



# **My So-Called Freelance Life: How to Survive and Thrive as a Creative Professional for Hire**

*Michelle Goodman*

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Tired of clocking in and losing out? Want to pursue creative, fulfilling work on your own time and also make a living in the process? *My So-Called Freelance Life* is a how-to guidebook for women who want to avoid the daily grind and turn their freelance dreams into reality. Michelle Goodman, author of *The Anti 9-to-5 Guide* and self-proclaimed former “wage slave,” offers tips, advice, how-to’s, and everything else a woman needs to pursue a freelance career.

Confused as to whether you should tell your clients that the odd gurgling sound during a conference call is emanating from the infant sleeping on your shoulder? Goodman answers all of the unusual questions that may arise for women exploring the freelance world. Far more than your normal business guidebook, *My So-Called Freelance Life* blends candid, humorous anecdotes from a wide variety of freelancers with Goodman’s own personal experiences as a creative worker for hire.

Whether you’re a freelance first-timer or a seasoned creative professional, copyediting queen or web guru, *My So-Called Freelance Life* is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in freelancing.

## My So-Called Freelance Life: How to Survive and Thrive as a Creative Professional for Hire Details

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Author : Michelle Goodman

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# **From Reader Review My So-Called Freelance Life: How to Survive and Thrive as a Creative Professional for Hire for online ebook**

## **Sarah says**

My So-Called Freelance Life: How to Survive and Thrive as a Creative Professional for Hire is written by full-time freelancer Michelle Goodman. With over fifteen years of experience under her belt at the time this book was published, Goodman provides tips, tricks and advice on how to set yourself up for success in the world of freelance.

My So-Called Freelance Life is divided up into three main sections: Section One explains how to adjust to a work-from-home lifestyle after being caught up in the 9-to-5 rat-race for your entire working life. Section Two explains how to market yourself effectively using social networking skills both online and in person, while Section Three teaches how to manage your career once you're up and running and your freelance business is thriving.

Within each main section are sub-sections that detail various subjects; including setting up an efficient home office, establishing your rates, building clientele, and even managing your taxes.

As with most how-to business books, My So-Called Freelance Life will be useful to those readers just starting out on their own; whereas most of the book's content is common-sense knowledge. The book adequately dissects the procedures of setting up any sole-proprietor business, freelance or not.

The upsides to reading My So-Called Freelance Life include Goodman's large sub-section and reminder on taking your taxes seriously, as well as her tips on weeding out legit and not-so-legit freelance gigs. The downsides to the book, however, include the time-sensitive material regarding social networking best practices and website links which are now three years outdated. After all, since it's now 2011, much has changed in the freelancing world since the book was written in 2008.

Michelle Goodman has also written The Anti 9 to 5 Guide: Practical Career Advice for Women Who Think Outside the Cube (2007).

For more book reviews visit <http://dreamworldbooks.com>.

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## **Wendy says**

Even if you don't know Michelle, this book is like having a good friend teach you the ropes.

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## **Kim says**

Not 5 stars for me, but I've been freelancing for years so most of this was old hat. Anyone who's been freelancing on their own for a while will (or should) already know most of this material. Give this to your favorite cubicle worker who has dreams of setting out on the freelance path, and encourage them to take the leap...

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### **Alison says**

I really appreciated the honesty and real-world tips Goodman offers in this book. I think anyone who is currently a freelancer or seriously thinking about becoming one should read this book. It's funny, a quick read, and full of tips that I haven't read anywhere else.

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### **Root\_rambler says**

A little dated (it came out 10 years ago) but still mostly useful. A very encouraging and chatty book aimed at women- it was nice that it was encouraging, and other books can fill the gap with additional practicalities. She seemed to give good advice, and I definitely felt like I needed to finish it before starting to freelance in case I made some grievous error.

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### **Hannah Flowers says**

I wasn't a huge fan of Goodman's writing style, but I gleaned some useful tips for running my business from the book. A lot of the content didn't really apply to me--being a harpist and not "scoring" big corporate contracts and having a lot less control over the work I do get.

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### **Leah says**

I'll be honest--many of the topics covered in this book don't really apply to me--for example, health insurance, but they are definitely useful for those who need them. I have found, however, that reading books about writing, or freelancing, etc., basically provide the kick in the pants I need to be excited about my work again, and to actually GET MOVING. I did learn something incredibly important, however--one which may be career-changing: to get where you want to be, you need to stop cluttering your work life with projects that do not move you towards that goal. This year will be the year that I cut out the clutter when it comes to writing.

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### **Emily says**

another great book for learning about starting a business!

