

THE 7-STEP FREEDOM BLUEPRINT

How to break free from the life you never consciously chose
and build one worth living, anywhere in the world.

By Dan James

Welcome.

The following points are a great guide to creating real transformation in your life and ultimately the kind of freedom that you desire. I'm sure that most of you will already be doing very well in some of these areas or have a good understanding of them, but probably need to work on others. That was certainly the case for me. I leaned in to what I was good at and ignored the areas that I needed to work on the most. If that is the case just disregard that step and move on to the next.

Also you don't need to wait until you leave the country to start working on these, you can start right now. If you do start really committing to working on your health your wealth and your dating in your home country then you may realise that you don't want or need to move after all and you have all you need there. Just an idea, be open to it, even if your heart is set on moving.

STEP 1

Build Your Health & Physical Foundation

Health isn't optional it's the foundation everything else is built on.

I learned this the hard way. I had minor underlying mental health issues and I was self-medicating with alcohol. When I got really sick, everything got worse. The anxiety, the depression, the self-doubt, they all amplified.

But here's what I discovered on my own healing journey: fix your physical health and fitness, and most, if not all, of your mental health issues will dissipate naturally. They're often just symptoms of poor nutrition, bad sleep, high stress, over-reliance on substances, or carrying too much weight.

Most men tell themselves they don't have time to train, they're too tired, or that you've got to live a little. I know this because I used to do it and I see so many other men doing it too. But they're all excuses. You are lying to yourself. You have time. You make time for what's important to you. Look honestly at how many hours you spend scrolling social media, watching Netflix, or whatever else you're mindlessly doing that isn't getting you one step closer to the life you want.

What I actually focus on is simple. Four things: exercise, nutrition, sleep, and stress management. Get those four right and you'll feel like a different man within weeks. There's a fifth underrated element too; environment. Being in the right environment makes all of the above dramatically easier. It's hard to be healthy and happy in the wrong place, around the wrong people. Do what you can to fix this. It might not mean moving right now, but even small changes where you work out, where you spend your time, and who you spend it with can make a significant difference.

Fix your health first. Everything else follows.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1** Audit your four pillars honestly this week: exercise, nutrition, sleep, stress. Where are you actually failing? Not where you think you're failing, where you're really failing. No excuses. Be honest with yourself. Give yourself a score out of 10 for each. Then get to work fixing the lower hanging fruit first and add a bit extra week by week.
- 2** Calculate how many hours you spend on social media, Netflix, at the pub or anything that isn't moving you towards your goals. Redirect at least half of that time toward your health this week.

- 3 Ask yourself honestly: is your current environment supporting your health and fitness or undermining it? The people around you, the city you live in, the habits your lifestyle encourages. If you can't or don't want to move right now, what small changes could you make? It could be as simple as your gym being too far away, so you don't go. Easy fix: find one near home or work that's actually on your route. The harder change is limiting time with people who sap your energy, have no growth mindset, and quietly resent seeing you improve. You already know who they are. Do what needs to be done.

STEP 2

Get Honest About The Life You Never Consciously Chose

Most men are living a life that was designed for them by their parents, their culture, their school, and their employer. They never stopped to ask is this actually what I want?

I'd had two solid careers by the time this hit me. I'd even changed direction in my late twenties, retrained, re-qualified, started again. I wasn't afraid of change. But even with all of that, I eventually came to the uncomfortable realisation that I was still just going through the motions. Doing what society expected of me. Being a good little worker bee.

I had no idea what else was out there. No idea what was actually available to me if I chose to become the master of my own destiny. I had a vague sense that I'd always wanted my own business and to be my own boss but no idea what that actually looked like. And I could feel that time was slipping away.

That's the thing about this step it's hard to admit to yourself that you've been a sheep, that you're not fully in control of your own decisions. It can feel emasculating. But it's in admitting that to yourself that you can finally take control, figure out what you actually want, and formulate a real plan to go and get it.

