

10 Steps **TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU DON'T** **NEED A VACATION FROM**



A practical guide for preparing your exit, building with intention, and creating a life you actually enjoy waking up to.

Jessel Jones



INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this, you're probably at that place where you're starting to feel like, this can't be all there is. You've been showing up, going to work, doing what you have to do but deep down, it still doesn't feel right. That was me. I was doing everything I thought I was supposed to, and still, I felt like something was missing.

I had the job I prayed for. I was respected. I had benefits. But I wasn't fulfilled. And the more I kept pushing through without checking in with myself, the more I lost sight of who I really was. I needed a reset. I needed clarity.

This eBook is about the exact steps I took to get back to myself and start building the life I actually wanted to live. These steps didn't just help me leave my job. They helped me reconnect with purpose, make real decisions, and move forward with confidence.

If you're ready to start doing the same, I'm walking with you. Read each step, reflect, and take action. Bit by bit, this is how you start living the life you were meant to live.

About Me



My name is Jessel Jones. I'm the founder and CEO of J. Jones Consulting and Chef Easy Food Company, and I also lead the nonprofit Trinidad and Tobago Next Generation Youth. I spent over 12 years working in the manufacturing industry, and while I had some great experiences and met amazing people, something felt off. I had the job I once prayed for, but I still felt like I wasn't walking in purpose.

I started noticing a pattern where I was always planning my next vacation. As soon as I came back from one, I was already thinking about the next. That was how I coped. But deep down, I knew there had to be more to life than counting down to the next escape. I wanted to feel fulfilled right where I was.

This eBook shares the exact 10 steps I took to start building a life I didn't want to run from. I hope it helps you do the same.

Coach J

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01

YOU'VE BEEN STRONG TOO LONG TO KEEP SETTling



You've been showing up for everyone but yourself. You've been going the extra mile, doing all the things you're supposed to do, giving your best at work, at home, in every space that needs you. But even with all that effort, you're still not fulfilled. You're a yes person but yes hasn't been getting you anywhere. And now, you're at the point where you need to dig deep and ask yourself: Is this where I'm meant to be, or is this the sign I've been ignoring?

I remember praying for my dream job. I spent over a decade praying for that opportunity, and when it came, everything started to fall into place. The title, the responsibilities, the benefits; it all looked good on paper. And I truly believed I was doing everything right. I was showing up, working 14-hour days, seven days a week, sacrificing, pushing, giving. But deep down, I felt like I was just existing.

Physically, I couldn't take it anymore. My body was drained. I was constantly tired, running on fumes, pushing through pain because that's what I thought I had to do. Mentally, I was running on autopilot. Emotionally, I was just numb. I remember thinking, "This is no longer for me." But then that voice would come back: This is what you prayed for. This is the job. The life. The security. So I kept pushing.

I told myself that if I just had more time, I'd be able to improve. If I supported more people, if I added more value, if I kept showing up, then maybe I'd feel more fulfilled. I tied my purpose to everyone else's progress. I thought that if they grew, then I'd feel better. If they won, I'd finally feel like I was winning too. But the truth is, I was stuck in a mindset built on fear.

I was afraid to walk away from something I had asked God for. I was afraid to disappoint people. I was afraid to admit that even with all the success and all the checkboxes ticked, I wasn't happy.

That was my wake-up call. I had to ask myself: Am I actually happy? Am I just comfortable? Or have I been stuck in survival mode, mistaking routine for peace?

I always promised myself that if I ever became unhappy in my job, then that job was no longer for me. But somehow, I broke that promise to myself. I stayed because it made sense. I stayed because it was safe. But I didn't stay because it was aligned.

So now I'm asking you to do what I wish I had done sooner. Pause. Spend time with yourself. Reflect. Ask the hard questions. Are you where you're supposed to be? Or have you outgrown the space you once prayed to be in?

Because the truth is, just because it started as a blessing doesn't mean it's meant to last forever. And sometimes, the boldest move you can make is choosing you.

