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From Iranian Refugee, To Successful But Unfulfilled Corporate Employee, Then Self-Made Info Entrepreneur – The Farnoosh Brock Story

YARO: Hello, this is Yaro Starak and welcome to another Entrepreneurs' Journey podcast interview.

Tonight, on the line, I have someone who already sounds very interesting. We've just been talking a little bit briefly before the interviews so I can get my head around exactly what Farnoosh Brock does and she does two interesting things, we'll talk about them in a moment but, first, let me welcome Farnoosh to the call, thank you for joining me.

FARNOOSH: Thank you. It's an honor to be here, Yaro.

YARO: Farnoosh is, as I just asked her, known for two things which is, we were talking about the phrase, "exit strategy" and normally, that means when you sell your company but, in this case, she's helping people exit from the corporate world to really discovering their passions and





succeeding online and building an income stream around that. So, that's number one.

And then, to totally flip it around, she has managed to find herself known for the green juicing niche and helping people in that space so, both areas you're having success online with and building an income online with, Farnoosh which we should definitely dive into in a moment but, first, can we go back in time and look into your past and in particular, you're Persian aren't you?

FARNOOSH: Yes, I am.

YARO: I have a friend who is Persian. I know it's not Persian and not Iranian to be accurate. He left--

FARNOOSH: I'm fine with either.

YARO: You don't mind that, okay. He left the country when he was quite young and has an amazing story regarding just getting out of Iran. Do you have something similar to tell?

FARNOOSH: Do you want to hear the story?

YARO: I'd love to hear the story.

FARNOOSH: Yes, so everyone that you meet that has left Iran has some story. We are scattered all over the world. We left when I was 11 years old and it was in the middle of the war when Iran and Iraq were having this eight-year war over absolutely nothing but, it was very disturbing to the citizens.

So, we left with my family to go to Turkey which was the only country that did not require Iranians to get a VISA so we could go there. And, we went there for a two-week vacation and we never went back.

So, yes. My dad decided we're not going back. He was very, very stressed. It was really hard. There were like nightly bombings in Iran where I lived.



So, it was a serious situation that none of us can fathom including myself right now.

But, yes. We left for a two-week vacation, with suitcases, my pregnant mom and my brother, and my dad and we left and we never went back.

He went back and cleaned things up a little bit and wrapped things up, wrapped up our whole life and then, we started life in Turkey. We lived there for three years, moved around a lot. I wish I could say it was glamorous. When you look back, it sounds like that but, it was very hard, three years for my family, very, very hard.

And then, we moved to the US. The reason we moved here is because my dad used to live here when he was studying and my mom did to some extent too.

And then, my grandparents were here and my grandfather was very sick so, it was a good way for us to come here and then, we stayed. We stayed and we started living in the US.

YARO: I have to know how you survived in Turkey because it does sound amazing to just arrive with suitcases. I know that's a common story for immigrants, certainly, go back 50 years, or 60 years, even my own parents. But, I can't even fathom what it must be like to land in another country with no identity there whatsoever. You've given up your citizenship basically to be immigrants like that and then, you have to make a living, find a place to love, healthcare... How does that all work out?

FARNOOSH: It was hard and the language, we did not speak the language. So, on top of that, Turkish is very, very different from Farsi. Well, it was a lot of fortitude. My dad had a lot of vision, a lot of fortitude and my mom did too.

And, I think that it just shows you that when you put your mind to something, you can absolutely do it. We survived. He spoke English, of course. He studied here. So, he got a job teaching Mathematics which requires very little of the language, if you think about it, it's very common in



all languages in the world, at a private school so that, my brother and I could attend that school.

So, that sort of paid the bills, very, very simple life and then, my brother and I had to learn Turkish and then, German because for some reason, they taught German before they taught English and English at the same time.

It was a really, really interesting. The first few years were interesting but, we were so happy to not be in Iran and not be in the middle of the war and have some sense of freedom even though we really missed our family.

Iranians are very, very attached to their families and extended families and their friends. So, very lonely years but, we made it.

YARO: And, you were 11 years old when this happened?

FARNOOSH: Yes, I was eleven.

YARO: Okay, so three years and then, you're off to the States, was it?

FARNOOSH: Yes, correct.

YARO: You're arriving at 14. Do you know English by then?

FARNOOSH: Well, I thought I did [*laughs*]. He asked me and I'm like, "Yes, I speak English. I speak very well." Well, I spoke to get by. Culture shock was very big, very big especially in an American high school if you can imagine it because even in Turkey, we still had uniforms and a lot of discipline. I was used to that.

And then, you come to the American high school. It's a different world. So, culture shock was worse than language barrier. But, it was really hard. Now, you're making me think back about all of that [*laughs*].

YARO: [*Laughs*] Well, I can imagine the Iranian popping into the set of Glee. That's what I'm thinking of right now and then, Glee is a typical American high school, I don't know if it is but, it may be exaggerated.



FARNOOSH: Yes, it is. It was hard. I cannot tell you how many times I was asked, "Where are you from?" Back then, it was just so unusual because I was in South Carolina. It's in the East Coast of the US, so they didn't have a lot of people. It was unlike New York or California where they had a lot of immigrants and I didn't really want to tell them I was from Iran so, that whole identity growing up, now I'm really proud to say it. I'm proud of my heritage but, back then, I would sometimes say, "I'm from Turkey." Sometime, I would try to not answer the question. It was really hard. I hated high school like most other people.

YARO: Okay, so you blossomed after high school. Is that what happened?

FARNOOSH: I think so. College was good. I studied electrical engineering because my dad said that's what I should study and that was really hard but, I did well and I was on top of my class and I was just starting to really get to know myself and have some confidence, have some confidence for the first time that I could do this because I could see other people having such a hard time and it wasn't easy but, I was thriving, I was doing better every year and finding things that I wanted to do. Our life was getting better, living in the US, year after year. Every year it was getting better. I was just so grateful. That's the thing. The gratitude makes everything look even better because you remember where you came from especially the closer you are to it so, I've just started seeing life getting better.

