

How to make a living from your hobby

How to Make a Living From Your Passion in Photography

Dear friend, I believe it is possible to make a living from your passion. I will try to use this essay as an attempt to flesh out my ideas on how to do it-- as a practical guide for you!

"Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby" — George Bernard Shaw, Pygmalion

I think a lot of us see the path to happiness as making a living from our passion/hobby. We all know the saying, 'He who loves his work will never work a day in his life'.

I do believe that with modern technology, we can all theoretically make a living from our passion. Let me share how you can do it.

First of all, we must define what it means to "make a living".

To me the notion "make a living" isn't good, because it is imprecise.

A better saying would be, "How to not starve to death, or how not to die of thirst or the cold." From studying Seneca, the only things humans really "need" to live is food, water, and warmth.

To be upfront, I would say the best city in the world (as of 2018) is Saigon, Vietnam. First of all, it is warm (you won't die of the cold, like you would in Europe or the East Coast in America), secondly the cost of living is very low, and the wifi is very fast (and the food is phenomenal).

Realize that you can make a living from your passion regardless of where you live-- but the truth is, **if you live in a city/country where the cost of living is less, it will be easier to make a living from what you're passionate about.**

For example, I have made a living from my passion of street photography, but it is of course much easier to pay my living expenses when living in Saigon or Los Angeles than living in San Francisco, New York City, or London.

So once again, the first step to making a living from your passion is to reduce your living expenses to the absolute minimum. Elon Musk (when starting his first company) shared a computer with his brother, slept in their office in a sleeping bag, fed himself on \$2 USD a day on hot dogs and spaghetti, and showered at the local YMCA. Steve Jobs also did a similar 'vow of poverty' when traveling through India, and just surviving off eating lentils and beans.

Just for your reference, when I was living in Hanoi, Cindy and I lived in a brand-new studio apartment for \$350 USD a month. You can get a good/filling meal in Vietnam for around \$2 USD. Assuming you eat two meals a day, food will only cost you \$120 USD a month. Assuming you drink 2 coffees a day at a coffee shop with fast wifi (a coffee costs \$1-2 USD), that means \$120 USD a month in coffee/your "office" expenses. Plus misc. expenses, let's say **you can live very well in Hanoi/Saigon/Bangkok for around \$700 USD a month.** Of course you can live for cheaper (assuming you live in a hostel, or if you're just eating beans and rice) or you can live for more money.

So you can just ask yourself: if you're willing to live in Saigon (my favorite city in the world), **all you need to "make a living" is around \$700 USD a month.**

Then ask yourself the question:

How can I earn \$700 USD a month from my passion?

To be honest, to earn \$700 USD a month isn't that hard. If you're reading this, I'm going to assume your passion is photography.

My simple suggestion is this:

Earn money in the West, and then live in Southeast Asia.

For example, you can teach workshops in the states of Europe, and assuming you charge around \$300-500USD+, and get around 5-10 students+, you should earn a profit of around \$1500 USD+ (on the low end). That means **you can just teach 1 photography workshop a month, and make a living from your passion of photography.**

Or let's say you want to do wedding photography (something popular amongst photographers). Assuming you charge around \$1,000 USD a wedding (on the low end), you only need to shoot 1-2 weddings a month to make a living from your photographic passion (while living in Vietnam, or some other cheaper country). And of course, **you can still live in the states or in Europe, but just make sure you reduce your living costs to a minimum (moving in with your parents, sharing a room for rent, or lowering your lifestyle expenses).**

For more ideas on monetizing your photography, enroll in my course: "[Ultimate Beginner's Guide to Photography Entrepreneurship](#)".

I think most of us make the mistake of not knowing what our expenses are, and also by being afraid to becoming entrepreneurs and becoming self-employed.

To be frank, ever since I started to work for myself (no longer at 9-5 job), I became at least 500% happier in life. Being self-employed won't make you happy, but it will afford you more freedom, flexibility, and control in your life-- which is the road to happiness. To me ultimately true happiness is just making more art (and studying philosophy on the side).

But I do encourage you friend-- seek to make a living from your passion in photography (or whatever else you're passionate about). Your life is short; why spend it working some silly 9-5 job, just so you can perhaps afford a BMW, to buy a house, and buy all these superfluous accessories in life?

Your #1 good in life will be your own creative freedom.

BE BOLD, ERIC