02

FREEDOM HAS A PRICE TAG. KNOW YOURS



I was planning my exit for months, but let's be real, if I wanted to leave my job to pursue my passion, I needed to know the financial number that would make that shift possible. I couldn't just say, "Well, I hope it works out." That wasn't going to cut it. I needed to make a money mindset shift before walking away from something stable. I had to get honest about what it would cost me to live for six to twelve months without a salary.

So I started doing the math. I looked at my lifestyle, everything from rent to groceries to how often I went out. I also looked at my business expenses, especially the cost of investing in my spice blend company. I love to travel, so I had to ask myself the hard question: do I want to keep traveling after I leave this job, or can I pause that for a while? Because when I saw the numbers, I realized if I kept traveling, I'd have fewer

months of financial runway. It came down to this: live small and stretch the time, or live big and shorten the timeline.

And that was the hard part because I've been working for 18 years. The thought of walking away from a steady salary after all that time was scary. The fear, the pressure, the unknown, it was real. But I also knew I didn't want to live my life hoping for the best. I wanted to be prepared. I had faith in God, and I knew He had a plan for me, and that faith kept me committed to following through. But I also believe that God expects us to use wisdom. That meant checking my numbers and understanding His timing, not just running on vibes.

If you're thinking about making a move like this, please don't get overwhelmed. You might be thinking, "Jessel, I've never taken budgeting seriously before." And I get it because neither did I. But this is the moment where you have to slow down and do the uncomfortable work. You don't need to be a financial expert. You just need to start.

Find a budgeting tool that works for you. It might be something simple on your phone, or you might be like me, just open Excel, create a sheet, and start writing down every single expense you expect over the next few months. Factor in your rent or mortgage, utilities, groceries, transportation, business costs, and anything else that keeps your life moving. Then calculate how much you'd need to survive and invest in yourself for the next six to twelve months. And if you can, aim for twelve.

Leaving your job isn't about being reckless. It's about being ready. And readiness starts with clarity. The moment I stopped hoping and started planning, everything shifted. Faith gave me the courage but the numbers gave me the plan. And that's what kept me moving forward.

03

YOUR PEACE IS LEAKING THROUGH YOUR SPENDING



The peace I got from walking away from my job was directly linked to my finances. It wasn't just about leaving a toxic environment or finally chasing my purpose but the relief of knowing I had a financial cushion. But that peace didn't come overnight. It came when I started paying attention to where my money was going, even in the smallest areas. Things like food, drinks, outings; those little things add up, and I didn't even realize how much until I started budgeting.

I had to learn that peace can leak through your spending. The more you waste money on things that don't add value, the harder it becomes to get out of your current situation. I had to start watching every dollar. And honestly, it was a wake-up call. I looked back at how much bad money I spent - money that didn't move me forward. Every time I had an idea, I ran with it and spent money right away.

I remember I wanted to start a travel company, and the first thing I did was print a banner. To this day, that banner has never been used. Even with Chef Easy, I spent tens of thousands on lab testing and did things out of order. I didn't stop to research or think about strategy. I was just spending because I had a job, and in my mind, the money would come back. But that mindset had to shift. Once I decided to walk away from that steady monthly salary, I realized I couldn't keep operating that way. I had to get serious about how I made decisions with my money.

So I started monitoring my spending monthly. I looked at every source of funds I had, investments, savings, bank accounts, and then I prioritized. I decided I was only going to spend on things that added value to my life or my business. If it wasn't helping me grow or move forward, it wasn't getting my money. Not every outing got a yes. Not every sale pulled me in. I had to develop discipline and fast.

The first step you need to take is to get intentional about how you spend. Look at the areas where you're spending the most, not your bills and mortgage, but controllable things like your electricity, food, and subscriptions. Ask yourself if you really need them. I keep it simple with an Excel sheet. Every two weeks or at least once a month, I sit down and go through where my money is going. I check if my spending is increasing or decreasing. I look for patterns. That's how I stay on top of things.

