

Interview With Yaro Starak



On

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INTRODUCTION

This neither is an ordinary interview, nor is it merely a lesson from a problogger. In fact, this interview with Yaro Starak is an inspirational manual for bloggers who want to be entrepreneurs!

I can say with confidence that this is a not-to-be-missed interview for bloggers, who really want to make money online.

I doubt whether there are many authority bloggers who've been earning money online independently as long as Yaro Starak has been doing - ever since 2005!

Yes, **it's** true, Yaro is one of the pioneers of blogging and a professional blogger, who can teach you how to be one too.

His views are unique and different, and it's always good to know about new money making strategies, isn't it?

I won't take much of your time to tell you more about [+Yaro Starak](#), as you'll find all the information you want in the interview itself.

I'll just let you know that Yaro presently lives in Australia, though he has plans to move to San Francisco. And for those of you who don't know, he blogs at [Entrepreneurs Journey](#) and loves to live *the laptop lifestyle*!

In this interview, there are a total of 20 questions, and as with the tradition of Aha!NOW chats, you get to know more about the personal side of Yaro that probably you didn't know before.

Yaro guides us about how to have a successful blog that makes us money.

That's right, Yaro wants you and me to make the most out of blogging and achieve financial freedom, so that we can take our blogs to the next level.

As I said before, Yaro's philosophy of making money blogging introduces a new perspective that might force many bloggers to rethink about their blogging strategy.

Bloggers have found this interview inspiring and motivating. I've also summarized the takeaways from the interview at the end of this PDF.

So without further ado, here's Yaro "unplugged" on Aha!NOW.

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(This is a transcript of the audio recording of interview with Yaro Starak)

Being an Entrepreneur

Q1: Yaro, welcome to Aha!NOW. You're a pioneer professional blogger and have been blogging for almost 10 years - making money seems to be your second nature.

What do you prefer to be known as - a blogger or an entrepreneur, and why?

Yaro: Wow! You say making money is quite my second nature, I still have to work for it like all people, Harleena.

But to answer your question, I probably, depending on the crowd I go to, I like being an entrepreneur slightly more than being a blogger. But I love being a writer as well.

So, I often will say, I'm a **writer-entrepreneur**. I think I like being an entrepreneur because it means you're not boxed into any one sort of aspect of running a business – you can be starting businesses in all kinds of industries using all kinds of different business models.

Whereas if you're a blogger, you're pretty much looked upon as a person who is a publisher, which is good but it is not quite as diverse and it doesn't have quite as many aspects to it as what an entrepreneur can.

But, you know what - there's an answer to that question. A blogger will also do a lot of things around the blog to make money so being an entrepreneur probably makes a bit of more sense.



Support of Parents

Q2: I read what you wrote about your childhood on your site. The freedom in school subconsciously inspired you, and you subsequently sought for a career that gave you freedom in your work.

How supportive were your parents about the career of your choice? Did their separation affect you in any way from pursuing your career?

Yaro: You know, I think a lot of my desire for freedom actually comes from being a bit of a control freak, which probably is a lot of the justification for entrepreneurs to want to have their own business and it's just being in control of their hours - **that's for me a big issue. I hate that feeling of being told to do something and not wanting to do it.**

If I tell myself to do something and I don't want to do it but I know it's important to my goals, my business then I'm more likely to still do it. But I want to have the choice to decide when and where to do that.

So to answer your question, my parents – there were some times where certainly early on they – first of all my mother didn't really mind whatever. She was supportive of me sitting on a couch watching TV (laughs).

She was a very supportive person, doesn't matter what I was doing, they'd help me no matter what I chose to do. She was also more entrepreneurial than my father.

So, she probably saw that as a normal. She has had all kinds of different jobs in her life. Some of them were running her own business; some of them were washing dishes, so she had the whole range of experiences and certainly didn't want me to do anything I didn't want to do.

My father was supportive as well. There were some moments I remember, which were quite funny in that he would get this kind of a irony to be a dad and ask certain questions in moments **where he'd say, "Are you sure you should be doing your own business? First, maybe you should get a job and then start a business and later want to have some experience in working for someone else's business."**

And I think he was almost just like saying that because he felt like he should, as a thing that a parent would say to a kid especially.

This is bearing in your mind - this is all before when I was making any sort of significant money from my own businesses.

It's amazing when once you actually have some success and you're making a living and buying a car and buying a property that suddenly it's obviously you made the right choice and (laughs) doesn't really matter so much.

But I certainly don't feel that my parents ever hindered my progress. You know there I was in a place to live by me and to do (work), so the good thing about that is I didn't have the pressures of rent during the very very early stages when cash flow is quite quite small.

So, you know, they were overall definitely more supportive than anything else.

Motivation for Entrepreneurship

Q3: There was a time when your mother had gone through tough times and had to endure hardships. That was perhaps also the time when you got your first exposure to the real world of business.

Was that a motivator for you to try to earn money and stand on your feet quite early in life? What started the entrepreneurial fire in you?

Yaro: You know with both my mother and my father I tended to see more things I didn't want to do than things I did want.

In terms of my father, I didn't like the linear aspect of the career, (but) he did. It's more suited to his personality to have had a job, but he also had a side business.

So, you know I can see that different aspects of being an employee for a university with which my father was and then having his own business on weekends.

My mother, she had some businesses that required doing things that I did not like, like getting up very early in the morning to go to a market to sell products at basically like a free market and that meant 5 a.m. or 4 a.m. start.

And I'm not a morning person, so I was definitely going to avoid any kind of job or business that required an early start.

Really, for me, the motivator to earn money and stand up on my own feet was more again about having the freedom of choice and control. Everything is about freedom of choice and its **funny and it's a bit of dichotomy** – you want control therefore you want freedom.

So, for me, I wanted to move out of the house and I wanted to have my own money so I can do that. And then, you know there might be finer reasons for that, there might be desire for **independence that's a natural motivator for you know a person in their late teens or early 20s** to want to do.