It's about getting honest. Most of us never consciously chose the life we're living. It just kind of happened while we were busy following the script. But it doesn't have to be that way.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1** Write down honest answers to these three questions: What does my ideal day actually look like? What would I do if money wasn't a factor? What am I most afraid of admitting about my current life?
- 2** Identify the three biggest things in your life you never consciously chose, your job, your city, your social circle, your habits. Which ones are genuinely serving you and which ones just happened to you?
- 3** Have one completely honest conversation with yourself about what you actually want your life to look like in five to ten years. Not what sounds sensible. What you actually want. And write it down.

STEP 3

Get Your Finances Sorted & Know Your Real Number

Money is not the goal. Freedom is. But without financial clarity you will always feel like you can't leave.

My issues were straightforward but common. When I started making good money I thought I'd made it and I spent like it. Overspending, lifestyle creep, money disappearing without me really knowing where it went. I also had no understanding of compounding or investing. I had this idea that investing was complicated, that you needed to fully understand macro economics, read the Financial Times, and have some kind of special knowledge. That's completely wrong. Investing is actually very simple. You don't need to be Warren Buffett. You just need to start early, diversify, take advantage of compounding, and be consistent. You do need some knowledge but getting financially literate is not as hard as you think.

Most men dramatically overestimate how much they need to make the move abroad. They also have no idea where their money is going right now. Getting financially clear is not about getting rich. It's about understanding your actual number, building a simple plan to hit it, and having some overspill that you can invest consistently and use the power of compounding to grow your wealth.

Once I actually looked at my numbers honestly I realised two things. I needed far less than I thought, and I was wasting far more than I realised every single month.

Here is a link to a Google Sheet I prepared as an example comparing the cost of living in London vs Bangkok. Copy it and use it as a template if you want. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dGLt1QUYju0iSzRkETJnflRu3CqXer8KMqxFR-TRDz0/edit?usp=sharing>

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1** Do a complete financial audit this week. Write down every single outgoing, subscriptions, rent, food, drinks, everything. Most men are genuinely shocked by what they find. Be brutally honest.
- 2** Calculate your real freedom number. What does it actually cost to live the life you want abroad? Research your target location's true cost of living on Numbeo.com. These figures are fairly accurate but can be slightly off on rent in terms of what you actually get quality wise for particular budgets. You will almost certainly be surprised by how affordable it is.

- 3 Start investing simply and immediately. You do not need to understand macro economics. Open an account with a simple index fund, a global tracker like Vanguard is a good starting point, and set up a monthly direct debit. Even a small amount. The habit and the compounding matter far more than the amount you start with.

STEP 4

Choose Your Location & Understand The True Cost

Most people choose where to move based on what they think a place will be like usually from holidays, Instagram, or romanticised ideas that have little to do with reality. Going on holiday somewhere for two weeks and actually living there are completely different experiences.

My approach was to do the slo-mad thing first. Rather than committing to one place, I'd spend one to three months somewhere join a gym, get social, explore the city properly, deal with the locals and the bureaucracy, and get a real feel for what daily life actually looked like. Only then would I decide whether it was somewhere I could see myself long term.

This is what I'd recommend to anyone. Before you commit, go and live there for a month or two. Not a holiday, actually live there. Cook sometimes, use local transport, go to the same gym and coffee shop repeatedly, navigate the admin. That's when you find out whether a place is really for you.

A few things worth trying to figure out while you are there and, as much as you can, online before you go:

The archetype of expats you'll find there matters more than people think. Every city has a different expat community some are full of digital nomads and entrepreneurs, others attract retirees, others draw a party crowd. Some are quite varied and easy to find any archetype but others are not. You need to find your tribe. If the expat community in a city doesn't match who you are and where you're headed, you'll be lonely regardless of how beautiful the place is.

The dating landscape is also important to understand too. The availability and nature of both local and international women varies enormously between cities. Some places are incredible for meeting people, others are surprisingly difficult despite what you might read online.

There is no real substitute for doing this either by going to meet ups and actually meeting people as well as dating.

Do your research. Go and live there. Then decide.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1 Make a shortlist of three locations that genuinely interest you. Research each one properly, cost of living on Numbeo, expat forums, Reddit communities for that city. Talk to people who actually live there, not just people who visited.

