever to go back to all my readers and be like, "Yeah, it didn't work out. It was all a load of crap, but you know I'm back at a day job."

Grant: "You guys do it, but I'm not going to do it."

Sean: And so I think that was one of my biggest fears is you know I took this chance, I made this leap, I was being selfish, and the idea that I did all of that and it wasn't going to work out the way that I wanted it to, that was scary.

Grant: Yeah, for sure. So at what point did you finally feel like, "Hey, I think this is going to work. This whole blog thing, I think this might actually come together and I could make a living from this."

Sean: So basically—you know there's kind of a three-step process that I teach people, and we can maybe go into that specifically a little bit later, but when I got back—I got back in July of 2010, end of July, and I was like, "Ok, I need to find a way to make a living." I'm still working with Dan, still working with Tropical MBA, so I've got a little bit of money coming in, but not enough to support in Portland or the United States.

So I was like, "Ok, well I've learned a ton about search engine optimization, so I'm going to do freelance SEO." And two weeks after being back in town there was kind of a big social media meet-up party in Portland and a friend invited me to that and I went, and just started telling people, "Hey, I do freelance SEO. Here's some of the sites that I've worked on."

I got offered three jobs on the spot. Two of those were desk jobs where I had to show up 9-5 and I said, "You know what? I'm not ready to go back to that." And one of them was an SEO company and they just needed somebody that they could freelance—or hire work at to. So they said, "We can pay you \$2,000 for this job, it needs to be done in two weeks, can you do it?"

And so that's what I did. So I found a few people like that where I didn't have to manage clients, I got to do all the SEO work and I just reported to somebody in that company and you know that's how I

supported myself for a year and a half while I continued to build up the blog, I continued to develop my own products and so on.

Grant: Nice. So that was your primary source of income for a year and a half?

Sean: Oh yeah.

Grant: Nice. So yeah, tell us about—so you've got three steps, and if someone's wanting to do this, if someone's listening to this right now and they're going, "Ok, I'm intrigued, I'm in my desk job, I'm in cubicle land, I'm living this unfulfilled life that I hate. I've got to get out of here, I'm intrigued by—maybe I'm intrigued by the travel, maybe I'm just intrigued by doing my own thing." What are the three steps that you prescribe that can help someone make that leap?

Sean: Ok, so step number one, and most—the reason a lot of people that get started online, the reason they're not successful is they skip these first two steps. They start doing something, they start working on it, it doesn't work, they get frustrated, they go back to their day job. So step number one is take the time to learn some of the fundamental skills you need to be successful online.

So things like basic copyrighting, WordPress, everything I do is on WordPress. It makes it easy for you know technical idiots like myself to build good-looking websites. Social media for business, basic SEO, so all of these skills that no matter what you do online, all of these things are really useful. And so I tell people, "Start a blog and use that as a way to hone all of these skills. So start a blog and use it to practice your SEO. Start a blog and use it to work on your headlines and see if you can get email opt-ins and stuff like that. Start a blog to treat that as your business and practice social media that way."

And a lot of people just jump straight into, "I want to build a membership site, I want to build a product, I'm going to build an ecommerce store," and those things are great, but if you don't have the fundamental skills from the beginning, then it can be really frustrating to start some of those things.

Grant: So you're just basically creating a laboratory for yourself. "This is my—I'm a mad scientist, I'm just doing experiments, seeing what works and what doesn't."

Sean: Exactly, and that's what Location 180 was for the first two years. I wrote about all sorts of different topics, I tried all sorts of different things, and just kind of paid attention and saw what worked. So that's step number one.

Step number two, and this is the one a lot of people like don't even think about, but what I tell people is take one of those skills that you're now pretty good at and freelance them. What this allows you to do is say you're a good writer, so you decide you're going to do freelance copyrighting or freelance SEO writing or something like that, it's a relatively easy business to get started with, you've already got most of the skills you need, and there's a lot of people looking for that kind of work.

So this does two really important things, it builds your income and it builds your confidence. So it builds your income in the sense it's like, "Ok, within three to four months of doing this you can make \$3,000 to \$5,000 and you've got the confidence to know that you can support yourself." It's like whatever you want to do, I mean one you're making \$4,000 a month that gives you a lot of choice.

Grant: A lot of options, yeah.

Sean: So it's like, "I'm going to leave my day job and I'm going to focus on this fulltime," or, "I'm going to keep doing this on the side, but now that I know I can support myself I'm going to do something maybe a little bit sexier," and that kind of is where step number three comes in. So build your skills, freelance one of your skills in order to build income and confidence.

And then step number three is apply it to projects you really want to be working on. So you know freelance writing, some people love it, but a lot of people are just like, "Eh, it's just not that interesting." So that's when you maybe start trying to professionalize your blog and do information products, maybe you create an affiliate marketing niche site, maybe you start a podcast, maybe you create an ecommerce store. I mean there's all sorts of other things.

For me, that's when I created Location Rebel, my premium product community. I created a golf site all around my love of golf, Breaking Eighty, I have a photography site, HDR Software. So once you've got that fundamental base, you've got the income, you've got the skills, you've got the confidence, that's when you start doing all the really cool, exciting, passive income projects or whatever you want to call it.

Grant: But it's easy, like you mentioned up top, it's easy just to leap frog those first two steps, going, "Alright, I'm passionate about this. Let's do it." It's like whoa, whoa, if you don't have some type of a base that you're working off of, it's an uphill battle.