So, I was motivated by that - I was really motivated by how much I hated the 9 to 5 idea. I just could not stand the idea of everyday getting up and doing a job that was very much restricted on where you could go.

You know you had a career path, you had an income cap, you had a ceiling, and even as you progress and may be you get raises and reach higher positions in a company.

It was completely slow and under the decision-making of someone else. You know it was your **bosses, your managers who decide, when you'd advance, how you'd advance, what roles you'd**

take, and I just couldn't stand and I like the idea of having complete freedom and control over what I did.

So, I always was going to find some kind of business, some kind of way to make a living, even if it meant freelancing.

And maybe that's not traditionally a business - it's kind of attracting but you still get to decide where you do the work and when you do the work, and if you wanted to get up at 11 o'clock in the night instead of 9 o'clock in the morning - that's your choice.

So, for me freelancing was probably the last resort if things didn't work out or good stepping stone towards having a business.

Understanding People in Business

Q4: Your family has Ukrainian, Canadian, and Australian background, right? Perhaps you inherited your writing skills from your mother and ability to understand people from your father, who is a psychologist.

How important is it for entrepreneurs, bloggers, and Internet marketers to understand the psychology of people to be successful?

Yaro: Yes, correct. My father was born in Ukraine, there's also Czechoslovakian from my mother's side and she was born in Israel.

So for me, the Canadian and Australian have been the dominant influences - growing up in Australia but speaking with a Canadian accent having made many trips to Canada. So those were the two most dominant countries for me.

Yes, and certainly, writing skills more so from my mother in the sense that she did lot more writing and English was her first language.

My father being a University lecturer is quite a capable writer. In fact, he's a voracious reader and I'm always impressed by how much he reads yet how terrible his hand writing is, but I think that's just a man thing – we don't have good handwriting. But he's a great reader.

Both my parents were in the field of counseling, psychology, social works or there's very very strong empathy and, you know, human psychology aspects to my parents. Definitely some genetics there.

But I probably didn't find their careers interesting in that sort of aspect. I had no desire to be a counselor or a therapist and perform, but marketing is very similar to social science as well, so it just has to be more tied to money.

Marketing is a social science. It means you're looking to understand why people make decisions and that you're tying in into a buying decision obviously since you're trying to sell products and services.

But alternately the motivations are the same - everything is from the same root place - the desire for food, safety, power, status, significance, and relationships.

All those things try how the decision we make whether to buy something or anything we do in life. So yes, absolutely critical aspect of being a marketer is understanding people.

Being a Money Making Blogger

Q5: You've told your "success story" probably many times to people about how you rose from being a plebeian to becoming a pioneer. Though my blog readers can always visit and read your [Business Timeline](#) for detailed information, but I'd like to know:

What are the things you did differently that other bloggers don't do? What do we miss out on to become a "Yaro"?

Yaro: The primary difference I know is putting myself and the other bloggers at the time I was growing up in the blogosphere, was my strong leaning towards Internet marketing techniques.

I was very much mixing Internet marketing with blogging, where certainly, the majority of bloggers of the time were not, and by that I mean, I was having an e-mail list - I have an e-mail list. I was doing offers through my list.

I was combining the blog to get people onto the list, giving people a lead resource to build relationships and promote a product, and that was something that most bloggers didn't do – it's still something that most bloggers don't do.

The idea of advertising and affiliate income is often the common path and for internet marketers - **it's not usually the first thing they do. They usually go straight to selling a product** or service and trying to get a higher response rate, and then they are very good at doing direct response.

But bloggers are terrible at doing **direct response, they're often terrible at making offers, they dishonor right content** and hopefully make enough money from advertising, which may be back in the day was a realistic goal.

But you know it's so competitive now and you need so much traffic in order to make a full-time living from advertising that.

I'd actually argue you should almost be hours be going some kind of a direct response model selling a product or service if you're serious about making a full-time income from blogging because there's just no way to get leverage without doing that, you need to be making offers.

So, that's one aspect in terms of what you miss out on to follow my path, you know there's a need to focus on selling sometimes and that's not something people or bloggers like.

So I guess you miss out on the potentially simple formula of just writing blogpost and then hoping you make enough traffic to make enough money from advertising and affiliate income.

Unfortunately, that's probably not something that you'll achieve because like I said very very few blogs ever get the kind of traffic of volume they need to make money just from advertising and just from affiliate marketing.

So, I don't know, I don't think you can miss out on anything that's too important - you probably miss out on things that are not as good like long hours writing tons and tons of content you give away for free, where if you do what I do, you can still write and have a connection with your audience.

But most of your money time is spent creating content and for paying members who really value what you do. So, you know different philosophies, and whether you see something as missing out or not missing out it's a bit subjective, so I'm not sure I can answer that part very well.

Importance of Blog Community

Q6: How important is it to have a blog community or a loyal blog audience? Was it in anyway instrumental in pushing you towards success?

Yaro: A community is more and more important and it has become more and more important over the years. I mean, you know when I started blogging; people didn't talk about a community quite as overtly as they do today.

Back then it was just what you did – you had a blog, you had people reading it, and you have people becoming fans and leaving comments. That's just a natural organic process of growing a blog. So, that's a community.

Today though, people are much more focused on that aspect of building a presence online. So, you know needing a community, needing a tribe, needing a core group, of loyal followers is absolutely vital.

In fact, I don't think you can actually have a successful business based on a blog, or really, most businesses without some sort of community aspect. Even if it is just some kind of a loyalty

program if you're selling products and services, there's always something you do to connect the people who're involved with what you do.

In terms of blogging, though I do think you've to be careful because a lot of bloggers who spend time fostering community, fostering engagement, and then - all end up having a rabid following of people who love what they do and just want more and more "free" stuff from you.

And then, (the) minute you go and say, "Hi, I now am going to charge you for some of my content", it's a complete pattern interrupt in the wrong way. It's like, "Wait a sec, you've been giving all this great stuff for free but now you want me to pay for something that you gave away for free previously? I'm upset!"

And then, not only will they not buy what you're offering, they actually will be angry at you and potentially you know write things against you on your own blog, and comment and potentially backlash and start leaving you altogether.