- 2** Plan a one to three month stay in your top location before making any permanent decisions. Treat it like a trial run join a gym, get a local SIM, cook at home, live like a resident not a tourist. Go to meet up events and be social. Get out there and date people too. If you are in to specific activities find out what the scene is like. Do they have padel courts, is boxing a thing there, are there local footy teams you can join?
- 3** Research the expat community in your target location as much as you can. Find the Facebook groups, the Reddit threads. Ask yourself honestly do these seem like my kind of people? If the answer is no, that's important information but its hard to tell in advance. For dating you can fire up tinder gold if you want and change your location and see how many matches you get and the quality of said matches but again this is not given. Matches don't always equal dates and I don't really recommend online dating but its a barometer at least.

STEP 5

Sort Your Visa & Legal Setup

This is the step most people procrastinate on because it feels complicated. It isn't. Visa and legal setup is a logistics problem and logistics problems have solutions. The key is knowing your options and making a plan early. Leaving this until the last minute creates unnecessary stress if you are someone who worries about this kind of thing and can derail everything else. If you do the slo-mad plan I wrote about the last step then you just need to figure out how long you get on tourist visa. And go. You can figure the rest out when you have your feet on the ground.

A side note here is that in developing countries things are not like back home. You'll get conflicting information and the truth about what can and can't be done can often be better established once in the country.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1** Research the specific visa options for your target country this week. Thailand for example has tourist visas, the Elite visa, The DTV visa, LTR visa, and education visas each with different costs and benefits.
- 2** Speak to a local visa agent in your target country. They exist in every popular expat destination and will charge you a small fee to handle everything correctly. You can find these on Facebook expat groups and even just ask a few expats in these groups who will often be very helpful. They get asked the same question a thousand times so just search the question and you'll find plenty of threads.
- 3** Understand the tax implications of leaving your home country. This varies significantly depending on where you're from. Get proper advice early it will save you significant money. If you want to incorporate an offshore business then look into that too.

STEP 6

Build An Income Stream That Isn't Location Dependent

This is the practical engine of your freedom. Without income you cannot sustain life abroad long term. The good news is that location independent income is more achievable now than at any point in history. But there is a trap that catches many people trying to hustle and I fell straight into it.

I spread myself too thin. At one point I was actively trading crypto, running a hostel, managing real estate with short term lets, running a drop shipping business, an Amazon store, teaching English online, doing match betting and tennis trading all at the same time. Living abroad stopped being fun. I had no time to enjoy the life I'd worked so hard to build. At that point I would probably have been better off staying in the UK and being gainfully employed.

The lesson: pick one or two income streams and focus on those completely. Find the combination that allows you to hit the monthly number you need.

The other thing I'd recommend is having a clear passive investment plan running alongside whatever active income you build. Set it up so money comes in each month and a fixed amount goes straight out to your investment fund DCA-ing consistently into a simple index fund or whatever your chosen vehicle is. You do nothing. It just runs in the background and compounds quietly while you get on with living. At a slightly more advanced level I recommend more active management of your portfolio but this is a start.

If the income stream you want to build requires learning a new skill coaching, trading, photography, content creation, teaching something whatever it is start before you leave. Ideally have at least one guaranteed earner already working before you go, even if it's modest, so you have breathing room to build the second thing properly once you're away. If you really want to leave sooner rather than later then perhaps you get one income stream that gives you say \$2k per month and go live in a cheaper spot then work on the other business there. Once you grow your income you move to another spot that you can now afford. Two income streams. One passive investment plan. That's it.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1** Identify your two most realistic income stream options right now. What skills do you already have that could translate to remote work or an online business? Pick the two with the highest chance of generating income quickly and focus exclusively on those.
- 2** Set your minimum monthly number what do you actually need to cover your life abroad comfortably? Work backwards from that number. You probably need less than you think.

