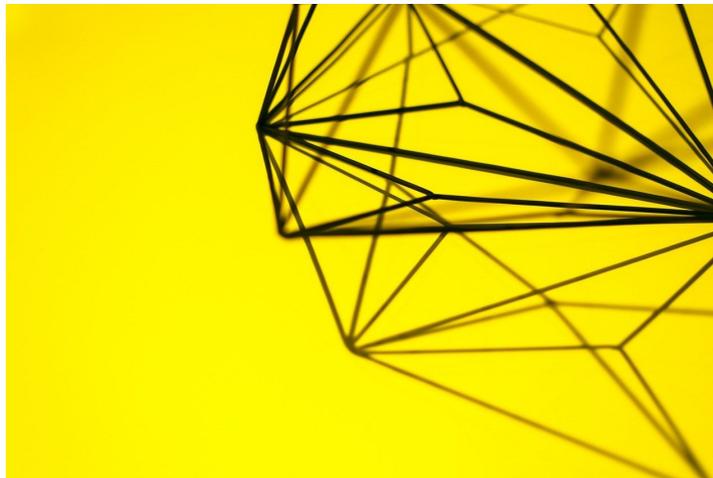


13 *Real* Small Business Ideas

For Side Hustle or Full Time Entrepreneurs

By Bestselling Author and Business Leader

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Goals of this PDF

- Consider 13 small business/side hustle ideas.
- Get the resources to start making money on the side or quit your job altogether.
- Identify the differences between generating cash and wealth.
- Find ways to specialize and gain a competitive advantage.
- Uncover ways to fill in skills gaps.
- Evaluate options for getting the help you need to launch your idea.



This PDF boasts 13 real small business ideas and ways to make money online, from home, or as a side hustle for entrepreneurs.

While there are many business idea lists out there, many of them focus on easy money and making quick money. As such, the ideas in those lists are usually sub par and appealing to someone who likely won't succeed in generating money successfully anyway.

The ideas here are tried-and-true, genuine small business ideas, whether you're doing micro businesses on the side or creating full-fledged small business that can grow to enterprises.

You could easily fail with any of these ideas; but you could also use any of them to become rich. Every one of the small business ideas here require you hustle harder than the next guy, work smart, take the time to educate yourself on being successful in that area, and execute. Oh and you have to market and sell your idea! If someone wrote a great book that no one read, they didn't market and sell it. More on this at the end.

BUT...this is the **exact reason there is such great opportunity** in small business for side hustle and full-time entrepreneurs...if it was easy, it wouldn't be so rewarding, both financially and intrinsically.

With these small business ideas, I'll give you resources, action steps, and whether or not the idea can make you rich.

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You're not going to find get-rich-quick, pyramid, or other guru/scam small business ideas here. If that's what you're looking for, head elsewhere. These small business ideas will require you put sweat and passion into them. But because most people won't do this, you can win much easier than you think. It's time for you to get smart, craft your life, and start living a lifestyle you craft.



Nothing has the ability to give you the life you want, the money you want, and the creative outlet you need like a business. You owe it to yourself to start today and thank yourself this time next year. Perhaps next year this time, you're making an extra \$50,000 on this side. Or perhaps you're in a position to completely quit your day job and earn six-figure multiple. Don't delay.

How can a small business idea make you rich?

Earning a little extra money on the side is one thing. Even if that extra money grows to six-figure income, are you rich? Probably not. As you look at these small business ideas, I'll provide info on how they can make you not only extra income, but also rich. Here are the three ways small business ideas can make you rich:

1. **Passive.** That is your potential income isn't limited by your time. You put in effort or money upfront, but then begin earning from it indefinitely. Even ideas such as consulting can grow and generate money without you as long as you're able to build the right team to support you.

2. **Sellable.** Selling a business is a great way to make a windfall of cash. You can sell unique intellectual property, a specific market or customer base, or an income-producing asset.
3. **Scalable.** Much like passive income, scalable income is not limited by your time. However, it has another quality: ability to hit massive quantities. If you can sell 100 per month or 100,000 per month without much change in your direct effort, then your idea is scalable. Owning a rental property would a passive income source, but not scalable. Writing a book and exposing it to millions of people on Amazon is, however, scalable.