So, I'd argue that ways you should spend your time building community is two-fold now. It is obviously doing some sort of community building around the blog, but really spending your time fostering the community around the people who pay for your products and services.

I [wrote about this recently](#), the most important relationship you want to nurture with a blog is your customer relationship – it's not your free reader, it's not the person who leaves a comment but never actually buys anything from you.

Spend your time focusing on the people that support you financially and value your time while being willing to pay for it.

That's way more important than just feeling good because you've an army of people who just want your free stuff. Unless, of course, you're doing it for a hobby, which probably means you shouldn't listen to what I'm talking about.

Well, you can, but you just won't like the stuff I talk about when it comes to making money. (laughs)

Developing Customer Relationships

Q7: What should bloggers do to have a supporting community? Can we still have an engaging blog community if we shift our conversations to the social media platforms?

Yaro: You know going back to my previous question, you can do as much as you want with community, you can engage them on your blog, and you can engage them on social media.

Bloggers out there will tell you that this is the most important thing to do that is to build this tribe around what you're doing and meet them where they're on all the different platforms.

But, like I said, at the end of the day, if you're spending all your time just talking to people, while you're not making any money and you want to make money, then you need to start thinking more about customer relationships and less about freebie relationships.

That's a personal point of view; some people will argue that if you focus on freebie relationships the people who want to buy from you will find you and buy from you.

But unfortunately, what I find from most people was for that to happen, you need an absolutely massive amount of people following you, and most bloggers will never reach those numbers.

You won't make a full-time income because you'll only have one person out of every thousand buy something from you. So for that to work you need 10-20-30-40-50,000 people following you and most bloggers never reach that point.

Most bloggers, if they're lucky, they get to 1000 people at best, that's sort of like a goal. However, if you have 1000 people and you actually managed to get a 100 of them to buy from you and spend a thousand dollars a year with you, then you're making a \$100,000 in a year.

So, if you shift your focus a little bit away from just supporting your community for the sake of it to supporting people who support you by buying products and services, it's just a much better use of your time.

And that can be on the social media platforms too, but focus on customers first.



Gaining Confidence

Q8: You need to be a bit extrovert to be social. There was a time when you lacked confidence and were a little shy in your initial years.

How did you develop self-confidence and become a successful professional blogger? How did you change your mindset and gain self-esteem?

Yaro: I know I'm still very much introverted. You don't need to be an extrovert to be at least to have an outgoing presence on the Internet. You can be a contributor without needing to be extrovert.

For me, a lot of, and I think everyone will agree with this - self-esteem and confidence comes from experience and doing things.

Having achievements, getting results, making an impact, you'll always get more confidence from doing that. So, the most important thing is to make sure I was doing something and that were to build the experiences.

You can also work on your mindset. I became very aware of my own self-thinking patterns. So in my inner dialog, I did little bit of an analysis of how I talk to myself and try to reframe a lot of things away from negative to positive aspects.

Then you know it's something you've to keep working on over time and it takes a while, but as you get better at it, it starts to have a positive impact then on everything you do.

If you're on your own support team, then more likely will you succeed because you're positive, you know you're happy with the results rather than saying negative things to yourself, like you'll not get anywhere, no one pays attention to your work, why you're wasting your time - that doesn't help you.

So you need to make sure you're on your own team to begin with.

But like I said, you can really be shy on the Internet and still be a successful blogger and the great thing about it is that you can just write the words - **you don't have to do a video, you don't have to do audio.**

There's a very well known email marketer named Andre Chaperon, who has a massive following, who has been influential in the Internet marketing space for longer than I've been doing this over 10 years.

And he is very very introverted. He never does webinars, he never does videos, he never does podcast, and he only ever once spoke on stage that was just recently after more than 10 years. Being a marketer he just writes words.

So you can be comfortable in your shyness writing words and have a successful business, [have a successful blog](#). So you know, don't let that be something that'll stop you.

But you know obviously, if these are parts of your personality you want to improve, then you should do it - you should do video, you should do audio, because that will give you confidence.

I know for me, when I started my podcast, which was very very early - I started my podcasts after six months of blogging, back in 2005.

It was little bit like public speaking and I hadn't done much of it. So, that helped me. Even though there was no one there, I felt a little bit nervous because I felt like I was talking to people.

Like I'm doing right now, but I don't feel nervous now. But when I just started, I'd ... this is probably the 1000th plus times plus I've spoken on something like an interview or a podcast, so practice certainly gets you more confidence.

Blogging Strategy to Make Money

Q9: Times have changed since you started blogging. Today bloggers face many challenges with the tough competition going on.

How should they change their blogging strategy to remain competitive and excel in making money online?

Yaro: Well, that pretty much ties into what I was talking before about - first of all, focusing on nurturing customer relationships and not just freebie seekers, and not just engaging with people for the sake of engaging - doing it as a business and having that mindset.

I think you need to have a much more specific target market, target audience, and niche within a niche in order to be a specialist because **that's something that really helps when you're in a competitive space.**

When you've reached a saturation point in the market place, the only way to succeed is to separate yourself by becoming more specific about some aspect of an industry.

So, you go [from being a blogging professional to being a professional blogger](#), who focuses only on the aspect of blogging. For example, may be just help women bloggers and then you say I only help stay at home moms bloggers, and then you say I only help stay at home mom bloggers who have two children, and you can go as far as you want with this.

You can always bring it down usually by *niching down* on the target audience you go **for**. **That's** where the *niching* happens because **that's the best way to segment.**

Once you know who you're talking to its much easier to market to them, to find them, and that's how you can have the successful business. Plus, of course, you're going to sell like a much better solution to their problem, if you say exactly the things that they are.

So, if I tell you I help bloggers who like only to right to make money by selling a course that they create themselves, then people are going to be interested in what **I teach, if they're also a writer who wants to sell a course.**

If there's a podcaster who wants to do an audio program, then they probably won't pay attention to me.

So, it's kind of good because it discards the irrelevant people and attracts the small tribe that you need. So, that's definitely the way I'd go, about dealing with the competitive landscape.

