



F2

FIREFLY MANIFESTO: REMIXED

Jonathan Fields

THE REMIX

On November 20, 2008, the original Fire Fly Manifesto was released to the world. My intention was to offer it as a catalyst to change the conversation from one of despair to one of hope. I was blown away by the worldwide reception to the ideas and challenges, and the conversations that unfolded from this simple document.

In the nine months since its release, though, both the economic climate and the mood throughout the world have changed in a fairly profound way. And, again, I felt the need to revise my manifesto to better address both the questions that have been asked of me and the challenges that lie ahead.

The result of this effort is **F2 | Firefly Manifesto: Remixed**.

My greatest hope is that you'll read it and share it with everyone you know as a source of conversation, growth, exploration and, again, a renewed sense of possibility.

With gratitude,
Jonathan

THE WAKE UP CALL.

Whether you flip burgers or swap derivatives, losing a job just plain sucks. I'm not here to tell you otherwise. Especially, when you were following the rules, did everything right, worked your ass off, sacrificed what you really wanted to do for years or decades on the promise of a better life... and still got sacked, or worse, watched your entire company go down in flames.

What's going on in the world and the economy right now is frightening. Nobody knows when the other shoe will drop, what it will look and feel like when it does, or if another shoe even exists. And, for many of the millions who've lost their jobs this year, the position you've lost simply doesn't exist anymore in any company. So, going back or making a lateral move isn't an option.

But, I've got news for you. What feels like the end of the world to you now may, in fact, be the window you've dreamed of for decades.

How many of you have spent months, or years, secretly praying to win the lottery so you could stop doing what you were doing and finally do what you loved? How many of you have felt locked into a tired, life-sucking career by a suffocating marriage of golden or lead handcuffs, fear that you'd be judged or ridiculed for changing paths and a life-stifling lack of belief in your ability to make a living doing what you love?

Thing is, if that's you, the economy has just served you up a big, fat opportunity.

In fact, you may never get an opening like this again. A chance to make a bold change, take a shot at doing what you love, and not be judged for trying. Not that it's impossible to change paths at anytime. I've done it many times. But, you've got a once-in-a-lifetime window here created by a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The meltdown has everyone re-examining how they earn a living and what they want out of their lives and careers.

Promises have been broken on a scale we've not seen since the Great Depression. Expectations have been destroyed. The old paradigm no longer exists. And, if you lulled yourself into believing that a honking pile of money or a seemingly Teflon job with a big, established company was your ticket to security, you're likely smack in the middle of a really rude awakening.

Everyone's worlds are being shaken, and in this shaking, sometimes violent thrashing, lies a massive opportunity—the chance to come alive.

We are now in the midst of a once in a generation window.

For those who've never explored a career with equal helpings of passion and prosperity out of a fear of being judged, unsupported or ridiculed, judgment has been suspended. For anyone who's decried the lack of time it would take to rebuild their livings around the life they want to live, time is your greatest asset. And, for anyone who's felt trapped by a long, emotional investment in a career you loathe, the slate's been wiped clean.

This crisis just served up public justification on a platter. It's given you a massive, defensible reason to explore a radically different approach to the way you earn your living. And, if you don't take it now, you may never have the will to do it again.

Simple truth—life is not all about sacrifice, suffering or giving up what matters most in the name of being a grown up.

Passion, purpose and fulfillment matter.

Even in this economy. Especially in this economy.

They make us come alive at work and at play. And, pursued the right way, they can be had along with a healthy serving of prosperity.

REDEFINING SUCCESS.

With the mass shift in mindset these days, a growing movement of people are learning to live with less. They're reshaping their lives around the concepts of simplicity, instead of excess. And, along the way, they're discovering something cognitive scientists and happiness researchers have known for decades. They're actually no less happy living a simplified existence. In fact, for many, they're happier.

Fact is, beyond earning enough to live comfortably in the world, more money, merchandise and power add little to how happy or satisfied we are. Nor do they make us feel a whole lot more secure. That's a fantasy. In fact, to the extent the pursuit of these things takes you away from other activities and people who truly do make you come alive, they may very well do the exact opposite.

So, if these things aren't success, what is?