Ways to make money online

“Content is where I expect much of the real money will be made on the Internet, just as it was in broadcasting.” - Bill Gates

The great thing about creating content is you can express yourself creatively, dive into a topic you enjoy, and it can easily be done on the side at your own pace. Done properly, the financial rewards can be very significant. Better yet, most ways to make money online become more and more passive over time, which to me is why they are ultimately one of the best small business ideas. While you might put in the hard work creating the content and marketing upfront, you are setting yourself up for recurring revenue that won't require your day-to-day attention.

1. Write a book, self publish

Don't knock this idea, numerous people I know make \$3,000 to \$20,000 per month from their books. This number, of course, has no ceiling. Finding a topic you like writing about is probably much easier than you think, and it is very enjoyable. Apart from the revenue earned, you will have excellent content you can use in numerous other ways, you can establish yourself as an authority on a topic, and you'll also have the ultimate business card.

Books can be a great way to not only make monthly cash flow, but also gain surges in cash. Book launches, done properly, can sell thousands of copies. Let's look at the numbers for a good launch.

Books Sold During Launch Week	25,000
Profit per Book	\$3.86
Launch Marketing Expense	(\$10,000)
Book Launch Week Profit	\$86,500

Resources:

- With freelancers across the globe available on places like [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com), you have inexpensive yet professional editing, cover design, and formatting at your fingertips.
- Once you have a great book, the real trick is marketing. Authors are called “best sellers” not “best writers” for a reason. I recommend [Epic Launch](#) and used them myself to learn about selling books.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: in most cases, no
- Scalable: yes

Action: Brainstorm 20 ideas you'd enjoy writing about. Search for similar books on Amazon by category. Within the top 20 books in each category, what does the competition look like? If the top books don't have a lot of reviews, you have a great

chance of breaking in and standing out. Are there books with less than 20 reviews? Less than 10? If you find a niche to exploit, take the bonus action of creating an outline for your book.

2. Create a niche website

The goal of a niche website is to earn money from affiliates and display advertisements run by Google Adwords or Facebook. Startup costs are as little as \$5 per month for the hosting, and the education. Generating traffic is key to being successful. The content can be delivered in the format you find easiest to work with, be it video, blog, or otherwise. In fact, this content can come from the book you've written or it can become a book. Content can be packaged in numerous ways, which is why it is so important to just start creating.

Resources:

- Web hosting: [GoDaddy](#) with great, inexpensive web hosting and excellent customer service
- Email: [Getresponse](#) for building the backbone of your online business...your email list
- There is plenty to learn and many subtleties. [RankXL](#) is the best educational resource I've seen on this topic. Be sure to also check out the blog for free info.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: yes

Action: Write out at least 20 topics you enjoy and could see yourself writing about. Then, study up on "keyword research" and see if any of your ideas are consistently searched but not already dominated by big national companies. If you're having trouble, you probably just need to go a level more specific in your ideas. There are countless ideas out there that aren't yet saturated.

3. Sell an online course

Having created a book or niche website, a natural follow on is to put that content into a course format. All of these small business ideas come together to and can result in a broader approach to make money.

Online courses can build on your other content, and have higher value because they can be interactive, include multimedia, and even access to the creator (you). Online courses can be sold on your own website using a Learning Management System (LMS) or through marketplaces like [Udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com). Depending on the type of delivery, you can even charge monthly membership fees for recurring revenue.

Resources:

- Web hosting: [GoDaddy](https://www.godaddy.com)
- Email: [GetResponse](https://www.getresponse.com)
- LMS for Wordpress: [LearnDash](https://www.learnDash.com)
- Payment Platform: [Stripe](https://www.stripe.com)

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: yes

Action: Map out the outline of a 4-module course in your area of expertise.

[Quiz: are you using growth to make your goals easy to obtain?](#)



Make money from home (home-based business ideas)

4. Consulting

Consulting is probably one of the best ways for most people to start a small business or side hustle. If you've built up experience in a particular area with results to back, you can almost certainly begin hiring out your services. In fact, many people and companies that seek consulting services have very basic or no current initiatives in the area they hire. This means they often just want the basics, not services that require years of highly-focused experience.

