

23-Year-Old Protege Earns \$210,000 His First Year Out of College

I know I said a few posts back that I would no longer be accepting guests posts but this is one that was already in the works and one I requested from my protege. I wanted him to capture a snapshot of where he is today - early in his journey to becoming a millionaire and reaching financial independence. He is only a year out of college and he is already earning multiple six-figures. He started to contribute to his 401k while still in college. He is THE model for all those compound interest charts that emphasize the importance of starting early. If you start early by saving and investing a modest sum you will no doubt become a millionaire someday. But if you start early and aggressively grow your income to contribute 50%+ of your income to saving and investing, you are traveling the express lane to financial independence.

As I write, I'm reminded of the saying to "always be sure to send the elevator back down every once in a while." T-Dog is one of a handful of folks I have had the honor of taking under my wing over the years. I am extremely proud of his accomplishments so far and I look forward to watching him crush his goals in the coming years. I knew from his first ~~day~~ week as an intern that he was full of potential and talent (so much so, that I wanted him to work with me no matter where I was, which you will read more about below).

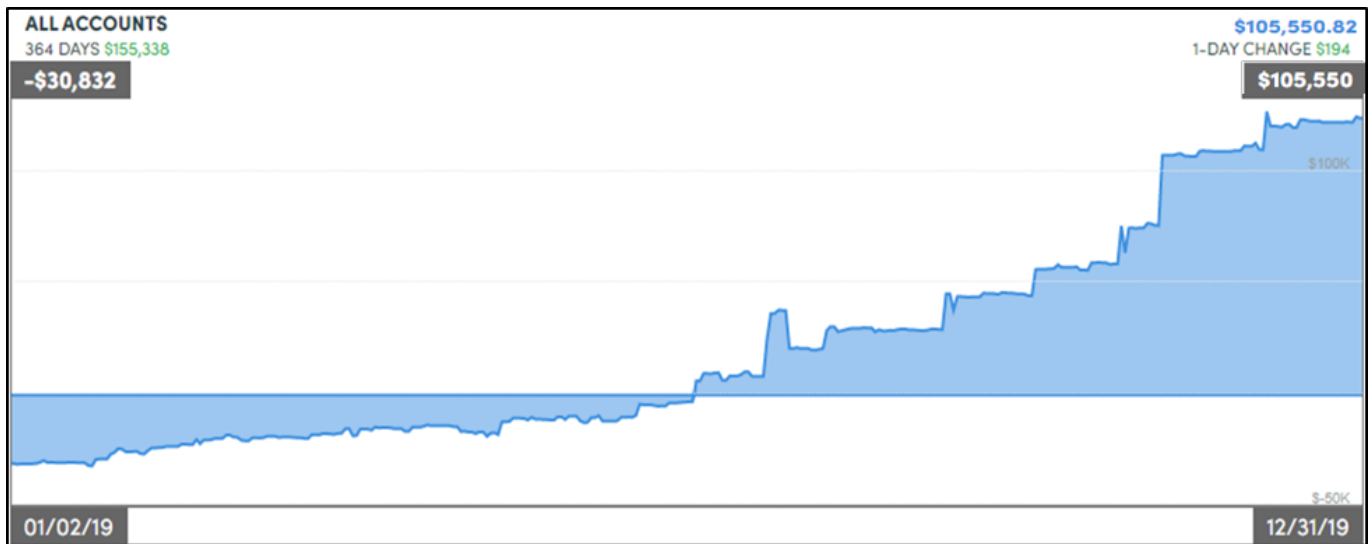
I hope you enjoy!


I should probably start this post off by introducing myself, which seems like a weird thing to say since this is an anonymous blog. Dom has mentioned me before under the name *T-Dog*, so I'll adopt that as my pen name.

Hi everyone, I'm T-Dog and here some stats about myself:

- 23-year old California-to-Texas transplant
- Graduated college in December 2018
- Improved my net worth by \$135k the first 12 months out of college

- Goal of becoming a millionaire by age 28
- Looking to hire someone to be on my team throughout this journey (**see the end of the post for details**)



“Becoming a millionaire by age 28” probably caught your eye. Even to me, it seemed like an audacious goal a year ago when I walked across the graduation stage. However, after an incredible and unexpected year in 2019, I have a newfound grip on what reality can really offer and it’s time to seize the opportunity in front of me. I will get into what happened this year and what this “opportunity” is, but I should first talk about everything that led up to this eventful year. As Dom has probably said many times throughout his posts, [“An overnight success is years in the making.”](#) I believe that the little things over time end up leading to big things down the road. Shout out to a favorite book of both Dom’s and mine: [The Slight Edge](#) !