Then, I had a job. We finally got our green card so, I was able to work, a part time job first and then, a full time job, internships and all that. So yes, we definitely made it and we've all come a long way. I think it makes for a good story.

YARO: Okay, so you went to the corporate world after that I'm assuming because you obviously now help people out of the corporate world so, you must know what it's like to be in the corporate world. Is that correct?

FARNOOSH: Yes, but not directly, Yaro. I went to work for a startup at the beginning. I know you have some interesting startups recently, right? I went to a startup that was doing fabulous but, a month into it, they announced that they got bought out by a huge semi-conductor company, Silicon Valley and all of our dreams were dashed and it was funny.



But, I stayed on. I was there for 18 months. So, I had some startup, really, really small company experience before I went to a huge Fortune 500 company. That was still a good time. I think I missed the boat just by a couple of years, the whole stock shooting up to the roof but, it was still very good. It was still a very good company and I really did have a good career at the beginning. I do want to say that.

I do want to say that I don't think corporate world is bad. I think that it can be the wrong place for you if you have certain symptoms or you are miserable or things aren't going your way in a certain way and you realize this is just not for you. That is okay.

But, corporate world in general, I love capitalism. I think it's a great thing that we have corporations and places where people can go get a job. I don't think it's a bad thing. I want to put that out there.

YARO: Yes, you're putting it out there. I can see it. You don't want to burn bridges.

FARNOOSH: Yes.

YARO: I'm curious though, you must have had I guess, pressure or at least an expectation or correct me if I'm wrong, maybe I don't know how inherently entrepreneurial Persians are so, was the pressure more to get a job?

It sounds like go to high school, go to University, get a job, build a career. Is that what you were feeling from your family?

FARNOOSH: Yes, because you know what? When I look back, I think that is how we define success because any other way, it just doesn't seem like it's possible or practical.

In the Iranian culture, you may notice from your Persian friends, basically, they consider certain professions as successful and privileged to go into that and parents always push their children in that direction.



So, engineers, which is what I studied, doctors, lawyers, professors. Those are pretty much the professions where if you tell other Iranians, that's what you do, that's very well respected. Doctors and surgeons are number one and it's really, really hard because there is artists in these children, there is creatives, there is writers and it's really hard to blossom into that or have your parents to support.

I try not to really blame them because I think it's cultural. My grandfather studied in France. He was a physicist. He wrote books. He was very, very smart. He was very well regarded and to him, Math was the center of the world. So, I think it's just cultural.

So, you're right. The expectation was to have top grades, high school, college, and then, get a really respectable job with a respectable title and just have a life that shows and reflects that success.

YARO: Right. So, it sounds like, obviously, you would have seen your parents working very hard just from the immigration process and trying to survive in other countries. You probably would have had a pretty good work ethic. I have to imagine from the beginning.

Where does this lead to leaving the corporate world? I can only imagine you sticking to it forever and you should still be there. But, you're not though. How did that all come about?

FARNOOSH: No. It took a lot of guts because I was very unhappy. Five years or six years into it, I started wondering what I'm doing here and I constantly wanted to climb up the ladder because I'm very, very ambitious. I think the problem was, I don't think there's anything wrong with ambition. I think the problem was I was in the wrong place. I was in the wrong environment because I still have a lot of ambition but, it just wasn't the right thing. I didn't really grow up in a way that cultivated me to respond both to bosses and management especially when they did not promote creativity and all the things I was looking for.

I thought hard work was rewarded and then, you see that people who don't work as hard get promoted and get ahead and that just questions you. You start questioning the system.



The first time you do that when you're in a place and you wonder if it's just a mistake or it's just a fluke and then, it keeps happening and it starts to make you doubtful and it starts to make you lose faith. That's really terrible because I was in love with this company. This was my identity. I didn't want to associate it with anyone who didn't work there and it was my whole life and then, I went from that to being completely jaded.

I didn't like myself. I just didn't like being this bitter sarcastic person and it was really hard. I was like that for another few years because I didn't realize I had options. I didn't realize it was possible for me to leave, go to whatever company would I go to. They were one of the best I interviewed.

I almost, almost got in Google. I was so close. I'm glad that I didn't because then, we had some family issues. My dad was very sick and I would have to move to California so, it all works out.

But, how did I leave? Well, I just became too miserable. I think the pain just became too great and I was ready to take the risk, give up my wonderful six-figure income that I did from home in my pajamas and my stock options and bonuses. And, I love money. I have no qualms saying that. We all do but, very few people admit it. I absolutely love money.

I had to give up a lot but, I found out that I can actually do something else. I actually had the beginnings of hope again that maybe something is possible. Thanks to the Internet and to our world and technology today.

That happened at Blog World 2010.

YARO: So, it's quite recent then. You've made these changes just in the last few years.

FARNOOSH: Oh yes. I resigned May 2011.

YARO: Okay, so you're freshly separated from the job. Maybe go back then to the perfect place, 2010 Blog World, take us forward from there.



FARNOOSH: Okay so, by then, I had been blogging a little bit just for fun. I started blogging, actually dabbling into it in 2006 and 2007, not really doing much and then, 2009, I started Prolific Living but, it still was just a hobby and I was just playing around and it kept picking up.

Things just started happening that just made me wonder if this can be more but, never really seriously thinking about it.

And then, my husband pushed me, really, really pushed me to go to Blog World because it was in Las Vegas and he loves Las Vegas. So, I was very lucky [*laughs*].

YARO: I'm assuming he's got a different motivation.

FARNOOSH: Yes, he did. He was like, "You go to this conference and I'll see you at the end of the day."

But, I was there. It was actually Darren who told his story, which I knew. I had read his story. I knew how he came about but, he said it. He was talking about it on stage and he said how there was a moment when he realized, this is it. He has to make it work.