Start spending with purpose. Don't spend based on emotion. Don't spend just to feel good in the moment. Every dollar should be working for you, not against you. Make your money part of your vision. Let it support the life and business you're building, not distract you from it.

04

UPGRADE YOURSELF BEFORE YOU UPGRADE YOUR LIFE



A lot of people stay stagnant in their jobs not because they lack ambition, but because they get comfortable. That was me too. I remember for 12 years I was just there. I wasn't doing any studies, I wasn't building anything outside of my job. I was focused on showing up, doing what I had to do, and keeping things moving. But the truth is, if you're thinking about leaving your job or making a big shift, you have to start preparing. You have to upgrade yourself first.

The best time to work on yourself is while you're still employed. That's the time to invest in your growth, learn new skills, and stretch yourself. When you're on your job, you're in a stable place. You're earning, you have a routine, and that gives you room to maneuver. That's the time to upgrade yourself before you upgrade your life. Don't wait until you're out of work to start figuring things out. Use the time you have now.

For me, the shift started when I came across an article from Youth Business Trinidad and Tobago. They were talking about working with mentors to improve your business. That caught my attention. I signed up and paid \$500 to join their program. I was placed with mentors, connected with peers in the same season of growth, and it pushed me forward. That was my first real investment in my personal development. After that, I found the John Maxwell team. I started working on my leadership skills, coaching, and speaking and the rest is history.

While I was still at my job, I was also sitting in on YBTT sessions. Then I joined the Maxwell team and started to study and grow in areas that aligned with where I was going. I didn't wait until I left. I saw every opportunity especially those outside of weekdays or flexible online options and I took it. I searched for free and low-cost courses, especially ones that worked with my schedule. And I encourage anyone in that position right now: use your evenings, weekends, and downtime to build your next chapter.

There are so many resources available right now. Platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and edX offer tons of valuable courses. Many are free, and you only pay if you want the certificate. Even Harvard and other big universities have free programs available online. You don't have to wait to be accepted into something formal. The world has changed. There's no excuse not to learn.

If you want to move forward, you have to take your growth seriously. The same way we show up for work every day, we need to show up for ourselves. That's how you prepare. That's how you stop just existing in a role and start building a life that reflects your purpose.

Start now. Upgrade who you are so when it's time to make your move, you're ready.

05

STOP WAITING TO BE INVITED INTO THE ROOM



One of the biggest issues we have is waiting to show up. We hold ourselves back, thinking we need an invitation before we step into the room. We let fear stop us because someone else has more experience, more confidence, more connections. But the truth is, you have to go after the growth you want. You need to do whatever it takes to get in the room.

We keep waiting to be discovered, waiting for someone to come find us and say, "You belong here." But that moment may never come. You have to align yourself with the spaces, the people, and the opportunities that match the life you want. Growth doesn't chase people. You have to go out and seek it.

I remember when I saw a flyer for a conference hosted by Crisha Bowen.

I didn't know her. I didn't know anybody who was attending. But I just knew I needed to be in that room. Something told me that room would change me. That room was going to stretch me. And even though I was nervous, I paid my money, signed up, and showed up.

When I got there, they entered dancing and I danced right along with them. I didn't care who was watching. I was there for growth. That experience showed me something: the room you need is often one you'll have to walk into by faith.

If you want to be a speaker, place yourself in rooms with speakers. If you want to act, go to shows, join acting workshops, and talk to other actors. If you want to coach, join a coaching group, attend a seminar, or participate in sessions where other coaches are growing. You need to sit at tables where your future already exists. That's how you prepare. That's how you align.

Attend conferences. Join webinars. Be present in professional associations like the Lions Club, Rotary Club, or any group in your area that aligns with your purpose. When you see someone coming to speak or host a workshop, sign up. Be in the room. Even if you feel nervous, do it anyway.

I used to go to events alone. I didn't have friends around me walking the same path, but I still showed up. And that's what made all the difference. You have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. That's where growth lives.