The other aspect is realizing that you won't make a living with a small niche, if you're just going after advertising and affiliate income and in fact, you probably won't make it just selling one e-book, or one course either.

You're going to need to have a marketing funnel with a range of products so that you get some people coming to you for the more lower priced products you offer. And then segment them coming to you for the group coaching or some sort of experience with you.

May be workshop in person or live webinars, and then a very small segment of those people willing to spend \$10,000 a year to have private coaching with you or to spend time at a personal retreat, or you know, buy your highest level product or service.

So its hours of segment, of a segment, of a segment, increasing the amount that they pay and you make money or you make the majority of your money as they further along in the marketing funnel as you go.

If you want to make the six figure level income, you're going to need to have the \$1000 products in those spaces. Obviously, I'm talking about information marketing here.

If you're an e-commerce seller and you're selling your own products and services, it's a different strategy - it's not my angle or hence I don't teach it and that's again niche segmenting my audience.

So, you should probably go study someone else if you've an e-commerce store.



The Yaro Story

Q10: I hear various versions **of your income story. But I'd like to hear it directly from you, if you wish to reveal.**

How much money do you make and how do you do it?

Yaro: Well, probably you hear various stories because its changed so many times over the years that I always write about it and I always talk about it on interviews.

So, at one stage I was making like ... I had a card game website and I had a trading forum there, which I made from advertising and selling cards.

Then I had a proof reading business, which I made money from basically selling proof reading services to university students, and I was a middle man - **I'd find the proof readers and hire them, and then connect them with the students and take a cut from - I call that business moral services arbitrage.**

And then, I started blogging and then initially I did do advertising and affiliate income with my blogging. I eventually launched a training program, that significantly increased my income, and then I also started to buy and sell some websites too.

So, I bought some blogs, sold some blogs, spot some forums about miniature motorcycles, and started to set up some passive income streams from buying and selling websites.

Eventually though, I sold out all those assets to focus only on my blog teaching business, and then I actually **closed down all my teaching programs as well because they're getting dated** that was a couple of years ago.

And I focused my time for a couple of years on a start-up called **"Cranky Ads"** that was about advertising for blogs, which eventually was shut down after two years, when it was clear it

wasn't going to work. At least, coming from Australia, I needed to go to somewhere and get some funding basically, and that wasn't something that I was looking to do.

And then just recently, as I'm talking to you, I'm back into the information marketing world.

So to be honest, I shouldn't really say what exact income I've right now because it's not really indicative of what I'm doing at the moment, which is re-launching my courses.

the moment, all I'm selling is some low-end, basically my front-end products, my more affordable products that are in the sort of \$30 to \$50 range, and just selling up my new coaching program, which a few people are in it at the moment my EJ Insider program.

And then next, I'll re-launch my blog mastermind training program and a few other of my courses, and they're more in \$1000 sort of range products.

So, my income is actually quite low compared to the best years – my best years I was making half a million dollars a year, but that's when all my courses were available.

Now, I'm re-creating them so there's this period of less income while I go back and update them, re-launch them, and most importantly, I'm coming up with a different model – I'm not teaching the same thing I taught with those courses five years ago, because things have changed.

So you know, I make a living at the moment primarily from a bit of residual affiliate income from the money that started to come in from my initial training products, and just increasing each month as I slowly create more products. I tweak the marketing processes and you know increase conversions.

But that'd be the best thing for me to say because it's so transient right now. And I've been spending a bit of money too because there's a lot of technology that's setup, a lot of outsourcing to do, so yes, very much a new period for my business.

Establishing An Automated Business

Q11: You never took up a full time job in your life and you believe in your concept of living the "laptop lifestyle".

How feasible is your 2-hour work theory? Is it that easy to make money? What tips would you give our readers who want to follow your way?

Yaro: Ah, I don't think there's ever an easy way to make money. That is a sentence that should be a sentence that should be completely eliminated from anyone's vernacular if unless you're gullible because there's no such thing as easy money.

Even if you set up a 2-hour workday, which I've **done with 2 or 3 different business models**, there's a lot of work to set it up.

You might be able to **function it and maintain it after you've set it up in 2 hours**, but there's a **process during the early days when you're not going to work two hours**. You are going to work four hours, eight hours, some days 10-12 hours - **but you're really enjoying it**.

So, **to get to a 2 hour work day, you'll have to set up the blog and get it making money**, create the products and get the traffic coming in, and make sure it converts in sense of working, and have all these things set up.

Then you can just sort of write a **blog post once a week, help your coaching clients, and you're going to spend, may be 2 hours a day doing it**.

Or, you can start a business like my proof reading company, I call that services arbitrage. So, you might provide like I did – proof reading services or may be transcription services, or you might provide video editing services.

Whatever it is you're coming up with, the company where you connect customers with people provides some sort of contract service and you act as a middle man.

Now, with that business you basically have two jobs. Hire the good contractors that deliver the service, and find the customers to buy the products.

Once you've done that and you've got consistent traffic, that's bringing customers and focusing on repeat customers - that business can be very automated.

My proof reading company was by far the lowest amount of work I've ever had with a company once it was setup. Because what all I did was checking on or actually niche sale is checking in on email but eventually I outsourced that job to an assistant.

So, I really only had to make sure that nothing was broken each week, and the assistant will send me a couple of matters that only I can deal with. So, it was less than 2 hours a day to run that one and it wasn't a huge business but it made a salary for me.

You know in the best years it was doing \$100,000 in revenue a year, and I get to keep about 50% of that, after all the costs and things come out.

So I could live of it and have no work, almost. But again I had to set it up, I had to build the website, I had to find the customers, and find the editors, and the proof readers, so there was a bit of work to start off with.

And the other thing I did was buy and sell websites as I mentioned that prior, same story there. If you've a bit of capital, you can buy some websites that are somewhat passive in terms of

their business model. I focused on blogs, for which I hired other writers and I focused on forums, which have user-generated content.