I wonder what might happen if, instead of holding up money, merchandise and the illusion of security as the currency of success, you valued relationships, purpose and impact instead.

What might unfold if you identified what you loved to do first, then tapped the wealth of tools, strategies and technologies that have only come onto the scene in the last few years to build a substantial living around what makes your entire life smile?

What if, instead of scrambling to find another "J-O-B" that sends you spiraling back into years of sacrifice in the name of a life that, in the end, you've already discovered you didn't really want, you went about crafting your career from this point forward in a very different way?

Try this career choice standard on for size.

Will this choice allow me to:

- Spend the greatest amount of time
- Absorbed in activities and relationships that fill me up
- While surrounding myself with people I cannot get enough of, and
- Earning enough to live comfortably in the world?

It sounds so simple. This is the standard I've used to guide my own evolution from six-figure, beaten down mega-firm attorney to lifestyle entrepreneur, blogger, author, copywriter, marketer and, yes, even yoga teacher... oh, and still earn enough to live very comfortably in the world and support my family in New York.

Fact is, this definition of success keeps me honest.

And, with good reason. It's evolved out of thousands of hours of testing and exploring a broad spectrum of career paths and entrepreneurial ventures, interviews with a wide cross-section of successful career renegades—from maverick CEOs to internet-earning soccer moms—and extensive research into the field of applied positive-psychology.

It integrates concepts like famed cognitive scientist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's seminal work on cultivating "flow" states and Gallup researcher Tom Rath's eye-opening studies on the critical impact of friendships in the workplace.

Apply it, test it, kick its wheels & see what unfolds.

RECESSION PROOF JOBS, SANTA CLAUS AND THE EASTER BUNNY.

Which one of these things is not like the other?

It's a trick question... they're all the same. They make for great TV specials, but they seem eternally elusive in real life—especially that first one. Because, as long as you're working for someone else, you'll never have the control you want.

Does that mean everyone should run out and become entrepreneurs?

Probably not. Control comes with responsibility and, depending how you bring your idea to life, varying amounts of risk.

But, here's the thing. I've been asked a bunch of times how smart it is to walk away from the "safe option" of working for someone else to start your own business, or even begin to build some kind of independent career and leveragable reputation on the side in this economy.

Safe...SAFE? I want to scream, "Are you out of your mind?!"

Since when is the safe option handing over the keys to your career to someone else and hoping that, in challenging times, they'll make the tough decisions in your best interest, rather than in their best interest?

Safety, in this context, is largely an outgrowth of control.

In times of relative prosperity, most people don't care so much about control. Because, as long as there's enough to go around, the people who you surrender the fate of your career to don't have to decide between them and you—or the company and you. There's enough to go around for everyone.

But, in tough financial times, like right now...

Those same people DO have make tough choices. And, there's a pretty good chance that what's best for you is the not their driving motivation.

When the going gets tough...

- I want to be the one who determines what I do or don't do, whether I have a job or not and what my relative value is.
- I want to be the one to monitor the world, analyze my options and take action to respond or adapt the direction of my career, my company and my future.
- I want to be the one who chooses who I surround myself with, why, in what context and when, and...
- I want to be the one to balance short-term risk with long-term vision and opportunity.

I want to be in control, even in this economy... ESPECIALLY in this economy.

And, somehow, the world perceives that as the "riskier" path?

Yes, things are challenging. And, I understand there is always risk in building your own path, starting your own biz in any economy. But, you know what, we'll all get through it. Things will get better.

In fact, in a recent Microsoft/Elance survey, nearly 90% of small business owners said they'd still rather work for themselves, and 60% said they expect 2009 to be as good as, if not better than, 2008. Like Seth Godin notes, "It makes it so much easier to win when so many other people are dropping out."

Plus, it's no secret that, without fail, those who are willing to find opportunities, invest and take chances in challenging markets are very often those who end up on top when we emerge from the carnage. Right now...

- You can acquire massive amounts of knowledge in the blink of an eye.
- You can test and research ideas online for free or very little money.
- You can establish yourself as the go-to person in your area of passion and begin to build a following—a community.
- You can build a business plan based on the proven demand of your community, rather than best-guess assumptions, and then...
- Give people what they want, when they want it, in the way they want it, at a price they can afford.