He moved from looking at his blog like a hobby to seriously thinking about it as a source of income or a living and it's the way he said it. So, it's again, the Australian... sounds really great listening to you guys... and something in me clicked.

I remember going to my husband and saying, "What if I quit?" And, he freaked out because at that time, we just didn't think this way. We couldn't give up a six-figure income and just do it based on a hunch, right? That was October.

So, I came home and I started to make things happen and I think by March, he had really seen that maybe, there are things we can do. And, on top of that, he saw how miserable I was. I really needed his support because we don't do things without really seeing eye to eye for the future.



So, I came home. I started my newsletter. I created my first book. I started guest posting. I started getting out there. I started looking at my blog like my business.

YARO: This is while you still had your job?

FARNOOSH: I had my job, oh yes!

YARO: Okay, so you're doing this at night?

FARNOOSH: I do this at night or during the day. This is the thing about my job. It was not really intense. So, this is why everyone thought I'm crazy. I work from home at my own hours and I probably work maybe four hours a day on a busy day. It was really, really ridiculous and I was a top performer because I really knew how to do my job well so, I still had work ethics and I really liked my bosses.

So, I did the work but, I just had issue with this whole spending my time doing something I didn't love. So, I had plenty of time and I had twelve other hours to do something with so, I managed.

YARO: This is like perhaps a little bit of an unusual story in the sense that you had no strong compelling reason to do your own thing or quit your job beyond the lack of passion in the work. It's not like you absolutely have to make something work financially because you got a well-paying job. I'm assuming your husband is also employed and you got a dual income family so, that's less pressure as well.

You're making a decision purely on a, "I just don't like what I'm doing with my life and I need to make a change." It's the original reason to make a change but, often people make decisions more because of the money or because of the hours or things like that. Those things weren't... You could still be working in your job, right now, really, right?

FARNOOSH: I could. I probably couldn't because I put in a lot of hours right now. So, I probably couldn't do that and I see what you're saying. I think the people who haven't gone through this, it's really maybe something



I could be doing or it just doesn't make sense that I gave it up or maybe I had it easy.

But, I think if you really put yourself in the mindset of someone who's been, I was in corporate 11 and a half years and to really be so attached to the lifestyle and the income, I made a lot of money. I had really, really nice income and to be able to really walk away from that even though we are surviving just fine because we have another income and now, my business is making money, I think that alone, that was one of the hardest and easiest things I did. It was a huge shift and I think if you can make that, that's great because your passion really deserves that but, I just wanted to put that out there.

It was interesting transition for me.

YARO: Which is what I'd like to talk about, can you talk what was your main goal then with this project? Obviously, listening to Darren and you had a mental shift to making into a business. I'd like to know what was your initial goal especially at the point of quitting your job?

FARNOOSH: Yes, so it was not to waste my life. I know that sounds really dramatic but, it just was.

YARO: Pretty good picture.

FARNOOSH: Yes, it really was--

YARO: I thought well, maybe like make 10,000 a month for my blog, something very tangible and specific.

FARNOOSH: I want to make 100,000 and I will. My business will make that much but, no. It was not to waste my life. This is where if we have any listeners who are in the corporate world and who are unhappy, they get this. If there comes a day where you cannot sit on another conference call listening to absolute gibberish for another hour no matter how much they pay you.



Remember, I love money. This is the kind of transition I had. I thought I could do it for the money. There is just no, no way I could waste another hour when I could be doing something I love and there were things I loved.

I love to write. I love to connect with people. I love to see the reach my writing and my word and my message could have. There were things at the beginning, I didn't have this idea of putting this program together and writing this book. I wasn't thinking that way. I was thinking, this is not right and there is an opportunity here.

There is a window of opportunity here for me to do something else and our life is not eternal. All of those things, when they click and when there is enough pain, you make the decision.

So, I wasn't just moving away from the pain. I was also moving toward pleasure, if that analogy makes sense and the pleasure was doing something I absolutely love that found something which was giving me a taste of happiness again for work which you forget when you're in a miserable job.

You can be happy when you work. You can be happy when you work very, very hard if it's something you love to do. And, I was learning. I was learning so much and I had stopped learning in my job.

So, when your brain stops to learn, a lot of things happen. You lose your enthusiasm. You lose your excitement. You lose that beginner mindset and so, I was getting all of that back by delving into the blogging and marketing and business world and I didn't have any of that in the corporate world.

So, it was a lot of transition. Does that help you? Does that help?

YARO: It does. I want you to continue the story. How did you realize all of these? Take us to the process, especially the timelines. I really like timing this.

So, you're in 2010 Blog World and what happened next?



FARNOOSH: Yes, so October was 2010 Blogworld. I came home and at that time, it was just me thinking I'm leaving, and my husband's like, "No, you're not."

We were like that for a few months and I started, like I said, I started writing my first e-Book because I wanted to get something together for my newsletter for my business, for starting my newsletter.

And then, I started just studying. I started reading books--

YARO: What's the subject, Farnoosh for all of these?

FARNOOSH: Subject?

YARO: What was the niche you chose for your blog, your book, all these things?

FARNOOSH: So, this is the thing and we're going to talk about the green juicing niche that you mentioned which came about quite accidentally even though it happens to be one of my passions.

I didn't have a specific, "I'm going to help this particular niche." My blog was Prolific Living and my tag line is, "Smart Habits for Rich Living." So, it was really, really focused on building habits, building smart habits and creating a life that you love which I know is general but, that was where I was going.

For my first eBook, I wrote about writing. It was a writing manifesto, writing skills, writing habits, just writing errors not to make and I thought that, "Writing, it's the basis of all wealth," it's one of my favorite quotes.

It applies to everyone. All of my readers are going to enjoy a book on writing which was actually, sort of on the spot but, not really and so, that was the first niche I went with and then, I expanded from there.