So my job was basically to increase the income these sites made, which is what I usually did by adding more advertising and things like that. So those sites were quite automated and once I had the assistant managing them, again, not much work.

But there's that period of buying them, taking them over, improving their performance, and hiring an assistant.

Once you're established, so 2 hours is definitely realistic. A lot of it actually is a choice you make – do you want to set this up as a near passive income business or do you want to keep growing it.

If you want to keep growing, 2 hours is not going to do it, but you need more hours for growth, you need more hours for setting something up.

But once you reach a point and you decide that your strategy is passive, then you certainly can set things up to be **very hands off. And that's what I did with quite a few of my businesses over the years.**



Dealing with Difficult Times

Q12: You suffered a personal tragedy when you lost your mother. It was sad and affected you in a big way. But you resurged as a stronger person.

What message would you give to people on how to move on and live your life leaving the difficult times behind them?

Yaro: Well, that's a potentially very long answer to that question but I don't think it's appropriate for me to talk about that as much as I'd talk about blogging.

What I can say is that you basically have a choice of how you react to any situation and this comes right back to when I was talking about in terms of re-framing and looking at your internal dialog.

And, in fact, my mother was a teacher and a practitioner of CBT, which you might – this is what's often called “Cognitive Behavior Therapy”, your cognitive behavior training. I didn't study that.

My mother gave me a few tips here and there when I was younger and I read a book that kind of talked about it, but it wasn't structured and wasn't called CBT.

Long story short, you can interpret how you view the world and re-frame any situation to however you would like to react to it.

So, there's obviously a period of time to go through different experiences based on how you're feeling - what your emotional state is. But at some point you'll decide what you want to do, given that you don't have the choice.

See, ultimate thing is you either can keep living in the current condition you're in and if you're okay with that then okay, if you're not happy with the way the things are, then you make the decision to change it.

That's ultimately all you can do. You got choices; you decide what direction to take. And if you're not happy, I recommend choosing things that guide you towards happy things. That's a very simplistic way of looking at it, but really that is it.

It's as simple as “am I happy with what's going on, am I happy with how I'm reacting to this”. If any of the answers to that is “No” – change your reaction, change the circumstances, until you're happy, if happiness is a goal you're looking forward to, which most of us are.

So, I know I'm certainly not the only one who's had a tragedy - there's always a period of adjustment, and of mourning, of experiencing loss. It's something we all go through until it's our own turn to pick the bucket as well.

So, you know, let's not forget that you don't get to choose whether you die or not, its one of those non-options, you know, the only time you don't get a choice is that one. So, everything else you can choose but that one you probably know [you got to deal with](#).

Products for Bloggers

Q13: You're back in business now after a gap of some time.

What are the products and services that you offer now and how helpful are they to bloggers and Internet marketers? What is the next rocking product that you are coming up with?

Yaro: Well, I'm primarily, as you've probably heard during this whole interview, focusing on people who want to build blogs that do not focus on advertising and affiliate income, and do not focus on high volumes of traffic.

I'm looking for people who [want to start blogs](#), build a small consistent stream of traffic from handful of techniques not trying to do everything, be on every platform, but finding one or two things that work really well for you.

And then getting a leverage from that - so, building a customer base, servicing them really well, having a range of products, and building a product funnel – a marketing funnel behind it.

So, most of my products are around the blogging area. So, the moment I'm building that funnel myself so as I said I've the entry products. So, if you want to get started with what I teach, I've a guide on [mindset and productivity](#), I've a guide on [how to buy and sell blogs and websites](#). So, if you don't want to build a site you can buy one, and I've a [guide on getting traffic](#).

So, those are low price – we're talking \$30-\$50 and it can get you started with core aspects of having a successful blog business. If you then want to continue this process, then I have a coaching program; it's basically a platform called the [EJ Insider](#), where I interact with people every day and you can ask questions.

It's basically for people who want more time with me, more personal connection and not just reading a guide - but the ability to ask questions and interact.

And then, the next level which I'm currently working on – I can't give you a concrete answer as to what will come out first or when they'll come out. But basically, the courses I've always had are blog mastermind, membership site mastermind, and the new one – the 2-hour work day.

They all teach an aspect of this so, blog mastermind is basically a more of a A to Z guide about how to make a blog that creates a sale. So it's all about the conversion.

Membership site mastermind, which I've, probably will change names to something that's a little bit more open – I don't want to just teach memberships, I want to teach product funnel.

So, that will be about product creation, content re-purposing and how to create that products you sell from the blog. So, blog mastermind teach you how to use the blog to make the sale and

then the information product course will teach you how to create the products that you then sell.

And then 2 hour work day, it's something new that I've ever had for a long time in my sort of my archives that I never released. It was created even before Timothy Ferriss came out with "The 4-hour workweek" but it was a bit unfortunate that the name was so close to his.

But I'm going to use that. I'm actually going to get out there and sort of leverage the fact that people love the 4-hour work week and offer this course that's called the 2-hour work day , which essentially will teach services arbitrage.

So basically, I talked about before about being a middle person providing a service that's completely different to blogging in terms of business model but you know lot of people don't want to have that kind of business – I didn't either see myself having a blog.

I thought I'd just have a business where I'd provide product or service that other people would deliver and I'd be a middleman.

So that's one of the options that I've done with my proof reading business, and I'd like to have a course up there for people who want to follow that business model.

And then ya, most of the stuff will be based on what kind of reaction I get with these products and services. So lot of this I'm still very much in the middle of developing it all so I don't know what's coming out when, and it's a bit embryonic.

So at the moment all I've is whether you want traffic, whether you want mindset and productivity, or you want to buy and sell some nice low entry guides, which are available at [EJ Insider.com](http://EJInsider.com).



Pros and Cons of Branding

Q14: You're a brand in yourself. Should bloggers try to build a brand too? If yes, then what are the best ways to do that?

Yaro: Well, you kind of can't help it if you're a personal blogger. If you're like you are - the only person writing your content, you'll end up being a brand because you'll infuse your personality into your writing.

It's just the way it is. It's not something that you've to proactively go about building, some people are natural at it. They love it and they love being in a spotlight - they love being themselves.