This is the new entrepreneurship—post downfall reinvention, start-up style. Fast, low risk, low capital, amassing knowledge, growing conversations and turning those conversations into passion-driven solutions you already know people are hungry for.

Ask these two critical questions that will likely determine what your livelihood and life look like once this period is behind us:

1. Who do you trust to create your career, income and future?
2. Beyond a paycheck, what do you really want from the way you earn your living?

When it comes to deciding what I should or shouldn't be working on for the rest of my life, how secure I want to feel and what I'm worth on any given day...

I trust me!

I want the control, the freedom and the opportunity to do what I love, make a great living and change peoples' lives.

So, I'm going to take the *safe* option... and keep signing my own paychecks.

GOING RENEGADE IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS.

“Yes,” comes the reply, “But, what if I’m laid off? What if I’m bleeding cash? What if I need to make money NOW? Can I still go renegade?”

If you’re in the midst of crisis and your immediate need is to put food on the table and pay your rent or mortgage, that will pretty much always take priority over any other pursuit—passion included. It’s straight out of Maszlow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

It’s difficult to focus on passion when you’re worried about losing your home.

And that may mean turning your immediate energies to finding a band-aid job, the sole purpose of which is to stop the bleeding. I’d never judge anyone for shelving the pursuit of a passionate living during a time of extreme economic stress that threatens their basic need to survive.

What feels like the end of the world to you now may, in fact, be the window you’ve dreamed of for decades.

But, here’s something else to ponder as you go looking for that band-aid job.

In most cases, if you’ve been laid off, the one thing you’ve got on your hands is time. People say that, when you’re unemployed, your fulltime job is finding another job. But, we all know that’s rarely a true representation of how most people spend the 8-12 hours you used to spend working. How you spend your crisis time is critical.

With rare exception, your search won't take up every hour of every day.

In fact, for most people, you'll spend more time not looking for work. It's not a judgment, it's more likely just a reflection of reality and the potential limitations of available positions and your local market.

That leaves a whole lot of time to do something else.

To begin to build a renegade path on the side, perhaps. And, one of the huge benefits of the paths I lay out in *Career Renegade* is that they allow you to tap technology to go beyond the income-generating limitations of your local economy.

So, if your town has been slammed by mass layoffs, or plant-closings, and prospects for any kind of similar job are slim, you can often move beyond the crush of your local economy by getting online and either:

- Mine different aspects of your trade/passion, or...
- Lay the groundwork for a move into a completely different pursuit.

And, the amazing thing about both these options, beyond that fact that it removes the limitations of the local market, is that they also offer the potential to generate income very quickly.

Everyone's worlds are being shaken, and in this shaking, sometimes violent thrashing, lies a massive opportunity—the chance to come alive.

GO RENEGADE BY MINING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOUR TRADE/PASSION.

An example of the first option—mining a different aspect of your trade online—is the website of an electrician I recently stumbled upon who set up a blog to share do-it-yourself (DIY) electrical information for people doing home electrical projects.

The DIY industry is perfectly positioned for massive growth in a down economy, because people still want to fix up things around the house, but they no longer want to pay other people to do it for them.

The meltdown has everyone re-examining how they earn a living and what they want out of their lives and careers.

In fact, with so many people now stuck in homes they'd love to leave, but are financially locked into comes both (a) a concession that they'll be stuck in the same home for years longer than they'd hoped for, and (b) the desire to make their current home as livable as possible—given the new, longer-term commitment to the space.

Now, this gentleman (our electrician friend) offers valuable DIY electrical project information on his blog on a regular basis. That, in turn, established him as an expert and builds a sense of credibility and trust among those who visit his website. This is likely a big driver of visitors and traffic.

But, as you scroll through the pages, you'll also see that, if you'd like his specific advice on a project, you can actually pay him for his time. In fact, 10-minutes costs \$27.

So, if our electrician ends up on the phone helping people an hour a day, that's \$162 a day. Do that for 30 days, and it's \$4,860 a month... working an hour a day from home. That's nearly twice the average annual household income in the U.S., working 7 hours a week!

And, chances are, a small number of people who start out looking for DIY help end up wanting live, on-the-job help and turn the entire project over.