So here's your challenge: stop saying "Why me?" and start saying "Why not me?" Go on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok. Search for events in your area. Check the government ministry websites. Look for free webinars and networking events. There's always something happening. You just have to decide to show up.

Because the truth is, the room you're waiting for might already be open. You just have to walk in.

06

FIND PEOPLE WHO PROVE IT'S POSSIBLE



Before I ever walked into a room filled with people who understood my journey, I was still questioning everything. I was second-guessing myself, surrounded by people who were envious, negative, and didn't even want me on the path I was on. It felt like I was walking this thing out alone. But the moment I stepped into a space with people just like me; people already living the life I wanted, people five or even ten years ahead of me, it changed everything. Because when you're in the right room, you see proof that your dream is possible.

I remember being in a coaching program with Marcus Rosier, sitting among leaders and business owners who were selling their packages and charging rates I couldn't even imagine. And there I was scared to charge for anything. I had been giving everything away for free, just hoping someone would see the value. That was me. Even with Chef Easy,

I'd hand people the spices and say, "Here, just try it." I was afraid to ask for the sale.

But hearing those numbers, watching others operate with confidence, it gave me a wake-up call. I thought, wait a minute, I have a master's degree. I went to school. I worked at a senior level in a multimillion-dollar company. I have over a decade of real experience in manufacturing. But still, I didn't see myself the way I should. Being in that room helped me reflect and realize the kind of life I was working toward, and it helped me believe that I belonged in that space too.

When you're starting this journey, one of the best things you can do is connect with people who are on a similar path. Look for associations. Search Facebook groups tied to what you love to do. If you're into painting, look for local or virtual paint nights. If you're in business, search for entrepreneurship hubs or growth communities. Whether it's local or global, be intentional.

The key is to show up with the mindset that you're invested in your own growth. Yes, you might feel afraid. Yes, you might be uncomfortable. But that's part of the process. Do it anyway. Let people know you're serious about this version of you. You don't have to fake confidence; you just have to keep showing up.

If you take one step today, let it be this: go online and search for an association or group connected to your field. It could be a government program, a youth event, a volunteer opportunity, anything tied to your purpose. That's how you'll meet people on the same journey.

And here's the thing - sometimes the person you need won't be at that event. But the person who introduces you to them might be. One connection leads to another. Don't wait for perfect. Start where you are, keep showing up, and trust that the right room will remind you exactly who you are.

07

TRY BEFORE YOU LEAP



One of the most important things I did before taking the leap was spending time testing my business. I didn't just jump. I tested Chef Easy for years before I went full-time. I spent three years trying out the product, tweaking formulas, and getting honest feedback. I tested it right there on the job with my co-workers. They were my first customers, my first critics, and my first supporters. They told me what tasted good, what needed work, and what they'd buy again.

Sometimes when you're frustrated at work and tired of the routine, it's tempting to just say, "I'm done—I'm stepping out." You feel like believing in yourself is enough. And while belief is powerful, it's just as important to be prepared. You need to test the idea. You need proof of concept. It's not just about quitting but about building while you're still employed so that when you do make the leap, it's with clarity and confidence.

Even though I made my final decision to leave in just two hours, there was a lot of thinking and preparation that came before that. I had been testing, adjusting, and collecting feedback. I remember selling over 300 packs of seasoning while I was still at work. That was my confirmation but this wasn't just a hobby. It was a business.

I used my free time to push forward. I sold my products on Facebook. I listened to what people said. I made changes. I improved my labels. I updated my packaging. I asked people at work which flavours they wanted to see next. That time, those conversations, were golden. And it made the transition easier. Because when I finally left, I already knew what worked and what didn't.

You might be thinking, "But I'm not making spices." Maybe you're making jewelry, offering coaching, doing printing, or baking cakes. Whatever your thing is, you can test it right where you are. Start with your co-workers. Ask your church members. Use your afternoons and weekends. That's how you balance it; through time management. When I was working 10–12 hour days at a management level, people would wonder how I still found time to blend seasoning. But I was focused. I knew what I wanted, and I had to make it happen.