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### **Fee says**

Good read for anyone dreaming about a freelance career. There is plenty of advice for the beginner but you can find that in other books too. The tips or stories aren't that unique or different. This book will just give

you the basics. I was hoping for a bit more inspiration and new ways.

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### Lindsey says

Before I bought this book, I handed it to a friend and said, "Do I need to read this or am I buying it because it's pink?" I had my doubts--not only about the fluff-potential of a freelance book marketed so shamelessly to young women but also because I've had more experience as a freelancer than people who might pick up a Freelancing 101 kind of book. So I should say that some of this info applied to me, and some of it didn't, but overall I'm glad I took a refresher course. Freelancing in a void can be lonely sometimes, sure, but you also run the risk of getting wrapped up swinging project to project, without an overall business plan, little mentoring from other professionals, or a basic idea of how other people handle the challenges in their careers (scheduling, bookkeeping, time management, marketing, and affordable healthcare, to name a few).

Michelle Goodman draws on her own experience as a writer and editor, but the book is also filled with snippets of advice from freelance professionals in other fields. She makes a valiant effort to incorporate all freelancers under the book's umbrella, but some sections made me wish the book was tailored more specifically to women in my field. The section on writing a business plan, especially, was way too broad, and I found myself scanning through a lot of the book's chattiness to get to the meaty stuff. Aiming business books specifically at women--especially early-to-mid career women--is an excellent idea, but sometimes they feel too breezy and hip to make me feel like I'm being leveled with. I'm not looking for one of those "The 1 Hour CEO," "The Fifty-Minute Manager," or "45 Seconds to Success!" kind of business books. (Please, people.) But I do need some straight-up facts and advice about how to run a business. And there was a lot of that in this book--I just kind of had to dig around for it.

I do think this is a worthwhile book for freelancers who are just starting out or feel like it's time for a healthy reality check about their not-so-healthy freelancing habits (did you know there's this thing called a weekend?). It got my creative & practical wheels turning about how I conduct business, better ways to put myself out there, and building great relationships with clients. It also brought to my attention resources I didn't know were available to me, and reminded me why I joined the freelance world to begin with. Aside from the lifestyle, the people are great--resourceful, gutsy, and generous with information and advice.

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### Ashly Lynn says

5/5 Stars

This is a nonfiction reference book written to aid freelancers trying to startup their own business. Even though the writer works in writing and editing, she includes all types of freelance work in her book and tackles how you should go about things such as office space, rates, finding work, and even a bit on taxes. She shares resources and her own knowledge after having been in the business for 10+ years and gives her readers plenty of tips and tricks to help them get on their feet in the scary work-for-hire uncertainty of the freelance world.

I actually came across this book completely by accident. It was lying on the shelf at Goodwill and screamed at me as I walked by. Me finding this book was meant to be as I'm currently trying to pursue a career in freelance and **this book has honestly helped me immensely.**

There are so many good tips in here that helped me feel less afraid of the scary notion of working for myself. On top of that, Goodman doesn't talk down to her readers at all. **She writes in an inspirational voice that will empower you and have you saying "Hell yea I can do this!"**. I love that she doesn't use her experience in the business to praise herself, but rather to help her readers who want to pursue the same goals.

**Goodman gives her readers so much useful information that I was actually excited to pick up this book each day.** Even though this book was published back in 2006 and some of the information (especially of the technological sort) is out of date, all of the methods she talks about are not. **There is so much knowledge in this book that can still be applied to today's freelance market.** These seem to be tried and true methods that will help any freelance start to understand the ropes of the business.

This was honestly a really compelling read and was exciting. I've read a good amount of nonfiction, and can honestly say that this book was really well done.

**Of course, I understand this book isn't going to be for everyone, but those who are looking for this type of thing or to get into this type of business (ad)venture, this is an absolute must read!**

Review originally published on my Wordpress blog Dreaming Through Literature.

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## **Elevate Difference says**

Goodman has been freelancing for sixteen years at the time of publication. From the jump, her writing is accessible and fun. The follow-up to the somewhat well known *The Anti-9-5 Guide: Practical Advice for Women Who Think Outside the Cube*, Goodman is once again onto something. What other how-to guides (repeatedly) use phrases like "get this freelance party started"? When you read a book like *My So-Called Freelance Life*, it isn't hard to wonder how anyone can break from a traditional mindset about how to make money and allow themselves the freedom to quit nasty situations. My guess is that radical personal politics and at least a small cushion of safety are two important components. They were for me.