Really, you can tell. It wasn't like a fully-fledged vision, mission, strategy, business.



YARO: Right, which is kind of funny considering you sound like you're well-versed in that or you have the education to realize, "I need a target market. I need a problem I need to help people solve," yet you sort of started a bit more generic in that.

FARNOOSH: I started more generic and I was still figuring things out. So, yes, analytically, I understand the importance of that in a business. You're absolutely right but, at the beginning, I didn't want to just rush and I didn't know what it was going to be. I didn't know what I could offer.

So, even if I could see all the opportunities, I didn't know what I could offer what I wanted to offer and I wanted to make sure it's aligned to my passion and at the time, it was just writing. I was just writing on my blog, I was guest posting, and I was learning. So, I wanted to take the time to really take the time to educate myself, right and I'm sure you know it takes a little time to figure things out once you get into the mindset of this is a business. This is not a hobby right now. I'm not going to write about my day anymore. I'm going to write about something that's valuable to my readers.

So, I was still working in that and then, I did decide on my first product at the beginning of 2011, so going back to timelines. 2011, I was going to write my travel blog and it was going to be a travel book in the sense that I was going to talk about helping people crush travel fears because I would meet people everyday with say, I would love to travel but, I can't. People who don't want to leave their homes or their pets or anything behind or they are scared of anything that might happen on the road so, I wrote this comprehensive book, four months it took me and it was my worst product. I think it's brilliant but, it didn't do well which was one of the hardest lessons.

It goes through crushing all your travel fears, building confidence, worksheets, master tip sheet to take with you, what have you, everything. So, I did have the mindset of a product and I started learning how to create a product.

So then, back to timeline, January, February, and March, I was working on my product and I was laying the groundwork to leave my job but, I didn't know when and we were thinking, after I get my nice big bonus in September of 2011.



Then, my work put me on this project. This project from, well, I won't swear but anyway, this project, *[laughs]* that was really, really hard for me to deal because it had to deal with the upcoming layoffs. I didn't want any part of that.

We were going to Hawaii for vacation and I was torn. I hated the project. My work, it wasn't tolerable anymore. It became miserable. I had to get on these conference calls and work with people I didn't want to and do things I really didn't like to do.

So, I mustered the courage to go tell my boss I want off this project and I want to work on something where I can give some value and she had no control of it. It came from higher up.

And so, we were in Hawaii and I decided to talk to my senior director and you don't just go up and talk to your senior director if you're in corporate. If you haven't done that, maybe Yaro, you would but, generally people don't.

YARO: I won't be in corporate so... *[laughs]*

FARNOOSH: Yes, exactly. And so, I went, and by the way, go and tell him not, "Thanks for the great job you're doing," but, "I don't want to do this project that you specifically ask me to do." That's exactly what I did.

He said, "Well," basically he said, "You don't really have a lot of choices." Then, I came back home and I said, "You know what I do." So, they put me between the rock and a hard place and that was it. I walked away.

They just pushed me too hard and I wasn't going to compromise my integrity and work on a project that I absolutely didn't believe in. So, that was the actual thing that happened behind the scenes and then, I gave myself a month to get ready. So, this was end of March, April getting ready and I resigned April 15, US tax day, yes.

YARO: Okay, so you resigned. Can you take me to the day you resigned? Do you go home and just keep writing for Prolific Living? Is that what you did?



FARNOOSH: No. I kept screaming! [*Laughs*]

YARO: [*Laughs*] In joy?

FARNOOSH: Yes, yes. It was a big deal for me. This is a huge deal for me and this was where I was doing something where I didn't exactly have the full support of family and people who thought, "Okay, Farnoosh is off to her next big accomplishment." This was like, "What on earth? What is she doing?"

I had the full support of my husband, full support. He was fully on board. This is what we're going to do. You're going to do whatever it is that you want to create here and it's going to work.

So, I went to work and I resigned very professionally. They were very surprised and I gave my usual two-week notice and then, I came home. It took me a while to pull myself together and do the transition and the emotional exit for me because I had a huge network at work so, all the goodbyes and leaving. It was just one of those life transitions where you take time to reflect.

I did that for a week or so but, at the same time my product was launching. My travel guide was launching at the end of April, and I was very busy with that.

I kept working with that and then, I went to Blog World to speak. I actually had that lined up which was very exciting, Blog World in New York 2011 and that was really good. That was on motivation. I spoke to people about just motivation and how you really can do the things you want to do and then, I went to WDS, World Domination Summit in Portland.

I had a lot of excitement in building up my enthusiasm coming up as I went into the world of self-employment.

YARO: I like the way, I know I don't want to belittle your achievements here, but it sounds almost like it was inevitable that you make yourself a place in the blogosphere and become well known.



Obviously, you're still building on this but, it doesn't sound like there was ever a period where you were sort of sitting at home, struggling to get traffic to your blog, doing everything that people tell you to do to grow your audience and no one knows you, no one is listening to you and no one is reading you or, maybe I'm wrong. Was there a period like that?

FARNOOSH: No, things were going really, really well. Are you saying, I could have like kept going with the corporate and continued my--

YARO: No, I'm just sort of... You know, you quit your job and it sounds like you were ready to just jump from one plane that's moving. You just jumped off it but, you jumped into another one that's already flying. You didn't have to build it up and take off. I know you're working on your blog and you were writing while you had the job of building the platform but, it does feel like you didn't go through a long period of sustained struggle to build an audience online. Is that right?

FARNOOSH: You are correct. I had attention. I had audience. I had built the foundation, the platform and it continued to grow but, I wasn't making money, so just to get really honest.

YARO: I want to talk about money too but, we don't have tons of time but, it's the hardest thing to do, to grow an audience. How did you do it? Why was it so easy for you?