Generally, consulting gigs pay twice as much as would be paid to regular employees. That means if you're a marketing person earning \$50 per hour, you'd likely fetch \$100 per hour as a consultant. Companies do this because they don't have to worry about the overhead of having employees (benefits, time off, management, building space, and more) and they also can disengage at any time. You, on the other hand, gain a higher pay rate, more autonomy, and greater control. It's fantastic.

Consulting is probably the simplest way for most people to transition out of regular employment. And if you build a business around it, it can grow independent of your time. That's right, you can charge \$100 per hour and pay assistants \$15 per hour to fulfill most of the services. This is how you can go from selling 40 hours per week to selling 400 hours per week. Not bad.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes, once it becomes a business
- Sellable: yes, once it becomes a business
- Scalable: no, but your expertise can be spun off to books, software, and more

Action: List out 20 people in your network that are purchasing decision makers at companies. Brainstorm the value you can provide each of them. Reach out by phone to let them know you're considering starting a consulting business and would like their input of your ideas. Let it roll from there.

5. Coaching

Similar to consulting, coaching is a great way for many people to make money from home and on the side. Whereas consulting solves common business problems and business tend to have budget to pay for such items, coaching typically is a bit tougher sale. You have to be able to demonstrate deep expertise in an area and be able to reach people that value personal investment strongly.

To augment your personal track record, you can become certified by coaching programs such as Jack Canfield's. You'll pay upfront for this, but you would need to consider it an investment in your coaching business. This will help you market and get customers, but you still need work to build your coaching business.

Coaching is highly rewarding. It's fantastic to take part in personal transformations. But you may find it more challenging to get off the ground than consulting. Additionally, if people are paying for time with you, there is less you can outsource.

But, on the upside, you'll be working with successful people, building your network, and will be more likely to surround yourself with success, small business ideas, and opportunity.

Resources:

- [Jack Canfield Train the Trainer](#)

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: no, unless you sell corresponding courses and books
- Sellable: no
- Scalable: no

Action: List out your 10 personal areas of excellence and go through your numbers-based track record in each. Read up on coaching certification programs.

6. Freelance

If the small business ideas of consulting and coaching seem too tough to break into given your current experience, success record, time, or money, then freelancing is your



answer. And don't get me wrong, you can build a full-fledged business around freelancing; but it is also one of the easiest small business ideas for most people to start.

Whether technical, artistic, or otherwise, there are millions of other entrepreneurs, side hustlers, and business owners who are looking for one-time services. Services that you can fulfill. These services are best kept very specific, such as designing logos, converting videos, formatting books for Kindle, or transcribing audio.

Unlike many of the other small business ideas here, there are large marketplaces built around freelancing, such as upwork and fiverr. This means people can bring their wallets, search, and find the services you provide. This eliminates a big piece of the marketing puzzle for you, but you will need to spend time learning how to compete. You need to figure out how to show in the top of results for your speciality. Additionally, since you'll be competing globally, you will likely have price pressure.

Ultimately, you should leverage freelancing to build your portfolio, polish your business acumen, and build relationships. By over delivering, you may find yourself moving into longer-term business relationships with clients on a consulting basis. Alternatively, freelancing can augment your consulting business or you can hire out portions of the freelance deliverables to other people, thereby making it a business. With freelancing, you should use it as a way to move up the chain.

Resources:

- [Fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com)
- [Upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com)

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: no
- Sellable: no, unless you build your freelancing into a proper business
- Scalable: no

Action: Go to [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) and search gigs. Check out areas in which you have expertise and interest. How competitive are they? What sort of prices are charged (you have to click past the basic gig prices to read true pricing)?



Create a business from your trade or profession

7. Skills-based services business

Whether you are a plumber, HVAC technician, software engineer, or CPA, chances are you can go out on your own. Rather than build the future of your employer, build your own future. As you gain experience in your trade, you likely have built a network of people who know and trust your work. This is a great sign that it is time to go off on your own.

I know numerous business owners that created skills-based services companies. From HVAC to software companies, they've all agreed it was the best decision they ever made. Creating a services business not only will build wealth, but it will also allow you to reduce your own time in the trade, which can be very important in manual-labor jobs as you age.

