

FREE SAMPLE

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE FREE



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3 free chapters

Darius Foroux



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“Liberty is slow fruit. It is never cheap; it is made difficult because freedom is the accomplishment and perfectness of man.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Freedom means living life on your terms. And if you picked up this book, freedom matters to you as much as it does to me. It's the highest form of success. Even though people are different and everyone desires different things, on a deeper level we share the same drive to be free.

Freedom means waking up in the morning and deciding exactly what you want to do that day. No unwanted obligations; no stress. Living free is not a fantasy. In our world everyone can live like that. The world is getting freer every day because of technology, which means we can work remotely and have unlimited access to information that improves our lives.

Even so, most of us are not free. More and more people feel crushed by the weight of obligations, debt, and social pressure. Most of us chase success without knowing what it looks like. To me, there's only one definition of success: **Freedom to live your life the way you want without hurting others.** Success, or freedom, is not having a job with status, driving an expensive car, looking like a model, going on vacations, or living in a big house.

People who pretend you don't need much to be free are not being practical. Freedom isn't free. They might have a positive mindset, but in real life, we need more than positive thinking to actually be free. We need to build a life and career that allows us to be free. We also need money. That's why this book is highly practical and covers everything I've done to become free. Does my definition of freedom resemble yours? I doubt it, because remember, even though most people agree that freedom means being able to live your life the way you want, everybody wants different things.

That brings me to the first lesson I've learned about freedom: Do not feel guilty about what you want from life. In the past, I always felt pressured to want what others wanted. If your parents want you to become a doctor you think to yourself, "Should I become a doctor?" It's funny how that works. In reality, you don't want to become a doctor at all. You never even thought about becoming one. And yet, just because your parents want it for you, you give in.

It's the same thing with intimate relationships, which play a big role on the path to our freedom. When a girlfriend, boyfriend, partner, or spouse expects certain things from us, we often give in. We do things we don't want to do because we think it's better for the relationship. We do things that are out of our character. We lose face and, as a result, we become characterless. Is that freedom? Is that good for your relationship? No, of course not.

If these things are not bad enough, when it comes to our financial life, we're even worse off. Most of us spend too much, have debt, and have jobs we hate just to pay for a lifestyle we don't even like. What brought us to this point? We like nothing about our lives. It seems like we're trapped inside someone else's life. Every day is filled with unwanted obligations and tasks that make us miserable.

Freedom is the answer to all these things. But I have to tell you right now that the price of freedom is high. **Living the way you want means suffering voluntarily. People will get upset with you, maybe even abandon you. You have to do hard things. But on the other side of suffering is freedom.** It's a place very few people reach in life. Is it worth trying to get there? Absolutely. And if you're reading this book, you probably agree. Whether you're held captive by success or failure, I invite you to join me in freedom.

My journey began four years ago when I realized I wasn't free. It was a gradual realization. After living unfree my whole life, I woke up one day and thought to myself, "I don't want this life." It was a life of fake smiles, frustration, and captivity. I continuously gave into the requests of other people, my partner, family, job, and even society. We behave a certain way because we think that's how *we have to* behave. We have desires that we *think* we should satisfy—but is that really true? How often do you inspect your desires? Do you do what you do because YOU want to? Or, is it because you feel like you should do those things? And if it's the latter, where does that *should* come from?

Who ever said that we should do all the things we do? **You're free to do anything you want. That's obvious. But what's not obvious is why you're NOT doing what you want.** It has nothing to do with your status or intelligence. I know people who are considered successful in the eye of society, with a lot of money, respect, and wealth. But they are not free to do anything they want. They are a prisoner of their own success. Whether you're successful in the eyes of society or not, you probably know the feeling of being trapped.

How often does it happen that you start chasing something new? Think about a new job or career. Or maybe you want to live in a certain city. Maybe you want to find a romantic partner. You get something in your head, read a few books on conquering fear, get your act together and decide to pursue it. Congrats! You took action. But half way through, you realize you don't even want the thing you're chasing. But despite that realization, you put your head in the sand. You ignore the inner disturbance and keep going even though you don't want that thing anymore, that way of life. All of a sudden you feel restricted by all the obligations you've accumulated. You're trapped in a life you created.

Let's say you think you want to become successful in the city. You want to live a fast life, make money, go out, and have a fancy lifestyle. You pursue a business degree that helps you get into an organization that pays well. But during those four years in college you acquire debt. Now, you *have* to pursue a job that pays well, and a big paycheck is no longer a desire, it's a responsibility. Along the way you realize you don't want that lifestyle anymore. You hate the pressure, the people, the work, the parties—all of it. But you're already half way through so you think, "I can't quit. How could I pay the rent for my apartment in the city, my student debt, credit card debt, and car loan?"