So, this is a great example of someone mining a different aspect of their trade and the growing demand for information to redefine the way they bring that trade to life and generate income.

EXPLORING THE INFORMATION GAP ON A B2B LEVEL.

The ingenuity of our friend, the electrician/info-marketer, shows how it's possible to mine an information gap that's been greatly expanded by the flailing economy. But, what if your passion or trade serves not the gaps and needs of individuals, but businesses? Is this still possible... in this economy?

Short answer—absolutely!

Let's say you're a designer who focuses on corporate ID, branding, logo and website design. There's a pretty good chance that, unless you're a rock-solid marketer, your business is hurting right now.

Lots of local small businesses simply don't want to pay someone on the outside to do their design work. This will lead clients and prospects to begin to explore DIY design work. Small businesses will try to get by doing it themselves in an effort to save a few bucks (let's get past the discussion of how that's often a terrible idea for now and stick to the example).

And, while this appears at first glance to be bad for business, there's an incredible opportunity here to mine a different aspect of your design jones to not only create a new revenue stream, but also tap the DIY needs of those small businesses and end up with more clients than you can handle.

What might happen if you offered a 4-part educational seminar series, priced at a small fraction of what you'd charge to actually do the design work for your clients? The price would be at the upper end of B2B impulse buy. The topic would be Do It Yourself Branding, Design, Logo Creation and Brochure Design for local businesses, and you'd run it either at your offices or the local library, chamber of commerce or other budget venue?

Chances are, you'd get far more small business owners at that program now than you would have a year ago. And, when you begin to share a wealth of knowledge and layers of thought that actually go into the process of doing what you do, a few things will happen.

- **One**, you'll quickly establish yourself as a bona fide expert in the eyes of all who attend.
- **Two**, by delivering a ton of high value information, you'll cultivate a strong sense of reciprocity, leading many to feel the desire to someday, pay you back. And, as the economy recovers, this may well come in the form of future business.
- **Three**, a solid chunk of those in attendance will realize that what seems fairly straightforward on the surface is actually a whole lot more involved than they thought. The more they learn, the more they'll realize they have no business trying to conquer such an important task themselves, and the more likely they'll be to decide they'd rather pay the money to have somebody else do it right. And guess who they'll turn to?

Use your crisis time not only to find... but to build.

The bigger point is, if you use the large chunk of crisis time that you're not spending trying to find any immediate source of income to:

- Research gaps in service, information, education, product, community and access that have been created or broadened by the economic downturn,
- Learn how to set up your renegade path on the side, and
- Take simultaneous action on this path...

You just might end up figuring out ways to generate the money you need by going renegade, BEFORE you even find your band-aid J-O-B.

Even if you land your band-aid job fairly quickly, take that job with a commitment to yourself to invest every free moment in the pursuit of researching, creating, and then launching your next great adventure—a career built around the life you want to live, not the other way around. A career defined by the marriage of passion and prosperity.

It may take weeks, months or even years. I've met Career Renegades who've done it in weeks and others who have taken two decades. I'm not selling a quick and easy fix. There's no such thing. But, we're talking about something that will profoundly improve or impair the quality of every day, for the rest of your life.

So, you might as well begin it now.

You just might end up figuring out
ways to generate the money you need
by going renegade...

NINE RENEGADE ACTIONS TO TAKE TODAY.

1. Don't Freak

You may have left your job, but you haven't left YOU! Your skills, abilities, experiences, connections, knowledge, work ethic and drive go with you. So, if you succeeded by applying these things to a field that held little interest to you, imagine what you'll be able to achieve when you turn these same qualities loose on something you love.

2. Own Up To Your Passion

Step back and revisit what really makes you come alive. Most of us already know what it is. We've just buried it deeply, because we assume we can't earn enough money doing it and think that, even if we tried, nobody would support the quest. A growing movement of Career Renegades now obliterates this assumption. Your job is to own up to what you really want to do, and then...

3. Research Your Passion

You may have a passion for something, but that doesn't mean enough others share that same passion to make it worth building a career around. Get online and (a) search for people or companies who are already doing what you want to do and see if they need help, or (b) surf search engines, forums, social networks, magazines and more for evidence that enough other people share your passion to make serving them a profitable adventure.