And if you've a loud personality or certain aspects of your personality - that people will naturally gravitate towards your brand, will be associated with that style.

In my history, I've had some unusual advantages that were not deliberate but became part of my brand and in the early days, it was my long hair.

Not many people know I had long hair and I was this sort of somewhat.... I didn't look like everyone but now I guess it's just a way to put it – it made me stand out.

It was quite a different situation, plus I'd this weird name - and you know not many other Yaro's on this planet. So people would very easily, if they would become introduced to my work, would remember Yaro or would remember the long hair.

After I cut my hair, it's funny, I still have people today who'll act surprised when they re-discover me going "Where did your hair go?", and that was 7 years ago when I cut my hair (laughs). So it's been a long time but you know that's just the way things are.

I think branding is a great aspect of writing a blog and I think if you think of yourself as a **personal brand, if you're prepared for it, then certainly go after the things that make you different and accentuate them.**

That's how you can build a brand around your personality.

You can do gimmicks, you can have mascots, you can have types of logos, you can have phrases, you know John Lee Dumas uses the "Entrepreneur on fire". **He has that podcast and he says let's ignite, and it says gotta bit of a cheesy slogan.** You know Pat Flynn is all about – he's the crash test dummy so he positions himself around that. And then Derek Hepburn positions himself using the psychology in studies to demonstrate proof of certain things that work in marketing.

So everyone has an angle or an aspect like that would become a part of your brand.

The important question to ask yourself though is "Are you prepared to be the brand?" **because if you're thinking of selling your business one day, you decrease your chances of selling it if it's heavily tied into your brand.**

I know my own blog and business will be difficult to sell because it's all about me.

It's possible, ideally though if you're thinking of selling, I'd use a different name to your own name so that you can sell the business and someone can take over that role or of course, choose a business model that's not as focused on you as an individual.

So, have a business name, have a team, have a may be a team of writers, or have a product and **service that is separate from you, and that's much more easy to sell. It's a big important strategic decision to make at the beginning.**

You do want to consider this – **are you building something to sell? That's often how you'd get rich, you may not get rich from the income you make as you run the business because it keeps going back into the business.**

But when you sell it, you get that big payday of potentially multiple six figures to millions of dollars.

So, thinking about building something to sell is actually a really important decision that **blogging as an individual is not really about. If you're building a personal branding and blog, chances are you're gonna have trouble selling it.**

If you want to create a blog that is something sellable, you should have a team of writers, and **make it a bit more like that sort of magazine format like you'll find with most of the biggest** blogs, like Huffington Post and Mashable, Social Media Examiner, Business Insider.

There's so many of them out there but they don't have an individual brand associated with them anymore. Even if they started with one, like Mashable and Huffington Post.

Making Money with Low Traffic

Q15: Blog traffic and making money online are interrelated, aren't they? What are the best ways to do both?

Yaro: Well, very much tied back to my original argument about not focusing on advertising and not focusing on affiliate income. **If you're focusing on selling your own products and services then you don't need as much traffic, you just need higher quality traffic.**

So, that's where the relationship happens. It's about targeting, getting to know about your ideal customer, your customer arbitrage, finding where they hangout and then attracting them and making the choice to pick a customer demographic that are actually buyers.

That is such a huge important decision to make even if you think there's a massive audience. If no one buys stuff in that industry then doesn't matter - you'd make a lot of traffic but you don't make any money.

So, you really...this is more not a decision about "Is making money and traffic interrelated?" - it's about niche selection, it's about customer arbitrage, it's about being clear who you're targeting, and what you offer them.

The clear you get on that, the more likely it is that you make money, the easier it is to make traffic, so that's where everything begins.

Status of Social Media

Q16: Social media is more important than ever. What kind of social media promotion strategy would you suggest to bloggers?

Yaro: Well, to be absolutely honest, I do not have a big social media strategy. I make use of **Twitter and Facebook because they're fun, and I re-post my content onto those sites as well as LinkedIn and Google Plus.**

I do agree that Google+ in particular is important because Google uses that data in their search rankings, so be nice to Google. Unfortunately, Google is the master right now since it sends so much traffic, you do want to factor in – what Google wants you to do so.

Being a Google+ user they're setting up your Google account doing Google authorship. That's pretty much the only mandatory social media aspect that I'd recommend.

I actually believe you can ignore social media altogether and have a successful business still – **it's not as important as you'll make it out to be.**

What happens though is certain industries benefit from it immensely. Certain people love it and they spend all their time thinking **about studying it. It is a brilliant source of traffic, it's a brilliant source of customers, its interwoven into how the Internet works today, so you certainly gain a benefit from having a presence on these platforms.**

But you don't have to use them as an everyday time sync. You could just go to Facebook, spend money on ads, and if you've the right target customer with the right offer, you'll make so much more money than you ever will by just using Facebook as a regular normal user interacting here and there.

Because if you're focusing on conversion, then it's about getting a target customer for making a sale.

If you're focusing on long-term engagement and building a tribe and having a massive following, then the social media tools become helpful, but that is not a short path.

You've a long process and it's going to be an on-going process you've to do forever, which is why I don't want to depend on social media.

I do not look to anything that requires lots of hefty work every day for a long time in order to make a worthwhile that to me is a recipe for not a 2 hours day.

That being said if you love it then that's the thing you love, so you should do it all the time, and I know there's a lot of people who do and that's why social media is important to them.

Harleena, probably that's the same for you – you're probably, I think you're a big fan of social media so you should spend a lot of time there.

My argument is you don't need it. It's one traffic strategy of many, you can chose to apply, it up to you to pick the best one for your situation.



Driving Happiness Home

Q17: I'm sure bloggers would like to know more about your personal views – about your concept of happiness and take on life.

What is your purpose of life and how would you like to be remembered?

Yaro: That's a big question. This thing changes, you know. I go from being much more idealistic when I was younger and then circumstances changed, based on what's important to you in the moment.