Something like that happened to me. It's easy to get trapped. We also get easily trapped inside a romantic relationship. How often does it happen that two people grow apart? You or your partner change, and you no longer have the same values. The relationship only drains your energy because you're no longer compatible. And yet, you stay together. What's worse, you think buying a house and having kids will make everything better. The opposite is true.

You keep moving forward, while deep down, you want to live your life the way you want. But you can't because you're an unfree person living in a free world. You realize there's always a choice—a way out. You realize you *chose* to live a life you loathe. You've given up your desire to be free. Because no matter who you are or where you are, you have a desire to be free. We all have that desire. But we are trapped; trapped inside the limitations of our own minds. But we are also trapped by real things: Debt, obligations, responsibilities, and even people. We can't accept these restrictions as facts. We need to break away from it all.

We need to become free. And we need to *stay* free.

It's not too late. It's *never* too late.

What You Can Expect From The Book

Thanks for picking up these three free chapters of *What It Takes To Be Free*. This introduction chapter belongs to Part I of the book, which consists of three parts. Part I is about generating awareness. What stands in the way of our freedom? There are so many traps we are unaware of. Why do we feel overwhelmed? Why do we dislike our work, relationships, and ourselves? Why do we end up in situations that seem hopeless? In Part I, I share the most important obstacles to freedom.

In Part II, I share what I gave up to be free (the second free chapter is from Part II). We want it all. But the truth is we can't have it all. Should that be a problem? No, not at all. **It's actually liberating once you realize that you don't need to do everything. You can give up many things you're currently doing. And, as a result, you will become free.**

Part III is an action plan (chapter three from this sample belongs to Part III). In the final part of *What It Takes To Be Free*, I will share specific techniques that *prepare* you to become free. Ideas are great, but useless without execution. Life is full of challenges, and positive thinking alone will not help you—but *preparation will*. While your peers are questioning the meaning of life and dealing with personal crises, you will be free from it all. You will be prepared for all the big challenges of life. It might not seem like it when you're dealing with problems, but nothing is new. All problems have been faced by other people in the past. It's up to us to study everything that could go wrong in life, and then *prepare* for it.

That's the way to be truly free. Is it complicated? No. None of the ideas in this book are difficult. In fact, you will probably recognize most of the things I share. But remember that ideas by themselves are cheap. Your *execution* is what matters; it's the only thing that matters. And that's the hardest thing on the planet. But that shouldn't scare you because the reward is freedom—the highest aim in life.



"Is freedom anything else than the right to live as we wish? Nothing else."

— *Epictetus*

CHAPTER TWO

WHY I GAVE UP CERTAINTY

Why do you seek freedom? Do you never want to worry about money? Do you want to have a little peace? No more stress? Finally certainty about the future, right?

I used to want those things. But that's not freedom. No matter how much money you have or how self-confident you are, life always remains uncertain. Deep down, we all know we're a fragile species. We know we can die in an accident tomorrow. It doesn't require much force either. An unlucky fall is enough to end your life. That's not the only thing that can end us. Viruses and bacteria kill people as well. That's merely our *physical* fragility. Our careers are also fragile. Jobs disappear, highly sought-after skills change, industries change, and economies collapse.

Life is change. Nothing in our power can change the nature of life. To find true freedom in life, we must accept that life is unstable. We have to give up our drive for safety, stability, and certainty. This idea has existed for centuries, but if this is the first time you've heard it you will resist giving up certainty. You will say, "But what about..."

Think about it. When during the course of history did the world stay the same for a long period of time? Can you name a country, company, or organization that has never changed since inception? How about yourself? Even though we can stall as adults, the first 18 years of our lives is nothing but change. And you can argue that people in their twenties still change until they settle into a career. You see? Life *is* change. A free person doesn't resist that. A free person welcomes uncertainty. That will not only make you free, it will also make you less susceptible to the things an unfree person fears.

Losing people, your job, money, strength—most of us fear loss. We think we can reach a point in life where things will be stable. Where we don't lose anything. That day never comes. As long as we live, we have to deal with change. **Adapting to change is real freedom.** That's why the first thing I did four years ago was to give up certainty.

Often, we look to *others* to give us certainty. I regularly see people celebrating when they receive a permanent contract from an employer. We expect that the company will take care of our future. We think we're "set." But instead, we become more vulnerable to change. When you work for decades at one company and only learn how to do one thing, you risk becoming obsolete. Companies and economies change. There's a high probability your job will disappear in time. When that happens, where's the certainty you thought you had? You don't have any other income streams. And you didn't learn skills that you can apply somewhere else. You see, assuming that you're set for life is true uncertainty.