FARNOOSH: Because I wasn't worried about it, I think. At the beginning when I was building my blog, I didn't really worry about building an audience. I was just doing it for fun and then, my passion was feeding into it. And, I was building. I thought I was just making friends and having a good time.

So, when you're doing that, I think that's the simplest answer, when you really take the pressure off and just do things because you really believe this is going to be a message that's worth spreading, that's worth writing about, the way you write your blog post and the way you connect with people without really expecting them to do a business favor to you in return or something like that, it grows organically. And, I had time.



This did not happen overnight. So, if I started in 2009, it had time to build up and to index in Google and I was doing a lot of guest posting and I think both, a combination of time and not having the pressure and being so passionate about it because I had a day job and then, I had an outlet.

I think that combination really worked well then, when I quit, I put the pressure on myself. That actually, if we continue the timeline, my summer was really hard emotionally because things didn't exactly work. My first product didn't work. My first attempts didn't work at making money.

The blog was growing, yes. The audience was there, the attention was there and I was getting pretty well known in the blogosphere from different places, recognition and stuff. But, the money wasn't coming in and that's the pressure I put on myself.

I hope that answers your questions.

YARO: Yes, it does.

FARNOOSH: If not, please ask me again.

YARO: *[Laughs]* No, I understood. It sounds like you did some good fundamentals of blog marketing. So, you maintained your content, you were doing guest writing, I like the way you said you were making friends which is like you were saying you were just talking to other bloggers, you were probably doing interviews like we're doing now, and you built this platform while doing your job which is fantastic and like you said, it was passion-based.

Okay, but you're not making any money, pretty big deal after quitting your job. How did you fix that?

FARNOOSH: Right. That was a hard one. My travel guide which I think is still a brilliant product but, it didn't do well and it taught me a lot. It taught me a lot about how to go about creating products, how not to go about creating them. I am not saying it didn't make a lot. It's still made some



money. It still hit a little four-figure income and I was happy with it, I paid my design fees off. It was fine.

And then, I started, and I was all about creating products because all my life, I had wanted to have something in my name, if I can create something and I didn't think it was possible but, now, with the Internet it's so possible.

So, I was thinking, what am I going to create next? And the next product --

YARO: Before you tell me your next product, what was wrong with the travel guide launch? What was the biggest lesson you learned?

FARNOOSH: Good question. It did not relate to my audience and even though I started to think beyond my list, my reader's audience, I think your audience is really a lot bigger than just your blog readers but, I think I just misread that. I did a survey. I was reading comments but, they weren't really coming to my blog to read about travel.

Now, I know a year later, I know that they come to my blog to learn about confidence and motivation and building self-esteem and overcoming fears but, a lot of my audience wasn't interested about travel and I just misread them. It was just, I missed it. I missed the mark with them and it didn't do well.

I still had them following and coming on board and grabbing the writing manifesto and reading my blog post but, I just really missed the mark on that and it took me a long time to admit this but, I'm perfectly fine admitting it because I really believe, just like you know when you really put your heart and soul into a product and one day, you're going to find the market for it. I really believe, I just didn't have the right market.

YARO: Okay, so how did that take part of the next product? You must have--

FARNOOSH: Yes, go ahead please.

YARO: I was just going to say you must have learned your lesson so, you didn't make that mistake twice.



FARNOOSH: Yes, so the next product went much, much better. I started focusing on another passion which is really health, natural health and natural way of reclaiming your health, your energy, your vibrant self. This is where I started basically getting a little creative. I do a lot of Yoga but, I'm not a yoga-certified teacher by any means.

I've done a lot of different exercises and aerobics and cycling and kickboxing, all my life, combination of different things, and I wanted to make this accessible. My whole thought was how do I make health accessible to anyone from my 20-year old inflexible student to my 65-year old reader?

How do I make it so accessible that they think that's what I want to do? And, how do I make it accessible so that, the busy professional has time to do it.

So, I came up with ten-minute invigorator system where I did these eight videos and it's all a combination of Yoga, breathing and movements, body movement but, I didn't call it Yoga because I didn't want to scare people away even though you don't think Yoga is a scary word. It is for people who are not familiar with it and for people who think you have to be a flexible gymnast to do Yoga,

I created these ten-minute segments where you can do it at home, where you don't need any equipment, you don't need any experience. I modified it for them, and at the end of that, you have energy, you have a little more flexibility, you have just a few beads of sweat and it's possible for anybody to do it.

That one did so well. It was so popular.

YARO: Why? I don't see, to me, they both sound a little bit left of the center when it comes to the subject of your blog at that time because you weren't talking about health for every article on your blog. It wasn't a health blog, was it, but then, you were selling a health product.

FARNOOSH: No. And, I didn't position it that way. I positioned it as... you're right, I don't talk about health. I talk a lot about my experiences with



food like I was doing a lot of vegan raw food experiments. I was doing habits and challenges and they were all about making myself better and I was doing some Yoga videos on the side so, they knew that I am familiar with Yoga.

I positioned this not as "health." I positioned it more as overcoming fatigue, how you come home, you don't have the energy and making yourself better, making yourself happier, this is going to help with your spirits, with your mindset. So, it wasn't like, "Get healthy." I actually don't think I used that word anywhere. It was about invigoration. It was about that overcoming that afternoon slump. It was about making, just getting through the day with more energy and people associated me with a lot of energy so, maybe that clicked with them and I did a beta-testing with this product which might have been a good idea with the other one where I had, oh, I think a dozen people go through it at the beginning, give me feedback, tell me really how they felt about it and then, launched the real one, did a lot of marketing, a lot of buzz building, with just natural organic because, you know, I'm not a marketing expert and somehow it clicked. Somehow, it was maybe the summer. It was about getting healthier but also doing it in an accessible way to everyone.

It clicked with people who never ever do Yoga, never ever do anything with health, like the people who bought it, some of them have never even gone to the gym so, I think maybe, it made it possible for people to do something they hadn't done, just gave them another glimmer of moving in the right direction in their life maybe, not so much health but just--

YARO: I do see how it's sort of starting to turn towards motivation and productivity and some of the health angle but, it all comes down to being productive and getting things done and...