4. Choose Your Renegade Path

Changes in technology and Internet access over the last five years have created a wide variety of renegade paths to profitability. They've made it possible to turn things you thought would never generate much cash into serious businesses and delivered a worldwide market of customers, clients and colleagues to your doorstep. Learn to leverage this technology and the world becomes a much richer place (in all senses of the word). With rare exception, making a great living doing what you love isn't a matter of "if" anymore, it's a matter of "how." Yes, even in this economy.

Here are a few examples that cost almost nothing to begin:

→ Serve the community, information or education needs surrounding your passion. Even if there's no clear "conventional" way to generate income around your passion, there is often a renegade way, and that renegade path very often requires little or no investment up front.

You might be able to tap the power of eBooks or paid membership sites to share information about your passion. You might rally people with a shared interest in your passion through blogging or forums, and then turn that into paid conferences, retreats or meet-ups—or bring products and services to your community's attention in exchange for a commission on sales.

The beautiful thing is, you can get started for less than \$50 and all you need is a computer, internet access and a desire to share information about your passion that others would value. And, with services that help you either for free or very little money, you don't even need to be all that tech savvy to do it.

→ Find people in business to partner with and share the income. Artist Ann Rea painted vineyards in Napa, and then partnered with the wineries to display her art in exchange for a percentage of the sales. This allowed her to launch a career as a very successful artist, spending almost nothing up front.

If your passion leads you to create a product or service, you can make an initial "test" batch of merchandise or sample services and ask people with existing foot traffic, communities or audiences to sell your merchandise on consignment or commission.

The point is, even passions that most people thought could never make money can often generate a lot of it if you throw off the chains of convention, think differently and take a renegade approach. And, if you're willing to swap time for money, you can often do it from anywhere, spending almost nothing.

5. Speeducate Yourself

Whether you just need to brush up in the area of your passion or train intensively, you can now find massive amounts of information, education and even certification and licensing for nearly any pursuit online. Much of it is free or available at a very reasonable fee, and it's there for the learning whenever your schedule permits.

A few examples include:

- **Blogs** - There are now thousands of blogs that will let you learn anything from background to highly technical how-to information about nearly any field. For example, if you have a passion for photography or photo-editing, PSDTuts.com is packed with tutorials on how to create high-level professional editing effects in Adobe Photoshop.
- **Open Courseware Consortium** - Started by MIT, there is now a rapidly growing movement by a large group of top universities to place a huge volume of detailed courses and information online for free in an effort to help level the educational playing field. Participants include Berkley, Tufts, Carnegie Mellon, Yale, Johns Hopkins and many more.
- **iTunes** - Boasts thousands of free podcasts, many with tremendous, bleeding-edge educational content.

I want the control, the freedom and
the opportunity to do what I love,
make a great living and change peoples' lives.

So, if you have the desire, you can master a ton of information about nearly any field in an astonishingly short period of time and then...

6. Turn Out Your Tribe

Once you know what you're talking about, tap the world of blogging and social media to publicly demonstrate your mastery to a massive number of folks who are literally hanging around the online and face-to-face worlds just waiting for someone to step up, answer their questions and lead them.

Whether your next step is within someone else's organization or launching your own adventure, establishing yourself as a known, go-to person in the area of your passion puts you in the driver's seat—and it costs next to nothing to do. Showcase your passion and thought-leadership, build your community, and then choose how to leverage your portable, personal brand.

7. Rally Your Rabbis

Nobody does it alone. In order to succeed in your quest to become a career renegade and rebuild your livelihood around what you love to do, you'll need people on your team on two levels.

You'll need to rally those closest to you to your cause (the economy just opened a whole new chance to do this). Forget the ludicrous instruction to abandon everyone who disagrees with your quest for a passionate and prosperous livelihood. Some folks may need to be jettisoned, but other close friends and family members aren't going anywhere—nor should they. Identify the small collection of people who are committed to you for life, the ones who's input, negative as it may be, is largely motivated by concern. Then, listen to their concerns and do the work necessary to rally them to your cause the way you'd prepare for and pitch your vision to your dream venture capitalist.