The other great thing about skills-based services businesses is that it is easy to specialize and avoid competition. You may offer your services just to a particular underserved industry. Or you may go local or hyper-local. There are countless ways to slice-and-dice your target market, which will significantly help your chance of quick profit. Additionally, older companies providing these services become complacent all the time. Customer service, responsiveness, and marketing all lack. It can be easy to shine.

The idea here is to make money off of your employees while also retaining a higher rate yourself. Using plumbing as an example, as an employee, you might make \$25 per hour.



But you'll notice that your company bills out at \$60 per hour. Let's see how that plays out:

Bill Rate	\$60
Employee Pay	(\$25)
Overhead (20%)	(\$12)
Net Profit	\$23

You'll see that the company keeps about your rate in profit. This model shows a 38% profit margin, which is very achievable for well-run companies.

Now, if you were to own a services business rather than work for one, here's how those numbers might play out. Let's say you have 5 employees, delivering billable services. You will have an answering service, insurance, marketing, vehicle, and other costs, but those are wrapped in the overhead figure. We'll use the same assumptions as above.

	Assumption	Monthly Dollars
Employee Time Billed	800 hours per month	\$48,000
Your Hours Billed	100 hours per month	\$6,000
Employee Pay	\$25 per hour	(\$20,000)
Additional Overhead	20% of billed	(\$10,800)
Net Profit	Monthly	\$23,200

These numbers show that you've reduced your billable time to about 25 hours per week. Perhaps you work another 10 per week on the business. Meanwhile, **our annual pay has gone from \$50,000 to \$278,400.**

This may all start with one employee, building up to 5 over time. Ultimately, your billable time reduces and perhaps you even hire a manager, thereby allowing you to enjoy time away from the business. It's easy to see why this is such a great model. It allows you to ease in and has a clear exit. This concept can be applied to numerous other small business ideas.

Perhaps the best success story in my personal network is someone who quit his standard job to start a skills-based services company with one employee. Four years later, he now has 200 employees and bills out in the millions, while maintaining very healthy profit margins. Competitors regularly solicit to buy his company. None of this would have happened had he stayed at his W2 job.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes, once you step out of the day-to-day
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: no

Action: Get over your fear of generating business. If you're an HVAC technician, the idea of creating a website to get business may be prohibitively daunting. Don't let it be. Search local marketing companies, set appointments, and let them know what you're up to. You might be pleasantly surprised at how easy it will be to keep yourself and your first employee busy.

8. Create a software product

If you are a software engineer, creating software that makes a company money, you need to seriously consider creating software you can sell yourself. There are countless small business ideas and opportunities for software engineers. Some of the best and most exciting entrepreneur ideas right now are coming from the software industry.

Further, some of the largest acquisitions take place in software--just be sure to protect your ideas, patents or otherwise. Software engineering is a tough, competitive field, but there are people making big money on the side or full-time all over the place, so why not you?



If you're able to provide software that addresses a problem or adds value to people, that is a great first step. The next step is marketing and selling the software, which is not easy. While there are many marketplaces (such as app stores) that allow you to distribute software, they are crowded and there is price pressure. Take the same approach as publishing a book: hire a freelance cover editor, copywriter, and others to fill in your gaps and develop a professional-quality product, end-to-end.

Given the competitiveness, a great place to start is to make a decision about monetization. Do you try to sell your product for immediate revenue to businesses? Or do you offer your product for free in an attempt to build a massive list of registered users? Or something else? Start with this goal in mind in order to treat this as a business.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: yes

Action: Research software product monetization methods.

Business ideas in real estate

Real estate is full of tremendous opportunity and contains its own subset of small business ideas. It's no accident that some of the wealthiest people I know are in real estate.

9. Buy rental properties

Rental properties are a business and they are a great way to build passive income and also wealth. You have to build your knowledge. As I like to say, not every real estate investor I know is rich, but every rich person I know is a real estate investor. When you buy a rental house, you are providing a service: you are providing housing to someone who cannot buy housing themselves.