Think about the product or service you want to offer when you eventually leave your job. Now ask yourself, what's a simple, low-cost way to begin testing it? If you want to start a kids' food business, make a few samples and let parents try them. If you want to bake cakes, carry a few to work. Let people taste and fill out a quick form with feedback. Keep it simple but professional.

Yes, you'll be nervous. Yes, you might get negative feedback. But that's the point. You want the criticism now, before you launch fully, so you can improve. Don't wait for perfection. Start small. Start smart. Test it before you leap.

08

DON'T JUST DREAM IT. DATE IT



You're thinking about leaving your job, but you haven't set a date. You just keep saying, "One day." "Sometime." "When the time is right." But the truth is, without a date, there's no structure. No plan. No urgency. You can't reverse engineer something you haven't decided. It's like planning a wedding without picking the day. Or graduating without applying for the ceremony. Setting the date makes it real. It gives you something to prepare for.

What I've seen, even in my own life, is that when you don't set a date, you stay stuck in survival mode longer. You stay in that loop of "it'll get better," "maybe next year," "it's not the right time." I did that. Even after setting a date, I still told myself, "It's not time yet. Maybe it's not God's will." But once I set the date, things shifted. Even though I didn't leave exactly on the date I chose, just setting it pushed me into motion.

I remember choosing May as my original month. That was supposed to be it. But truthfully, I didn't do enough by then. It wasn't until June that I went to my first conference. In July, I joined my first association. But the moment I gave myself a real target, that's when I started growing. I began making financial plans. I started working on my webinars and building out J. Jones Consulting. I was finally taking action because I had something to build towards.

There was a season I picked December 24th as my date. I planned a big trip and told myself I wasn't coming back to the job after that. I hadn't even given official notice. I didn't know all the details. But I knew something had to change. I had about three or four months until that date, and everything started to align. I looked at my money. I researched conferences. I made a timeline. I knew that by June the following year, I wanted Chef Easy in supermarkets. And so, setting that date became the foundation of the dream. It gave me vision, structure, and movement.

Now I won't lie to you. Setting the date can feel like failure. Especially when you've been in a job for 10 or 12 years like I was. It feels like giving up. Like something didn't work. But it's not failure, it's realignment. I had to remind myself that my dreams were too big for where I was. And no matter how many times I told myself, "Things will get better," I had to be honest. They weren't.

So here's my advice: set your date. Even if it's a year from now. Choose the day. Once you've done that, check your finances. Build your business plan. Map out your timeline. What do you want done by month three? By month six? When do you want your business registered? What systems need to be in place?

And don't do it alone. Get an accountability partner. Join a group. Because planning your exit isn't just about leaving but about building what's next. And building requires discipline, support, and bold decisions.

09

LIVE TODAY LIKE YOU ALREADY LEFT



Sometimes we look at our lives and think, “This is not the life I want for myself.” And that thought can be hard to sit with. But what we have to understand is that the messy steps we take, even the small, awkward, uncertain ones, still count. They still move us forward. We can’t live three years ahead in the now, but what we can do is start practicing the life we want to live instead of just dreaming about it.

I know the life I want. I want to travel. I want to run my businesses full-time. I want to add value to people’s lives. I want to use J. Jones Consulting to help others through the same adversity I went through. I want people to know that no matter what’s against you, you can get through. That’s what fuels me. I want Chef Easy to simplify people’s lives in the kitchen, so they don’t have to stress about cooking and can

still enjoy flavorful meals. Even though I wasn't fully there yet, that didn't stop me. I still had big dreams.

Yes, it's scary to say things like "I want to make a million dollars in five years." Your mind will say, "Girl, what?" But say it anyway. I want to make a million dollars. I want to export. I want to speak at international conferences. I want to coach in schools and impact lives. Even though I wasn't doing those things yet, I started living like I was. I was putting things in place while still on the job.