FARNOOSH: Yes.

YARO: ...where travel isn't necessarily tied in to that. It's more the outcome. It's something maybe you should be selling in the backend when people already succeeded. And now, this is how it will be when you travel but, I know, it sounds like, okay, you learned a lot from the first launch, you did the second one better but, I do get the feeling it's still a little bit of, you



know what? I like this subject. I know people are responding in some way to this subject area. Let's make a product and see if it does better.

FARNOOSH: Mm-hmm, right.

YARO: Is there a little element to that?

FARNOOSH: Yes. And, you said something about productivity. I think it was a lot around time management too because a lot of the people that are, a lot of people want to be healthy. They want to be productive. They want to do everything but, there's no time. And, if you want to go to the gym, you have to set aside an hour and a half to two hours.

And so, this was just another accessible home program where you could really do it but, it wasn't your usual doing abs or doing weights. It was a completely unique routine so, maybe, that was also an angle that attracted them.

YARO: Okay, so did you get rich?

FARNOOSH: Yes, very. I am. Just talking to you here from my Hawaii villa and life is good. *[Laughs]* Not quite. But, I got confident. I got more confident and I was really happy.

YARO: Can you sort of share sales numbers? That's really interesting to hear how income grows over time too like each launch gets better.

FARNOOSH: Yes. You know, to be honest with you, and I'm not saying this not to share, I actually don't know exactly how much I make. I know it was maybe \$2000 and it was a \$27 product. I think in numbers it was good and I had some affiliates and it was a big launch. It slowed down after that. It was a big launch, slowed down. I think that's around that sum.

So, definitely not rich but, I went from making nothing to making that from a product. To me, it was a success.



YARO: I can tell Farnoosh, you will be very hungry still especially because you were on a six-figure job. \$2000 from one launch is not good enough, right?

FARNOOSH: [*Laughs*] Not yet. But, you know what? It gave me the confidence. I was really in a bad place that summer because I was feeling really low on my confidence but, it was a huge transition. I was sure the corporate world is behind me. I'm never going back. But, what to do?

So, that gave me the confidence and it made me very happy because I helped people. I actually gave them something that they valued. So, I finally got what people mean when they say that.

YARO: Next.

FARNOOSH: Next, so then, we are in September and I had a lot of travel coming up. A lot of travel coming up actually around your part of the world. First, we went to... Where did we go in September? I think we went to Asia and I started thinking about... my coaching was picking up a little bit so, on the side, I was doing some coaching. Mostly life coaching but some business coaching and I was getting some ideas from my coaching clients. I was attracting a lot of people...

YARO: Were the clients coming from your blog?

FARNOOSH: They were, yes. Everything was coming from my blog. I wasn't marketing anywhere else. So, I had random clients here and there for life coaching but then, I started attracting people because I started talking about my transition from work.

I wrote a few articles that really hit it big like Life Hacker one time linked to me and some other places where career minded blogs linked to me. I attracted people who are in corporate, who are in the same position, who saw what I had done and somehow could relate.

It's one thing to look at 20-year old entrepreneurs who make it really big but, to relate to someone who went through the corporate world and make that transition and so, I started to identify with some people and they



became my clients and I started helping them with the way that I started looking and leaving the corporate world or starting a side hustle at the same time or thriving in their corporate job because I had a lot of experience in that because at first, I did it and then, I figured out how.

So, I started attracting different kinds of crowd into my coaching business and that was taking off. I realize how passionate I am about helping people. So, I started putting the foundation of my course together, my **Smart Exit Blueprint course** but, it was a while before I offered it.

I was doing that but, at the same time, I was getting a lot of traffic from Google completely accidental on green juicing. You mentioned this earlier right, and this was a blog post that I wrote that has probably now had 100,000 hits on it which is pretty odd.

Every day, it gets a few hundred still going strong from 2009 and one day, I decided I should do something about this. I just decided maybe we can do something and the more I did, the more it kept growing.

So, it just seems like I was meant to do something with green juicing. So, I started the newsletter just on green juicing. I started an auto responder series just giving people tips on green juicing and I started creating videos and just doing something on the site as I was growing the blog. I thought of this as my experiment in the niche market.

Then, we were on a plane to Australia so, we were coming down there and to New Zealand for a few weeks and I wrote my green juicing book in the course of two weeks while on vacation in your lovely country and it is my best-selling book, that I cannot understand. [*Laughs*]

YARO: [*Laughs*]

FARNOOSH: But, I think it is really showing you the power of a niche. When people really, really know what they want and they go for it and they find something because I believe in the quality of the products I make. I just hadn't hit the right market and with the green juicing book, I did.



So, at first I was selling it on my blog. I hope this is the direction you wanted our conversation to go.

YARO: Keep going.

FARNOOSH: Is that okay?

YARO: Yes.

FARNOOSH: Okay, all right. So, I created the green juicing book. I finished it up in New Zealand, I remember because the Internet was so choppy that it took me all night to get it online and then, I woke up in the morning and the sales were coming in.

I just put it on my blog at the beginning. It was a \$27-package again and I had a green juicing audience by then, only five hundred people. But, they were very focused.

This is where it tells you the power. I don't think there's so much in the numbers as it is in the quality and the focus of the numbers. And so, I started selling the book and then, it slowed down and picked up. Everyday, I would sell a few but, the launch was good. I think that was probably a little over \$2000. It was still, you know, a \$27-product but, it was good.

And then, what we did when we came home in January, we put that book on the Kindle store. When I was on Kindle store, I also enrolled in the KDP which is the Kindle Direct Publishing program which is a boon to all publishers out there so is Amazon Kindle. It's just brilliant that we have that opportunity and nothing happened the first month, just a few sales.