At the very minimum, resolve to obtain their forbearance and give you enough judgment-free space to grow your vision on the side until it proves the viability of your quest to all. It may not be easy, but the support of those closest to you will make your adventure both more enjoyable and far more likely to succeed.

Beyond your circle of family and friends, though, you'll also need to find and connect with one to five “rabbis,” or mentors, who've already achieved what you want to achieve and will agree to help guide your evolution.

8. Master Your Mind

Given equal qualifications and abilities, whom do you think the job, the support or the funding goes to? It's the person who's the most confident, calm, collected, resolute, overtly-passionate and likable. Want to be that person? Get your mindset act together. Commit to a set of simple daily mindset practices that will allow you to de-stress, refocus, cultivate lasting peace of mind and remain calm, cool and collected in nearly any situation or setting.

9. Get Out Of Your Head

The simple truth is that this manifesto, along with every other manifesto, book, blog and course are useless if all you do with them is read. There's not magic to success. It's about daily consistent action. Take six actions every day—even itty bitty ones—toward the attainment of a career defined by equal helpings of passion and prosperity, and you'll be amazed at what unfolds in the next six months.

Get your mindset act together. Commit to a set of simple daily mindset practices...

GET A BUCKET, NOT AN UMBRELLA.

No doubt, there are challenges all around. The economy and world have changed in a way few saw coming, and that has meant that the old rules simply don't apply anymore. The old way we pursue opportunities, paths, needs, solutions and that all elusive quest for security has been forever altered.

So, you've got two choices...

- Keep banging your head against the wall and trying to figure out how to force a now extinct paradigm to fit a new circumstance, or
- Change what you're doing.

Find the new pain points, discover the new needs, reveal the new desires.

They're still there, they've just moved around a bit.

Uncover how the problems that people need solved have changed and, work to find the revised points of maximum pain. Find the windows and opportunities that have been CREATED by this economy.

Then, deliver a new solution that targets and solves those new problems at their points of maximum pain and your point of maximum passion.

If you can find that sweet spot, magic will unfold.

There is opportunity all around us—even today. But, you'll never find it wearing yesterday's blinders. If something's going down, something else must be going up. And, for Career Renegades, that means opportunity.

So, even if the sky IS falling (and it's not), you still have a choice to make.

While the pundits scream about the sky falling, most people are running for cover, ducking into doorways and buying umbrellas. But, a small group of savvy entrepreneurs and Career Renegades are out there with buckets waiting to catch it, bottle it, and sell it.

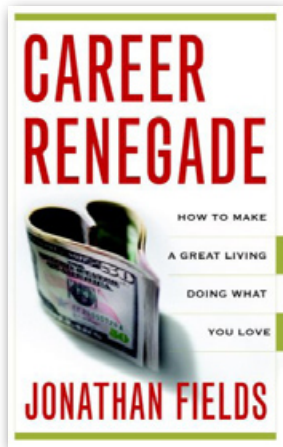
They're finding, tapping and exploiting gaps, and creating opportunities that will set the stage for the next great wave of passion-driven, massively prosperous entrepreneurship.

In fact, this very realization recently led one of the smartest investors and business thinkers on the planet, Warren Buffet, to share the following ditty in his 2009 Berkshire Letter when talking about one of his major portfolio companies, GEICO:

"Tony and I feel like two hungry mosquitoes in a nudist camp. Juicy targets are everywhere."

Question is... which camp are you in?

Maybe it's time to start looking beyond the perceived limitations of the economy, take off your "pundit blinders," grab your bucket and start catching your piece of the supposedly falling sky. 🪂



BUY THE BOOK

Get more details or buy a copy of Jonathan Fields' [Career Renegade](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonathan Fields, hedge-fund lawyer turned serial entrepreneur, speaker, marketer and blogger, has been featured in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *CNBC*, *Entrepreneur*, *USA Today* and thousands of websites. He currently oversees small business marketing group, Vibe Creative and venture catalyst, Career Renegade, Inc.. Fields also writes a widely read lifestyle blog, *Awake @ The Wheel* at [JonathanFields.com](#), shares thoughts on marketing and entrepreneurship at [CareerRenegade.com](#) and speaks around the country. When not playing at work, he can be found dancing around his living room with his daughter and wife. Occasionally, he sleeps.

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