I was going to work and doing my eight hours, but outside of that, I was posting about Chef Easy on Facebook and Instagram. I was making deliveries. I was showing up at markets and small trade shows. I reached out to supermarkets. I hired salespeople to help. I started planning webinars for J. Jones Consulting. I didn't know I'd one day trade at one of the biggest trade shows. I didn't know I'd coach people one-on-one. I didn't know I'd speak to students. But I started living that life before I had the full results. My mindset was clear: this is what I'm working toward, and I'm not waiting to start.

You need to ask yourself: how much time are you investing in the company you work for, and how much are you investing in yourself and your future company? That's the real question. If you want to live a life you don't need a vacation from, you have to check your mindset. How much time are you spending in prayer, in worship, in quiet reflection? Whether it's yoga, journaling, or simply worshiping God. Your mind has to be aligned before your life can shift.

And stop telling yourself this is all you'll ever have. Stop clinging to the belief that this is the best it can get. Start taking messy steps now. Live the dream through your daily actions. When that dream grows too big for where you are, life will push you to step into the next level.

10

YOU'RE MORE READY THAN YOU THINK



I wanted to wait until everything was perfect. And that's where a lot of people get stuck. We convince ourselves that we need all the pieces in place before we take the first step. But the truth is, most of us are more ready than we think; we're just scared to move. If you have a one-year financial buffer, your systems are halfway built, people are already asking for your product, and you're still not doing more... what are you actually waiting on?

That was me. I had my formulas. I had customers. I had amazing reviews - never a bad one. I had people telling me how inspirational my story was. And still, I was hesitating. Still wondering, Am I ready? But what does "ready" really mean? Because if you stay stuck in preparation, you'll miss the momentum that only comes from doing. I had to stop overthinking and take the action.

Taking action doesn't mean the fear disappears. Sometimes it still doesn't work. Sometimes you fail. But what's guaranteed is this action will always move you forward. I've never seen someone grow by staying still. Forward requires motion, even if it's messy.

I remember planning my very first webinar for J. Jones Consulting. I had never done a webinar before but I had my Maxwell Leadership team. I knew I wanted to add value. I had over 12 years of industry experience. I had lessons. I had stories. I had something to give. So I pulled together my notes, trusted what I knew, and showed up. And when it was done, people reached out. They told me how much they learned, how impressed they were, and how it helped them.

That moment showed me something: you don't have to be perfect to be powerful. I know people who've been in business 15 or 20 years and still make mistakes. The difference is that they keep going. They keep showing up. That's what I knew I had to do. If I wanted to get better, I had to do more. Practice more. Put myself out there more.

So as you step into your next chapter, don't see it as giving up on something. See it as stepping into something new. Something aligned. Something already prepared for you. I believe God has already set the table. We just need to walk in and take our seat. The day I walked away from my job and stepped into purpose, everything began to shift. The right people showed up. The money I needed came. The opportunities I couldn't have planned for fell into place.

Even when it looked like funds were running low, something would show up. A discount would come through. A new door would open. Everything worked out—and it keeps working out.

You haven't come this far just to come this far. That dream in your heart wasn't placed there by accident. So stop making excuses for why you can't... and start believing in why you can.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



1 on 1 Coaching

Ready to start anyway? Let's work together 1-on-1 and build the business and life you actually want.

Group Coaching

Ready to start anyway? Join the group coaching experience built for bold moves, real growth, and lasting clarity.

Business Setup Support

Need help starting your business? Get guided support to register, plan, and launch with confidence.

Upcoming Book

Coming soon. My new book: *Living on the Edge of Almost: Your bold wake-up call to finally choose purpose.*

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

You've just read the 10 steps that helped me go from feeling stuck to living a life I no longer need to escape from. If you see yourself in any part of my journey, know that change is possible for you too. I didn't have it all figured out when I started, but I stayed committed. Now it's your turn to start; right where you are. You're not alone, and I'm here to remind you that progress is still progress, even if it's messy.



If you're ready to move forward, I would love to walk this journey with you. Join me for a clarity session, sign up for an upcoming webinar, or reach out through my website. Let's take your next step together.

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You'll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine. - John C. Maxwell

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