In order to not just earn passive income through monthly cash flow, but to also get rich, you need to do two things: increase the income of the property or buy in a growing area. Those two things make the property more valuable and will allow you to sell for much more than you bought.

Again, to succeed here, you don't necessarily need a lot of money--you need education.

Resources:

- Ben Leybovich's justaskbenwhy.com. Get started with a [free ebook and 3 weeks of audio training here](#). Ben started with almost none of his own money and has built a portfolio that allows him to live without a W2 job. Oh and he drives a Tesla and lives in a beautiful home.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: probably not unless you're buying large multi-unit complexes

Action: Talk with a real estate agent (free) to get a profile of a typical rental home in your area, including the price point. Then, talk your bank to see what it would take to get a loan in place. If their requirements (cash or otherwise) are too high for you, research creative finance--there is always a way to get started.

10. House hack

I love this one. A new trend emerging is to use your home as a way to generate cash. This may offset some of your monthly mortgage payment, pay for your home completely, or provide very solid income. The trick is to find a primary home that is suited for house hacking. This may mean your home has a casita, a guest house, or simply a separated living space. Additionally, you should target living near an area that attracts out of state visitors, whether a tourist destination, a college town, or a major business hub.

Do you think moving downtown or to your dream city is out of reach financially? Maybe not! Consider buying a home suited for house hacking. You can upgrade your lifestyle without breaking the bank.

Resources:

- Advertise on [Airbnb](#) and [VRBO](#)

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes assuming you build in a fee for cleaning and turnover service
- Sellable: yes, as demonstrated income typically increases the value of your home
- Scalable: no

Action: Browse Airbnb and VRBO to see what type of properties are available in your ideal city. Call a local real estate agent to discuss the idea.

11. Fix and flip houses

Fix and flipping is a great way to make surges of cash. If you live in an appreciating market, where it is hard to buy rental properties, then this may a great way for you to still make money in real estate. Despite what you see on TV, this is labor and money intensive. You'll also need a great network of reliable contractors, real estate agents, wholesalers, and more.

Resources:

- Mark Ferguson of investfourmore.com is the best and most active house flipper I know. He generally has 16-18 flips going at any one time, which is crazy! Maybe that's why he has a garage full of exotic cars. Get on [his email list here](#), you won't regret it.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: not unless you have a team doing the work for you
- Sellable: no
- Scalable: no

Action: Call a local real estate agent and see what the flipping market looks like in your area. And most importantly, start educating yourself on the nuts and bolts!

12. Build a real estate team

Are you a real estate agent or considering becoming one? That's great! Like other commission-based fields, real estate agents can make a whole lot of money. The key to making it a business is to build a team. That means you have other agents that work for you and you take a percentage of their commission. By doing this, you can multiply your income.

What do you need to provide in exchange for the commission split? It's not as much as you think. Most new agents struggle with systems, structure, and generating leads. It's the basics. By being smart about your advertising, you can keep the team busy in a cost-effective manner. You can answer questions, provide templates, a CRM, and other systems to fast track their success.

Resources:

- Mark Ferguson with investfourmore.com not only has great info on flips, but also a ton for agents and building out teams. [Get on his list here](#).

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes

- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: no

Action: Talk to your Managing Broker about how building a team works in your office. Find some young agents who need some guidance and see if they're interested in learning from you and being part of your structure.

13. Property management

One of the wealthiest real estate agents I know is a property manager. This might seem shocking, but done right, property management can be an excellent business. Who are your clients? People rich enough to have a portfolio of real estate they don't want to deal with! As a property manager, you have the opportunity to surround yourself with successful, business-minded people. Think of the opportunities that may come of that if you develop relationships properly and over service them.

Additionally, your income isn't limited to property management fees. Those clients will be buying and selling homes regularly. The bulk of your income will actually be in commissions, not management fees. This is how you land multi-million dollar property contracts and have repeat customers in real estate.

Can it make you rich?

- Passive: yes
- Sellable: yes
- Scalable: only if you expanding geographically and move into large building management

Action: Take a property management class and attend a property management association meeting.