Sometimes you're so focused on making money and building a basic level of cash of flow and standard of life that everything is about that. Then you make enough money to start contemplating to do what you really want to do with your time.

That's what I found with my own experience was over the years. I went from - I need to make enough money, to move out of my house, to I want to make bigger money.

So I've true financial freedom, like I want to have a million dollars in the bank, and own my house, and own my car, not have any loans.

But when you reach a point when you start making like \$30,000 a month, which is what I was at, you know, couple of years ago, I realized I could decide how to use my time.

That's when I was thinking what I want to do next, that's why I started a start-up, because I was quite keen to have that kind of experience.

So for me, as I said, things change. I'm not worried about being remembered. I enjoy writing, that's certainly something that I like and I plan to use some kind of writing in everything that I do for the rest of my life.

But I also love start-ups and technology and those sorts of big ideas that change the world.

So, I'm planning moving to San Francisco. I might get involved with another startup again at some point soon. But for the moment, my only focus is getting what I know about outside of my head and on to information that other people can benefit from.

And once I feel like I've done that, then I'll decide what's next.

And that makes me happy at the moment - **it's just about more for me... almost everything I've always done is about realizing my potential. So, I feel like I know how to do something and understand something, I want to see the result. That's what drives me.**

It might be in blogging, it might be in a startup, it might be in other aspects of life, from maybe focusing on better eating, losing weight, gaining weight, getting into a relationship.

All these things you feel like you start to get better at and if you have knowledge, for me, the greatest satisfaction is the execution of knowledge, in delivering the result that will always be, you know, makes me happy and what drives me.

Future of Blogging

Q18: How do you foresee the future of blogging? Do you think blogs will continue to "live" as they do now along with blog comments? Will membership sites have a future?

What possible changes should we be prepared for?

Yaro: Well, I was actually just talking to Gideon Shalwick, good friend of mine, about this very subject, and we agreed on what we consider the future of everything to do with information.

So, if you're talking about blog comments, blogging, membership site, the big concept we think that eventually everything will head towards is that all will be free. All information will be free.

So you won't be charging for digital information and products. The membership sites that are just information probably won't exist – you'll be giving them for free. All your videos will be for free. All your training products will be for free.

So in my case all my guides will be free, all my courses will be free, everything that I've ever produced in terms of written or published content will be free.

But for that to work, you need to have some kind of business model behind it. If you want to see an example, how this has already happened in another industry – look at the music industry.

Music industry - the music is all free. We already know that and you can go to YouTube and watch every single film clip you've ever wanted to on there – **it's all for free anytime on demand.**

So the musicians of the world have had to find other platforms to focus their income producing **efforts so on, and for them it's become about adding value services and products. So, live events** have become a much more important aspect of their income streams.

Back in the days, the record sales and then live events. Now record sales – NO - **unless you're at the very very very top of the tree. You might sell enough MP3's to make good money but most artists in the music world make their money from performance.**

Then there's also the same concept of that rabid tribe who buy everything they produce. So, their music might be free, but the special edition, limited print version of something won't be free. And the true core fans will buy that.

So, again, that marketing funnel becomes important, the tribe becomes important, because they spend the **most money on what you do. So what you'll probably find in the future is that all blogging will be free, all information you produce online will be free.**

You'll have live workshops, you'll have private coaching, group coaching programs, you'll have special limited edition types of things you do. And you'll probably do things for people - you'll deliver services, you'll have products done for them, you'll have software, you'll have automation.

It'll be what people are already doing, you know, services like lead pages and AWeber and OntraPort and InFusionSoft and all the various plugins you can buy. All those sorts of business models will become the more prevalent style, and information will be free.

As for things like “would blogs live and where will comments be?” at the end of the day, publishing is not going to go away.

I wrote about this recently, if humans continue to communicate using words, there'll always be a place for publishing. And I doubt humans are going to stop communicating using words unless we tap into some sort of, you know psychokinetic kind of connection, which I don't see happening certainly not in the near future, so we'll need to publish.

A [blog and the comments](#) and the Internet happens to be the tool we use today. Smartphones invented another platform, the mobile way of communicating and a way of reading published content. Apps again changing that, so the platforms change and the tools change, but unless

there's something significant changing about in the Internet, but I don't see blogging going away

That's like saying "will the website be replaced?" Right now, the Internet is still predominantly "websites". They might be more social, they might be more interactive, but it's still publishing words.

Then you tell me any social platforms, it's still publishing words - it's music on YouTube, it's audio on podcasting, its written words on a blog, its written words on a social media, they're still all words.

So that's not changed, its just been a change in the platform, so until a new platform comes along, nothing is going to stop blogging in my opinion.

It's just has to be a better platform – may be something 3D, maybe something more connected to our body might change things but it's still publishing.

Health Tips for Bloggers

Q19: Making money online and blogging are addictive professions. Moreover, they can adversely affect our health too.

What measures do you take to keep fit and healthy? What would be your health tips for bloggers and Internet marketers who remain glued to their laptops and computers most of the time?

Yaro: Well don't do that (laughs), you don't want to stay glued to your computer all the time – not healthy.

Major tip from me would be to use a stand up desk, that is, I'm talking to you right now I'm standing up. I'm moving around and I'm not sitting in a chair, I've [better posture](#) and my energy and my blood is flowing, it's a lot different than sitting in a chair and doing this. That's by far number one tip. Sitting will kill you.

For me the most important thing is a rapid changing of activity. So, you know, nobody is built to do one thing for long periods of time, no matter what it is you shouldn't do something for hour upon hour.

So, you know, you should be writing a blog, you should be reading Internet posts, you should be exercising, you should be mixing it all up – nothing is all the time.

So for me, and this is an aspect of having the freedom that we talked about earlier on. Having the control over your life to choose how you spend your time is really important because once I

finish this recording with you, Harleena, I'm leaving the house - it's just gone mid-day, I'll probably go grab some lunch.

I'm going to leave at about one o'clock afternoon, and then I'm going to ride my bike somewhere else, and then I'm going to sit down with my laptop at a Cafe and do a couple of hours of work.

