

# STEP INTO THE NEW ECONOMY

Many people are not satisfied with their job. Many of them decide to make their dreams come true and take a leap into the unknown. Many others are seriously considering to also taking that leap. Where to begin? In this article four people explain which steps they took to be able to take that leap and start for themselves.

“While I was used to working really hard, due to a sudden burnout I was instantly immobilised.” This signal was the starting point for Arjan ter Linden to leap into the new economy. Now, after 5 years, he has a succesful training agency called The Human Effect. But not always does it happen so suddenly, as Sanne Roemen explains. She realised that she put a lot of effort into organizing her work, trying to understand her salary slip and in writing her proposals. This took so much time that it left her without enough energy to do the creative work which she had chosen. She decided to take the leap, started her company Oomph and now creates meaningful solutions in new media.

More and more people choose to leave the known system behind to venture into selfmade businesses. In the previous article The Economic Storm we spoke of the so called Economy 2.0. A typical feature of this economy is the phenomenon swarming. This is where a group of people come together temporarily to carry out a project based on shared interests and afterwards go their separate way again. Although many would like to take the leap, it's the question of how to go about it. To get some answers I talked to four different people who clearly found their own way.

## Thinking out of the box. Meeting out of the box.

The first step is to listen carefully to the signals in your own body. When you have the sensation of something nagging. When you lack the motivation and ease of your job. Knowing you want something different. This all takes you to the question of what that might be. The advice that Martijn Aslander gives is to go and have a chat with ten interesting people in your direct environment. He talks from experience. He has made it his job to get to know new people, to discover what motivates them and where they are good in. Where their needs lie and how he can help to achieve these needs. “Ask these people what they think of you. Where they think you are good in and what added value you offer.” Also ask them if they can recommend ten other people which might be interesting to talk with.

Sanne states that you must be willing to step out of your known and trusted circle of people. “In every situation I trust that people have my best interest at heart.” To be able to do this you get the chance of finding out something which otherwise you would never have known. And that is where new and inspiring ideas develop. For example, help in a kitchen that makes food for the homeless. Or visit a canteen of a really large firm. “I have always searched for diverse groups which has enriched my life treamendously,” Sanne says. In short: thinking out of the box, meeting out of the box. Arjan did it differently. He went travelling for six months to find out who he was and what he wanted out of life. That decision itself already gave him the right insights. Halfway during his travelling he was done with his self reflection proces and ready to get started with his new life. He started to tell his story to others. Though one group laughed at him, the other group took him seriously and was enthusiastic enough to help him along his path.

## Anticipate the best that can happen

Which ever method you choose, it shall have to lead to the ultimate answer to the question: How can I be of value to others? This answer gives satisfaction to the meaning of it all, rooted deep within every one of us. “It is not a coincidence that all the meaningful questions of life are about how we can be of value to the other,” says Martijn. Help the other and thus help yourself is the motto. What can you add to the life of someone else to make it better and more fun? It can help to have a role model. Arjan compares himself to people that effortlessly flow through life, feel at ease and get results with a smile. A similar example will awaken the qualities in you that are already there. Knowing your value is the starting point from which you will be able to move.

The next step so I hear from everyone is simply: Action, action, action! Nothing more or less. People have the tendency to stay put in their heads and doing research but only taking action will book results. That's the only way to discover when and where your talent lies. To be able to have succes in the new economy, these are necessary insights. To

How can I be of value to others

start off with, make it easy on yourself. When you have a full time job, start working only one day less. Experience shows that even with a little less money people can still manage. From this relaxed starting point you can make the first steps to your new existence.

Then be brave and follow your curiosity. Meet as many people as possible because it is important to know that you can not do it by yourself. You always need others to succeed. Connect yourself to them and you will find your plan in motion.

Arjan collected a couple of coaches around him, developed a bundle of services and started to visit companies. It surprised him how fast the orders came in.