Whether we like it or not, no one has the tools or information to completely remove uncertainty. We assume that experts have the answers to everything we need to deal with. Philosophers don't know everything about

life. Doctors don't know everything about the human body. Business consultants don't know everything about running companies. Financial advisors don't know everything about markets. If they did, they could predict the future. We laugh at people who say they are psychic or clairvoyant, but we don't laugh at people who make predictions about the stock market. In effect, it's the same thing. Predicting the stock market might require more information, but you can't predict most things in life with 100% certainty. We all know we will die, have to pay taxes, and that certain bad habits lead to our destruction. Those things are obvious. So why do we still try to remove uncertainty by looking to others for answers?

We haven't come to terms with uncertainty yet. At some point, I hope it's now, you need to accept that life is uncertain. Anything can happen. Are you comfortable with that? You're only comfortable with that when you stop worrying about the future. I used to worry a lot. What happens if I lose my money? What if my business goes bust? What if the people I love die? What if I get ill?

Today, I realize that anything can happen and that I have to deal with it. We don't control much in life. However, we do control our personal freedom. You decide how you look at the world. And accepting uncertainty is entirely within your control.

Giving up certainty doesn't mean giving up responsibility. It doesn't mean you should blow your money fast. It doesn't give you permission to be an asshole. It also doesn't mean you should shut down your emotions. No one says you should laugh when someone dies. We're still human and we have emotions. Grabbing a bottle of Jack Daniels, hooking up with a stranger, snorting coke, binge watching T.V. shows, eating 5000 calories a day—we do those things to numb the pain that uncertainty brings. You can't deal

with uncertainty. And you think you will find certainty in those things. But we all know that's not the path to happiness and freedom.

"Freedom means doing what you want... And I want to down a bottle of the best whiskey."

That's what the cynics tell me when I talk about freedom. I get it. It's another way of hiding. Instead of taking responsibility, they try to make fun of freedom. I'm all about having fun. But is getting drunk, screwing up your life, being addicted, and destroying your body fun? C'mon. Everybody can do whatever they want, and I don't try to force my way of living on people. But don't tell me it's "good" to screw up yourself. There's nothing noble about self-destruction. It's downright sad. People who glorify self-destruction should grow up and face the uncertain nature of life. Just because we don't know what will happen tomorrow doesn't mean we should throw away today.

Freedom means that we accept anything that happens. Give up certainty and be free as a reward. It's not easy, but we've already established that freedom is worth it. That's why we should never complain about the price. We should only focus on the reward. Would you rather pay a high price for something? Or not be able to buy it at all?



"Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility."

—Sigmund Freud

CHAPTER THREE

PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

Wishing, hoping, wanting, talking—it's all useless without action. And to become free, you need *a lot* of action. While taking action is better than doing nothing or dreaming, **action without thought is a waste of effort.** For years, I had a strong urge to be free, and I took a lot of action. I said yes to every opportunity, traveled a lot, did a lot of different types of work. But I wasn't precise in my actions. I didn't have a thought-out plan.

Planning is not only important if you want to achieve results. Planning for failure is what keeps you going. While most people give up when they experience setbacks, a person with a plan knows what to do.

That's true freedom—to always know what to do, no matter what the situation is. Everything you've read until now will fade if you don't put it in practice. I'm sure you know this. **How many books have you read? And how many of the ideas that you learned are you still applying today?** My goal for this book is to not be like other books you read once and forget. I hope you *live* the ideas we talk about. That requires execution and planning. Otherwise, we can never be free.

I read two books a week. That's over 100 a year. And most books give you good ideas and inspiration. But that always fades. So instead of saying goodbye to you right here and letting you create your own plan, I'm sharing an action plan with you.

We've talked a lot about why freedom matters. And why we need to give up a lot of things so we can be free. But *how* do you execute those things? *How* can you be free? That's what Part III is about. My goal is to connect with as many of you as I can. If you'd like to connect to me, and other readers, I invite you to do the following:

Post this quote on any social media you currently use:

"Through discipline comes freedom." —Aristotle

And in the description, add #WhatItTakesToBeFree so other readers and I can find your post. You can also tag me in the post. It's not about showing off or trying to impress others. I'm not a big social media user myself. I only like to use it to connect with others.

Most importantly, this is about accountability and connecting with other like-minded people. Books are static and it's impossible to interact with each other. You can't interact with me or other readers through this book. For some people that's okay, because they prefer to process ideas alone. But others have a desire to find counterparts who share the same values. That's especially important if the people around you are not thinking and working on the same things as you. By searching on that hashtag, others can find you. And you can find others that are on the same path. We can use this challenge to connect and support one another.

Remember, you can do whatever you want. You can keep everything to yourself. Or, if you want to post on social media, you can post another quote or something different. Either way, I will search for #WhatItTakesToBeFree on social media to encourage everyone who posted about it.



"Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."

— Confucius

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