And then I'm going to get back on the bike and ride home and then I'm going to go to a Yoga class. Then I'll come home and send some emails and you know, do a bit of work like a 10-11 o'clock at night.

So, the important point there's the transition of activity. We all know we've to eat right. We all know we've to exercise, we all know we've to work, we all know we've to educate yourself, and we've to socialize. How you combine those things and how you divvy up your time spent is what matters.

So, variability and doing them all in some shape or format every week is basically how you stay in balance. What I do believe in though is not forcing yourself to being balanced every day.

There's a time to counter balance basically, in fact, I read about this in ["The One Thing"](#) by Gary Keller recently. He talked about life balance not being the answer, but life counter-balancing being the answer.

I totally agree with him - what he means by that is there are times in your life when you've to focus on an aspect more than other things. So, your business might be going through a launch, **you're getting a new product ready, you've to focus on making money or you're going to be homeless.**

That's when you start counter balancing your time heavily towards the income producing work you're doing.

But eventually once you get some income, things are settled down, you start to counter balance little bit away from work and then you can go back to maybe family or health or **something like that. Obviously, you tell your family that this is what I'm focusing on right now but I won't be forever.**

Unfortunately what most people will do is to counter balance so far towards one activity that **eventually their body will start to tell them they can't do that anymore or they'll get sick.** Getting sick forces the counter balance movement away from what they're doing back to repair and recovery of your body.

And that might trigger response, you know. What you want to do is make sure there's enough maintenance in terms of balance, and then as you flow from different goals you counter balance the majority.

So this is the [time to spend with family](#), which might be weekends or holidays, there a time to spend focused on work during projects but there's also always a little bit of exercise, always good eating, going on.

And then you know you might decide you want to lose a bunch of weight or gain a bunch of muscle - that's counter balance away from work towards more heavily in terms of exercising.

So, it's moving time away understanding that you've a finite amount of time. So actually living a balanced life is impossible.

But living a counter balance constantly flowing life works, as long as you always maintain a basic standard for the critical things like health, eating, exercise, rest, that sort of thing.



1 Yaro Starak, Darren Rowse, and Chris Garrett

Need and Benefits of Blog Business

Q20: Lastly, what do you think of Aha!NOW?

What special message do you have for its lovely and vibrant community?

Yaro: Well, I certainly can see the community aspect at what you're doing, Harleena, like I can feel the passion that you've for socially connecting with your audience and I'm sure your audience feels the same way about you.

You've a very strong level of engagement and I've come across a lot of people like you who're so good at devoting so much time and effort to their people and that's wonderful, and I'd never suggest you stop doing that.

But one thing I want to speak to and suggest for yourself and for all your audiences is asking yourself a simple question – *“Are you happy with the amount of money you're making with your business and if not, what are you doing things to increase your income?”*

And for me the answer to that question would be *“Are you making enough offers?”*

Unfortunately, we can spend all of our time just engaging and enjoying the social interaction. **And you know what, if you've got a lot of inheritance, or you've got a sugar daddy or sugar mommy, who's paying your bills - then that's fine, you can spend as much time as socializing and engaging and just talking for the sake of talking - that's wonderful.**

But, if you're having a business and you want to make a profit, then I'd suggest that you think about counter balancing a little bit of time away towards offer creation, product creation, marketing and selling.

And then this is the incredible thing – if you start making a living from what you do, you get access to resources, you get access to the potential for greater leverage and you can actually reach and help a whole lot more people.

So, in some aspects, I'd suggest that you're actually hindering your audience because you're not able to help them as well as you could. But, if you did have a profitable business, think about all the things you could create and give away to your people.

If you had an income stream that was consistent and profitable, you can do so much more and help so many more people.

So in some ways, it's even better to be focusing on a profitable business than just the social engagement issue. But like I said, it's a personal choice based on your situation and you're certainly doing a great job of interacting with your community and supporting them, Harleena.

So, that's it from me, thank you for giving me all these questions – some different ones that I'm not used to answering.

I hope everyone got something from it and my name is Yaro, Y-A-R-O from Entrepreneurs-Journey.Com. Thank you Harleena and I talk to you soon, Good bye!

You can also download the free ebook Yaro offers – [Blog Profits Blueprint](#) – and try out some monetization strategies on your blog.

Conclusion and Take Away from Yaro's Interview

Summing up, in this interview, Yaro tells us that –

- Freedom means having the choice and control to do what you want
- Have an email list and use it to build relationships
- Focus on selling and do direct response selling of your products and services
- Spend more time creating content for paying members
- Have a community, tribe, core group, or loyal followers
- Nurture customer relationships, and foster a community that would buy from you
- Have a specific target market, target audience, and a niche within a niche
- *Niching down* on the target audience is the best way to segment
- Have a marketing funnel with a range of products
- Remain positive, create a business mindset, and you'll get confidence with experience
- Work hard in the beginning to earn easy money later
- Success depends on your choices, decision, and reactions
- Don't create personal branding around the blog if you want to sell it later
- Higher quality targeted traffic makes you more money than massive traffic
- Social media is a traffic strategy that can be avoided
- Realizing your potential and getting results will bring happiness
- Coaching and service related blog business models and marketing funnel are important because information will be free in future
- Counter-balance your life by having variability and transition of activity in your work routine
- Make a living from what you do

That's it!

If you like what Yaro says - then visit his website that has lots of information or read his free ebook – [Blog Profits Blueprint](#).

I hope you benefit from this interview series as much I did and will share your thoughts and feelings with Yaro and me in the comments below.

If you would like to read the responses and feedback of bloggers on this interview, then visit these posts on Aha!NOW and read the comments –

>> [The Aha!NOW Chat With Yaro Starak \[Interview\]](#)

>> [The Aha!NOW Chat With Yaro Starak \[Interview – Part2\]](#)

Do you also want to create your blog as business and set up an automated blog business? Then **download Yaro's ebooks and learn how to create a successful blogging career with financial freedom.**

Happy Blogging,

~ Harleena Singh

Aha!NOW (<http://www.aha-now.com>)



The End!

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