Sean: And I think that's the mistake most people make. Everybody—there's all this talk, people read [The 4-Hour Workweek](#) and it's like, "Sweet, I'm going to start a passive income business around my big hobby or whatever it is." And you know they start getting into it and they're like, "Oh, this is a lot harder than I expected it to be." But when you've got that base and you've got that freedom and you've got that time—like if you're making \$4,000 writing, you leave your job, you can do that work in say 30 hours a week, then you've got a ton of extra time and freedom with which you can build out your new project.

So you know for instance my golf site, I started it over a year ago, and it makes a little bit of money, but not a whole lot. And for the amount of time and effort I put into that, if I still had a day job there's no way I'd be able to devote that much time to my kind of passion project. But now because I've got this business and I can do it from anywhere and I can work on my own hours, it gives me the free time to devote to that.

Grant: Yeah, for sure. I think you described that really well, that the golf thing may never pay the bills, but you've got enough going from Location 180 and a few other buckets where money's coming and you've got some revenue streams happening that it gives you the time to say, "Let's create a site about playing golf, because I'm into that and I may never make a living from it, but I really dig that." And it just allows you to pursue some of those side pet projects.

Sean: Exactly.

Grant: Nice. Very cool. Looking back, is there anything that you would do differently? What advice would you give to your 24, 25 year old self?

Sean: You know, to be honest, there isn't a whole lot I would do differently in that regard. I might have made the leap a little bit earlier. If I were to go back and talk to my 24, 25 year old self, that was the person that decided to make the leap and do it, so I would basically say, "Keep doing what you're doing. If you're not happy—"

Grant: "It's going to be ok, buddy."

Sean" "It's going to be alright. You're going to come through on the other side great." But I would say if you're not happy with something change it sooner rather than later, because the longer you wait the harder it gets to change." Tim Ferris had a quote, he once said, "Most people will choose unhappiness over uncertainty," and I think that's absolutely true. For eighteen months I sat in my day job and this uncertainty around you know what's my boss going to do if I leave? How am I going to pay the bills? What are my friends and family going to think? What's going to happen?

And once I finally said, "You know what? My happiness is more important than this potential of what might happen." Once I made that decision everything kind of started falling into place.

Grant: Yeah, for sure. It's one thing now for guys like you and I where we can look back and be like, "Oh, it worked out, it was great. We hustled and there were definitely some sleepless nights and you're wondering how it's all going to play out." But when you're in the midst of it, you're in the trenches, you're just like, "Oh dear God, I hope this works and I hope I don't have to go back and get a job." And you have some days where you feel great and some days where you're just like, "Oh man, I feel it's all falling apart, I'm not really sure what to do."

Sean: Well and it's one of those things I like to ask people, it's like, "When was the last time in your life the absolute worst case scenario ever happened?" And it's like, "What is the worst case scenario? Ok, I'm going to leave my job, I'm going to move to Thailand for six months. What's the worst case scenario? Alright, the business doesn't work out, I have to come back, get a job," and I'm 25 years old at the time is what I would have been or 26 or something. "Ok, that's not that bad. I got a big adventure, I got some life experience, and a lot of employers are going to look at that as a benefit."

So it's really—when you put things into perspective, what you think might be this huge, big, scary, terrible thing really probably isn't that bad.

Grant: You felt like either way it's going to be in a win.

Sean: Exactly. It's like there was really no way I could lose in this situation and it just so happened that kind of the best case scenario worked out where I was able to start a business that helps a lot of people and I can continue to travel and do all the stuff I like to do while I'm at it.

Grant: Beautiful. Well let's wrap this up, put a bow on it. You've got this Location Rebel product that helps teach people those three steps, just a lot more in-depth, so tell us more about that.

Sean: Yeah, so Location Rebel I started two and a half years ago and that's exactly what it's all about is starting with the basic skills, helping you turn one of those skills into a business, and then helping you grow the business you really want to be growing long-term. So we've got over 700 members in there now, the most important part about this or any system like it is the community.

This is kind of an unconventional thing, when I was going through this process I knew Chris and my buddy Ryan, but I didn't really know a lot of other people that were building this type of solopreneur-type business, and so to have a community full of people that are working on the exact same type of thing as you, that get it, I mean that's I think one of the most powerful aspects of the entire thing.

So if that's something you're interested in, shoot me an email and check out www.LocationRebel.com.

Grant: Sweet. Well where can we find out more about Location Rebel? Where can we find out more about who you are, what you do, email, Twitter, all that stuff?

Sean: I'm pretty easy to find. So Location180 is www.SeanOgle.com, [@SeanOgle](https://twitter.com/SeanOgle) on Twitter, www.facebook.com/Location180, and for anybody that's interested in golf, you can check out www.BreakingEighty.com.

Grant: Beautiful. Sounds good. Sean, thanks for the time, thanks for the knowledge biscuits man, always good talking to you.

Sean: My pleasure, man, I appreciate it.

Grant: Alright, boom. There it is, there it was, there you have it. Sean Ogle coming at you. I hope you enjoyed that interview. Just a really cool story, just crazy, crazy how planning his exit and looking for that way out and then boom, here's a little bombshell the company's going to drop on you. But really cool about how that was one of the best things that ever could have happened to him and again that's a theme I think you're going to hear a lot on this show. So hopefully you learned some stuff there.

Hey, if you want to check out Location 180, if you want to check out anything else that we talked about there, even Sean's flagship program, Location Rebel, you can go to www.GrantBaldwin.com/SeanOgle. You can find all the details there, so make sure you stop by and check that out.
www.GrantBaldwin.com/SeanOgle.

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