But then, after that, it started picking up. And, it's been selling a good few hundred copies a month and really, really doing well and it's the number one green juicing book and it even ranks for juicing, just juicing in Amazon. It's really, really amazing and I am so glad that that happened because I just was looking for some place where I was thinking, "Okay, this really, really works and it's really helped a lot of people." I've actually converted quite a few people to green juicing [*laughs*].



YARO: *[Laughs]* It's amazing how, it's like you started a blog purely for the sake of starting a blog and then, all these little niches have popped up out of it. You've had a travel guide that, okay, that didn't do so well but, you learned a lot.

You started consulting because people started asking you for advice on whether how to leave their job or how to do better in their job then, you have some success with exercise DVDs and then, now juicing. It's almost like you see something pop up on your blog and you say, "Why not go after it?" And, if it's doing really well, go further with it as you have done with the juicing.

So, is it safe to say right now, your main income sources are from selling your juicing products and the consulting style of products? Is that right?

FARNOOSH: Mainly yes. I also started offering some selected advertising on my blog and I started that actually last year. I have some advertisers that I work with mainly in the UK and I'm very selective on what I advertise and how I do it but, I do have some steady income from that. That's mainly, I believe, part of the traffic, right and part of my publishing styles.

So, I do have that. I have some affiliate income but, not very much. I have the juicing. I have the coaching. You're absolutely right and then, I also have the Smart Exit Blueprint. So, I did launch that course that I mentioned to you which helps professionals choose a direction when they hit this sort of a career crisis.

It's not necessarily out of the corporate world. It's really out of a miserable job. So, if they want to stay, I help them find the right place in the right company but, if they want to leave then, we also will talk on that.

That did okay from the beginning. I had eight students but, that was a \$250 course. So, it was more focused, more intense and I'm getting ready to offer that again.

So, it's been different streams of income but, you're right. Those are the different pockets.



YARO: Okay, now Farnoosh, I'm noticing a trend here. You have not been doing this for that long on a grand scale. You went to Blog World 2010 but, you were blogging before that. You didn't quit your job until literally last year as we record this. And yet, you have managed to release quite a few products, do a bunch of coaching programs.

Now, I know what goes into often a list of, you keep saying the word "launch" as well so there's a lot that goes into a launch. You need to have a copy written for the sales page or maybe the sales video needs to be produced. You need to have email sequences. You need to attract affiliates and have a system for them to use and promotional tools. You need to create the products themselves and then, get the nice traffics with them and the covers and do the formatting and then, you need the coaching calls and... There's a lot there. How big is your team and how are you getting all these done so quickly?

FARNOOSH: It's so nice that someone realizes that [*laughs*].

YARO: [*Laughs*]

FARNOOSH: I didn't even tell you all my products. I wrote a motivation book and then, I created a confidence series program this month which is super popular with my audience and that's how I know that's what they want. A lot goes into it. It's just me. It's been me and that is actually not something I advise because I believe that you really need to be able to delegate the right things, maybe not the content creation, the intellectual part of your process but, I wanted to do it at the beginning because I wanted to learn.

I had my brother, my younger brother helping me with all the technical stuff so, he was my IT guy on the blog and so, he was doing that and he was taking 20% of gross. It worked out well for both of us.

Then, he just transitioned off and my husband is now supporting me on the IT front. But, I did some delegation on transcriptions for my course and I am glad I did but, I did all of it because I wanted to learn Yaro. I wanted to really push myself. I wanted to be really involved in the process so, I get really close to it, really get intimate with it.



My goal isn't to just create a big company. I want to really understand how this works and what works and what doesn't. I just love it. So, it's been hard, hard working year. I never worked this hard in my life and never been happier ever.

YARO: Okay, so it's safe to say this is more hours than your corporate job was?

FARNOOSH: Yes, that's a safe bet [*laughs*].

YARO: [*Laughs*]. Okay, so you write your copy. You format all your eBooks. You do all your blog posts.

FARNOOSH: Yes.

YARO: Yes, okay so, you're quite a one-woman show but, you really show what's possible. For a lot of people, they can find that inspiring. Everyone here is about delegation, outsourcing and that makes your life easier and you can get passive income and sit on the beach and work for a couple of hours.

But, I think there's good value in knowing that it is possible to do all of these yourself, it may not necessarily be the most time freeway of doing it but, like you said, you get to know your subject. You really become a subject matter expert at the process as well as what you are teaching.

And, clearly, you're good at productivity and they can tell you're teaching in that area so, you're obviously good at it yourself.

FARNOOSH: Thank you.

YARO: We're almost at the end of I guess, our timeframe here, Farnoosh. I just like to maybe look at what's the secret to that? How can you produce so much and what do you think makes you special? Is it your focus on action?

FARNOOSH: Green juicing is the secret [*laughs*].



YARO: [*Laughs*]. Okay so...

FARNOOSH: No, I'm kidding. I'm kidding. But, health is huge. Health is huge. I say that one seriously. If you take care of yourself and if you are doing something you love, a lot of things that seem to block your energy will fall into place. I can promise you that one because we have a lot more energy than we really, really allow to release and this really is a sort of not a function of your age.

I know people who are much, much older than me and have a lot of energies because they just align what they need to do to their passion and they take care of themselves.

So, this doesn't mean go on a diet and exercise. It means whatever is true for you. Take care of yourself. So, I really think taking care of myself really helps and also I took some action.

Now, I will be quick on this because I don't want to go over but, I decided to remove some things from my life. I basically changed or gave up my social life to some extent even though I'm very happy. I have a very engaged online life.

I gave up activities, gave up a lot of things I would do that I don't do anymore so, it takes really setting some priorities maybe making some sacrifices and making good deal with yourself because you can't do everything but, you can do anything to set your mind to. You just cannot do absolutely everything,

So, I made some priorities, some huge shifts and really became clear on where every minute of my time goes.