Business ideas with low investment

Probably the top question asked is what if I have the will, but don't have any money? Well, the answer is you need to do the side hustle and choose the right small business ideas. Look back at this list, and you'll find many ideas that require nothing but sweat and effort from you to get started. That means you just need to make time to get it done.



Get your first idea out the door, and use the money you make to fuel bigger and riskier ideas.

What do all of these small business ideas have in common?

Marketing and sales! You can have the best product or service on the planet, but if no one knows about it, it won't sell. Each of the small business ideas mentioned above have their own marketing strategies to master. Think of marketing as a game. If you understand the game, you can win.

Whether you do the marketing and sales yourself, hire someone to do it for you, or partner with someone, you should still take the time to understand the game for your particular idea. If you don't plan on handling marketing and sales yourself, you still need to build your knowledge so you can make better decisions about who you hire and partner with. Like it or not, the CEOs of companies are generally the top salespeople in the company too. You will have a unique passion, understanding, and drive. So get in the game.

Should you go local or national--how do you specialize?

One of the best ways to overcome competition is to specialize. Get very specific in what you offer and to whom. Solve a problem for a specific person in a specific place. Advertise to them. Sell to them. Eat where they eat. And when they buy from you, over deliver. You can grow and expand from there, but start as specific as possible. Start in your backyard and watch yourself grow into the big dog in no time.

If your business idea is not local by nature (book, course, software product), you need to get hyper-specific on the target audience and the problem you solve for them. The more general you are, the less you'll stand out.

What if you have skill gaps (marketing, sales, technology, etc...)?

If you have one or more terrific small business ideas, but are stuck because you don't know how to get your website going or don't know how you could possibly sell, here are my favorite options:



1. **Partner** with someone who knows how to do what you don't. Maybe they're a killer marketer, but lack their own small business ideas. Go into business together and share the profits. This keeps your costs down and lets you launch your business. Read all about the [5 advantages of small business partnerships here >](#)
2. **Learn on the job.** If you're a W2 employee at a big company, take advantage. Do your side hustle, but in the meantime, do whatever it takes to move jobs at your employer and get experience in areas you need.
3. **Learn as you go.** All you need is one customer to get started. Maybe your skills are lacking in one area, but are good enough in others to get started. Most of your customers are at the 101 level, so even if you can bring a 102-level game, you can probably get going sooner than you think. You likely still bring solid value to your first customer, so take it as an opportunity to get paid and refine as you develop.
4. **Hire out on a freelance basis.** Go back to the freelance section. You have access to a huge pool of global talent that is waiting to deliver you great professional services at low-geography costs. You can get a lot more done with a lot less than you think.

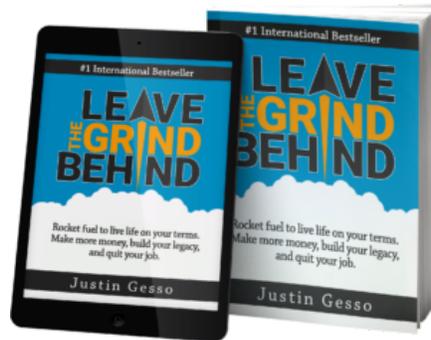
These four approaches have been critical in my path. Don't expect you can do everything on your own. Getting help in the right areas makes the difference between success and failure.

Conclusion

There are no shortage of small business ideas for side hustle or full-time entrepreneurs. Taking control of your future, becoming rich, and enjoying your life is at stake. Take the first action step today and get the ball rolling.

Wrapping Up

We live in an awesome time where with the right approach and the right attitude, you can start your own money-generating business machine. You are the only thing holding yourself back. If you like what you read here, check out more in my bestselling book [Leave the Grind Behind](#). It will shortcut your path.



Look, I'm dedicated to growing the businesses of millions. I'm committed to inspiring people to leave the grind behind and achieve their own excellence. I want to hear your story. I want to connect. Here are some ways:

- justin@justingesso.com
- [facebook.com/grindbehind](https://www.facebook.com/grindbehind)
- twitter.com/justingesso
- <https://justingesso.com>

And of course, you have to go buy my book bestseller “[Leave the Grind Behind](#)” on [Amazon.com >>](#)

I know you'll love it. Thanks for reading,

JUSTIN GESSO

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