Caroline Dekker, founder of Feel Goodies, trusts on her instinct that she knows she is a succes. This trust in her self keeps giving her the solutions that she needs. This appears in a valuable conversation, an important book or a simple sentence from a passerby. Conciously testing herself to see if she is still on track on the right road, she creates a group of like-minded people around her.

It is obvious that in everyone's story the importance of networking is essential. The natural need to be connected to an other. At some point the network will know your story and see where you could be of possible value. You don't have to sell yourself, an other can do that far more efficient for you. This fundamental function, Martijn calls personal branding and power of recommendation.

### Fun and inspiration

It sounds superb to think how you could be of value for the other. But does it also pay the bill? The answer to this all is: yes! Sanne en Martijn do not ask money for their services. Their motive to start on a project is the chance of a valuable new experience, learning something new and being able to work with great people. And on top of the list it states that above all, it should be fun to do. That's the dynamics which it all revolves around. But they do make agreements with their clients. At the end of the project, the clients are the ones that decide the value of the project and thus donate a related sum of money. This means that trust is necessary in a deal like this. But Martijn and Sanne have only had good experiences.

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(Sanne Roemen)



Sanne Roemen  
Foto: Anjoescha Odufre | Studio-20 Haarlem

Arjan is focused on projects that 'feel right'. He notices this when people become enthusiastic and there is an energy of 'yes!' instead of a 'yes but...' feeling. This makes a project run smoothly and results are easily booked. This efficient and intuitive approach is appreciated by clients and he makes a good living out of it. And still, it stays a paradox. "If you think it is about money, then don't do this work in this kind of manner," says Sanne. It is all about your heart beating faster. Your heart is a valuable place for inspiration. Eventually it is all about love, the ultimate value. When you are loving to yourself and to the other, then you are doing something right. Therefore it is not surprising that decisions made from the heart will eventually do you the world of good. Money wise also. Arjan has many spontaneous meetings which in a real job would cost him a reprimand. If something triggers him in someone, he starts a conversation. Mostly he does not book instant results, but in the long run he always profits from it. For Caroline it is obvious. Her only advice is following your heart and having faith in that. If you do that, help will come along in any kind of form.

### Stay pure

In this system, your talent and your added value is your most important barter trade. To keep this of value it is important to stay honest. Especially where it concerns your own behaviour and your motives. When you are pure at heart the other will notice. Martijn says "I only do the things I totally believe in and can support." For Arjan, to be pure means being true to himself. Otherwise he might find himself in a project or role in which he does not fit. Which has the effect of becoming rigid or calling the whole thing off half way. To be loyal to himself, means being loyal to the world.

Everyone makes mistakes. It is not about that. It is about being honest. When you are not honest, then it will be picked up by the society around you and will turn against you. This brings the risk along of being thrown out of the circle of value. You need honesty to see that you are responsible for everything around you. And you need guts to be open about that.

### Feeding mentality

An important value in the new economy is the realisation of who helped you get where you are now. Where you are is only possible due to others. To realise this and making sure to thank these people personally, you will complete the circle. That is how the energy keeps flowing. Giving and

receiving, a well known concept in the economy, finds its balance in this way. While this might seem unrealistic, the whole of nature works exactly this same way. And the threatening situation of the world at this present moment, gives us more than ever the chance to step into this feeding mentality. The growing interests for women and their qualities in doing business are a hopeful indication.

### Follow your heart

The new economy might actually not be a very good term to use. This label might make people just follow the new rules instead of thinking for them selves. What is important is that people start listening to their own hart and passions. From that point, the economy which is so needed right now, will develop automatically. Which effect that might have? Caroline sees the bright side. "The choice I took to start with my company Feel Goodies makes me happy every single day. If everyone does what makes them happy, our society will change dramatically. Happy people want to work together instead of being competitive. Where self-enrichment in our present society causes damage to people and nature, I see that we are slowly moving up in a straight line." ◀



Arjan ter Linden



Martijn Aslander



Caroline Dekker



Jorrit Timmermans

[www.theprojectnetwork.nl](http://www.theprojectnetwork.nl)

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Sanne Roemen - [www.oomph.nl](http://www.oomph.nl)