YARO: Okay.

FARNOOSH: So, I think if you just do that, I think that pushes you a lot further closer to your goal.



YARO: Which leads me to the next question, you probably do want to have some kind of social life at some point again so, I don't see this as a permanent situation where you want to do the kind of hours you are doing now. What's the plan? Get every single product out of your head and then, sell back a bit?

FARNOOSH: No.

YARO: Or, what are you doing?

FARNOOSH: That's a good question. No. I don't think that you should give up your social life altogether. I do have some but, I think I'm so passionate about what I'm doing right now. I'm so focused. I'm just following the energy.

I know this is not sustainable. I don't want to work 18-hour days forever even though I don't think sitting on the beach and drinking those drinks is really the way to go either. I think you need to do some work in the course of a day to feel like you've accomplished something. So, I really subscribe to that.

But, I think the idea is to build up my passive income, to do it in such a way that, that comes in and I then become more selective on what I do. So, there are some things that I still want to get done. I really want to launch my course again. I really want to write more books. I really want to get more out there with the community and write guest posts and stuff like that.

But, I think yes. It's not sustainable and I'm moving towards a direction where I want a lot of income from my own lines of products and services. I want the brand to be out there and then, I want to start delegating. I want to start doing some smart delegation to people that I can truly trust. So, if anyone is listening and wants to help me... *[laughs]* No, I'm kidding.

And, I think yes, I need a sustainable model. I absolutely, absolutely subscribe to that and the shocking thing is that we're getting my husband ready to quit his job, too. That is going to really be an interesting transition for us.



YARO: A pressure point, another pressure point.

FARNOOSH: Yes.

YARO: Okay, well it sounds like an exciting future. I feel like we've only caught you halfway through this journey if that even but, if anything, you point out and demonstrate what you can achieve in a short period of time when it comes to establishing a platform and a brand and your name out there and leveraging that in all kinds of niches and to be honest, it sounds like, I know you're doing surveys and you're researching what people want but, I get the feeling that you just pick subjects you're interested in and have something to teach about and then, go find the customers.

So, that's a wonderful way to do it if you can because you always get to indulge in what you're interested in at that time. And, you make the time and have the energy to keep producing which is amazing because I know I personally get a lot of ideas too like I've got an article in my site that's doing really well for buying and selling websites and I could go and create a list on that and a course on that but, I go, "You know what? I just can't focus on that because I'm focusing on my startup."

FARNOOSH: Yes, absolutely.

YARO: So, I'm impressed at how many things you can get done, Farnoosh!

FARNOOSH: Absolutely, no. Thank you. You have done quite well for yourself, Yaro and we are very, very honored to have you as part of our community. But, no, I think it's really possible. You just have to really get clear with yourself and really get focused.

I think I don't really consider myself a big success. I really always look for bigger and better but, I think you can. I really, really hope that your listeners take away a lot of hope that whoever they are, wherever they are in their life, they can totally create something and it starts to build on itself and you get support from people. You don't even know and it's an amazing opportunity we have.

So, you really have to take advantage of it.



YARO: Farnoosh, let's end with one last question which is probably the most relevant for your stage at the moment.

If there's a person listening to this and they are considering quitting their job like you have done, what do you think are the most important things to have in place at the point of quitting? Do you think it's... I don't want to answer the question for you but, I know most people are worried about the money side. That's the first part.

So, a big nest egg saved up, do you recommend that or something else?

FARNOOSH: Yes, very good question. I totally get the money issue. I work with that all the time. I think it's really important, first of all, to know why you are quitting. This is the first exercise I go through with everyone because you many think you know why but, you don't know because you don't want to recreate the conditions that brought you here.

So, when you're really clear on "why," then, you start creating the direction you want to go and yes, you have to have your financial house in order. You have to be out of debt. You have to have some sort of income coming in especially if you need it. Some households can do without but, you have to have some of that in order.

But, I think that's not so interesting as what it is that's moving you away from your job and what you want to do because sometimes, you're just bored and you need to just switch things up.

But, if you really have a drive to do something else, that's the exercise I would do, self-examination if you would. Ask yourself why you're really quitting so, once you figured that out, yes the financial house has to be in order. How much? That depends on your condition, on your lifestyle, on the changes you're willing to make in your lifestyle but, I think the more important thing I want to draw everyone's attention to is why are you quitting? Why do you want to leave?



It's a very hard question and no one wants to answer that but, I think that gets you closer to your path, to your true path, that hopefully gets you to where you really want to go.

YARO: Okay, thank you, Farnoosh. Websites, where can we find you?

FARNOOSH: Prolific Living, prolificliving.com – that brings you to me. You can contact me. I answer every email and I would love to connect with your listeners, Yaro. Thank you so much. I am so honored that you took the time to speak to me today.

YARO: Thank you for coming on and sharing the stories so far, Farnoosh. I wish you good luck and I'm sure that we're going to be hearing so much from you because you get so much done [*laughs*].

FARNOOSH: [*Laughs*]

YARO: I'm sure there will be a baking cookies eBook that I want to get hold of it at some point.

FARNOOSH: You'll get a free copy. Thank you, Yaro. You're too kind. Thank you so much.

YARO: Okay everyone so, check out ProlificLiving.com for more from Farnoosh Brock and obviously, there's green juicing if you're into that or want to quit your job if you're into that or exercise and motivation or travel... It's all in there.

And, if you want more interviews like this with Farnoosh, other entrepreneurs like her who have quit their jobs and started some sort of online business, please head to my blog Entrepreneurs-Journey.com or google my name Yaro and you will find all the podcasts like this one.

Thanks again and thanks Farnoosh. We'll speak to you on another call very soon. Bye!



Relevant Links Mentioned in this Interview

- [Smart Exit Blueprint course](#)
- [Darren Rowse](#)
- [Blog World](#)
- [World Domination Summit](#)
- [Kindle Store](#)
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