Goodman is particularly skilled at debunking the myth that freelancers are kept women who have quaint hobbies and fleeting interests. She also doesn't assume anything is off limits because of gender. Want to be a freelance welder? According to Goodman, you just need a solid business plan – and not the ugly 200-page kind. Other practical tips include choosing your client instead of being so desperate; they choose you (and you're forced to accept every nasty job that falls in your lap). Always be moving toward goals: better clients, bigger paychecks, more freedom. Isn't that why you went solo in the first place? In other words, don't be afraid to give yourself a promotion just because you're self-employed.

You also should be clear: freelancing will not always mean working for others. Goodman loosely defines freelancers as women who have gone on to start their own businesses with multiple additional employees. Freelancers are also women (much like myself) who do creative work for pay and supplement their income with assorted odd jobs, often in the service industry or as social servants.

*My So-Called Freelance Life* is also a somewhat refreshing anti-establishment approach to making your own way, particularly during the recession that Americans currently face. Sometimes, freelancing can shrink some costs (less commute equals lower car insurance and repairs, for example). Fewer dry cleaning bills aren't the only reason to work at home. And were you thinking about leaving your 9-5 while still in massive debt? Goodman doesn't politely say, "Think it over." She tells you to stick it out or your life, even if being

lived in daily cube hell, will only get exponentially worse.

The only real criticism I'd have is that despite inclusive, pro-woman language that fills this pseudo self-help book, I cringe whenever I see a female write the phrase, "I'm their bitch." Reclamation of the word aside, maybe this is a liberal feminism I don't personally employ, but I do think a better word could easily be used in this type of context.

Freelancers abroad be warned – a lot of this information is for stateside folk. Certainly you should write what you know, so Goodman did just that, but if you're a struggling freelancer in say, London or Cairo, this will give you great generalized advice, but the money sections (and some of the tech specs) won't do you a bit of good. The author acknowledges her own limited scope, but she doesn't spend time going into it further than that.

You don't have to reach the final chapters before this book makes you believe you can make it as a freelancer. That, in our culture of fear and negativity, might be the most valuable aspect of all.

Review by Brittany Shoot

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## **Katrina Sark says**

"To fulfil a dream, to be allowed to sweat over lonely labour, to be given a chance to create, is the meat and potatoes of life. The money is the gravy." (Bette Davis)

### Introduction

p.1 – "I used to be like you, thinking one day I'd pursue my own writing or take up painting again," they'd say. "But eventually, you learn to let go of those silly dreams. You gotta grow up sometime and get a real job like everyone else." Why? I remember thinking. What's so juvenile about actually liking what you do for a living? What's wrong with designing your own career if you can't stomach the one you've got or can't figure out what kind of a job you want in the first place?

### Chapter 1 – Business Plan To Go

p.14 – Ready to roll up your sleeves? It's time to write your own Business Plan To Go. It can be all of a paragraph or to. All you need to do is list at least three of your freelance goals for the next year. Bonus points if you also outline your game plan – your to do's – for reaching each one.

p.15 – Give each item in your plan a start date and deadline. Break down the steps into bite-size pieces you can tackle each month, week, or day, and give them deadlines too. Set up whatever reward system you need to prod yourself along. If you can't wrap your brain around anything beyond the next ninety days, write a three-month plan and rinse and repeat at the end of the quarter.

Make a spreadsheet to track you progress.

### Chapter 2 – Forget the Fuzzy Math

"Making money is art and working is art and good business is the nest art." (Andy Warhol)

p.18 – Nobility to me is using your creative talents to invent a job for yourself and getting paid a decent wage to do it.

p.20 – Track each bagel and beer for a month to see where all your dough goes, then multiply by twelve to get a tally of your annual spending. Don't forget any one-time expenses you'll have for the year, like vacations, car registration, and holiday gifts. Because until you get real with how much you need to live on, you can't accurately determine what to charge for your freelance projects and how much you'll need to work each week in order to make enough green to survive.

“Just as you've trained yourself (or have been trained) to be a mouse, you can teach yourself to be a tiger (non-killing variety).” (Jean Baer, *How To Be an Assertive (Not Aggressive) Woman in Life, in Love, and On the Job: A Total Guide to Self-assertiveness*, 1976)

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### **Ami says**

This book is chock full of practical advice about building and growing a freelance business. The author has a fun, light tone but is very down to earth and manages to be inspiring & grounding at the same time.

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### **Regina says**

Skimmed through this one to get to the 'meat.' Goodman offered some useful tips for running a freelance business but failed to connect with a broader audience. Unless you're a writer, I'd say skip this book and go directly to the SBA for straight to the point advice on how to start your business.

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