- 3** Set up a simple passive investment plan before you leave. Open an account, decide on your monthly contribution, automate it. Then forget about it. The discipline of automating this from day one is what builds real wealth over time without requiring your attention. This is a long term investment. We are approaching some uncertain times so this can't be money that you are later going to need. Your time horizon should be 5-10 years with this money which is why you need to have a runway.
- 4** Get to work saving enough runway if you don't have it already. 6 months worth of budget is OK but better a year.

STEP 7

Build Your Social Life & Dating Life From Scratch

This is the step nobody talks about honestly and it is harder than most people expect. Leaving your existing social network behind is a real loss even if that network wasn't serving you. But the friendships and relationships you build when you are living authentically on your own terms are often deeper and more meaningful than anything you left behind. And your old mates will come and visit. You will likely find out who your real friends are as you stay in contact with the ones you are meant to and lose it with the ones you are not.

The social side takes intentionality. Use apps like Meetup and Time Left to find events and communities. Join activities and groups you are interested in go to co-working spaces, talk to people. Ask someone what they're working on. Say yes to everything for the first three months. The nature of expat life is transient people come and go and you'll outgrow some quickly. But in my experience within three to six months you can start to build your real tribe. Even early on you'll get a feel for the archetype of people around you and whether they match the man you are and are becoming.

On dating I'm going to be straight with you. Some of this may be triggering but I've lived this and helped a lot of guys enact serious change.

If you're not good with women in your home country you won't magically be better abroad. You might get more attention, but you'll also get finessed, and you'll end up settling for far less than you deserve and could get. Moving abroad is not a shortcut around doing the work.

The apps can supplement your dating life and you can optimise them to get far more matches than you currently do. But the real game changer is learning to approach women in real life. I've approached over 1,000 women across my travels and it was a learned behaviour. I don't even use the apps anymore. When you develop the ability to walk up to a woman you find attractive, start a genuine conversation, and lead it somewhere it feels like a superpower. Because it is. Almost no men can do it. The ones who can have an almost unfair advantage.

You can develop this skill wherever you are right now. Start before you leave. By the time you arrive abroad with that skill already developing, your dating life will be in a completely different league.

YOUR ACTION POINTS

- 1 Download Meetup and Time Left before you arrive in your new city. Find three events in your first week and commit to going to all of them. Show up alone it forces you to be social.

- 2 Make it a habit to talk to at least one new person every day from the moment you arrive or even before you leave. Co-working spaces, gyms, coffee shops. Ask what people are working on. Be genuinely curious. Friendships abroad are built faster than you think when you take the initiative.
- 3 Start approaching women now not when you arrive abroad, now. You don't need to be in Bangkok or Bali to develop this skill. Every day you have opportunities. Start small, get comfortable, build momentum. By the time you land abroad with this skill already in motion you will be operating at a level most men around you never reach. The biggest hump most men have to overcome is approach anxiety. I know I've done it. You can too.

You Don't Have To Figure This Out Alone

This blueprint gives you the framework. But knowing what to do and actually doing it are two completely different things.

If you're serious about making this happen not someday, not when the time is right, but actually building a plan and executing it I work with a small number of men one to one to do exactly that.

Together we go deeper on every one of these seven steps as it applies specifically to your life, your situation, your number, and your timeline. I provide the accountability, the honest feedback, and the roadmap. You provide the commitment.

I've spent 10 years across more than 20 countries figuring this out the hard way so you don't have to. Every mistake I made, everything I wish I'd known earlier, every shortcut I eventually found, that's what I bring to the table.

This isn't just about moving abroad and in fact it doesn't even have to be. It's about becoming the man you actually want to be. Through honest conversation, real accountability, and a framework built from lived experience, I'll help you get clear on what you actually want, dismantle the patterns holding you back, and build a practical plan to get there. No fluff, no generic advice just direct, experienced guidance from someone who has walked this path and come out the other side.

If that sounds like something you need right now, here's how to take the next step:

BOOK A FREE FREEDOM DISCOVERY CALL a no pitch, no pressure conversation about your specific situation. We'll get clear on where you are, where you want to be, and whether working together makes sense.

You've read the blueprint. Now it's time to build.

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— Dan