Let’s start with high school:

When I was 15, I made the decision to stop asking my parents for money. I felt guilty saying, “Mom/Dad, can I have 20 bucks to go hang out with friends?” I never saw us as a poor family, but rather a family that had to be careful with money and squeaked by on occasion to make things work. There was no extra to waste. I recognized our financial situation and I think that is where some of my guilt to ask for money to spend on myself stemmed from.

A typical 15-year-old kid’s solution for this would have to go get a job at the local

grocery store or fast food chain, making minimum wage. However...that's not me. It's important to note the recurring theme throughout this post, which is: **I've never wanted to take the 'typical' path and I've always set my sights on something bigger.**

That said, I started a lawn mowing business (HIGHLY recommend this for any suburban high school kid out there). To do this, I approached my best friend (who had a truck) and got him to help me out with this venture. We lived in a densely populated suburbia with thousands of homes in a 5-mile radius, so I thought it was the perfect plan, and it turned out to be. Long story short, we attained roughly 20 clients, customized our work schedule, got paid in cash, never felt overworked, and always had the freedom and flexibility to enjoy our time in high school. We kept our beloved (and quite successful) lawn mowing business until right before we headed off to college.

During the summer before college, I had an increased amount of free time on my hands so I jumped on an opportunity to work in construction. I worked in a construction yard 45-50 hours during the week making \$12/hour + overtime while still mowing lawns at night and on the weekends. I was earning nearly \$750/week, which felt like great money at the time. Mind you, from my humble upbringing, I had the mindset of "if I could make \$80k/year one day, I'll be living FAT." I was very naïve in my small money world; I didn't know what all was out there. However, this quickly changed when I got to college.

Community college, community college, community college. Did I say community college? This was by far one of my better decisions. I took some heat for choosing a community college over a four year from the high school snobs, but I knew it wasn't about where I started, it was all about where I finished. I completed my two years in CC debt-free with a GPA good enough to transfer to almost any university I chose. Up until this point I was still working construction and ready to leave that career behind. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do with my life yet, but I knew it did not involve holding a shovel in 100-degree Texas heat.

The next phase in my life was the biggest and most influential. I just didn't realize it at the time.

In January of 2016, I became an intern under good ole GYFG. Quickly after making it official, Dom mentioned I should advance my Microsoft Excel skills ahead of showing up for the upcoming summer. I did not fully grasp what that meant, but I

joined a business club at my local community college and put my name in to compete in an Excel competition. As nerdy as it sounds, I had a lot of fun and did well. I ended up making it to Nationals that spring and traveled to Boston to compete.

My first official week on the job was in June of 2016 and during that week I worked through a Corporate Performance Management software training module. Dom wasn't there my first three days on the job (this was pre '[C-Suite Dom](#)' who was still trying to make a name for himself), and he had me learn this software during his brief absence. My natural knack for Excel translated very well to this software and I picked it up quickly. So much so that two months later the company was billing me out at \$180/hour to implement the software for a client— all while I made \$15/hour as an intern.

This software implementation was the first of its kind for both Dom and me. We thought it was too good to be true that someone would pay us that kind of money to be experts on a product and play with data. ***(Spoiler alert: This will end up being my x-factor)***

When the summer was over and my time as an intern for Dom was completed, I was offered quite the opportunity. The offer included:

- Removing the 'Intern' title and becoming a Financial Analyst
- Working remotely from my apartment at school back in Texas.
- Offer to opt into the company's 401k Plan
- Pay increase to \$20/hour

I said "yes" to all of the above, and spent the next two years both hitting the textbooks and furthering my skillset as it pertained to CPM software, Excel, and a data visualization tool. I'll be the first to say that school was not my passion. I had much more fun learning skills that would have a direct benefit in life and the real-world workplace. However, the diploma was my entry card into the place I wanted to be, so I did what it took to receive that diploma.

At the time, I had no idea how valuable my non-scholastic skills would turn out to be. Because I felt my time was much better spent advancing myself rather than hitting the bars at night like a typical college student, I spent my "recreational" hours a bit differently than most of my classmates. I'm not against having a good time, but during college I had the mindset of "*Do what others **won't** do right now,*

so I can do what others **can't** do in the future." My 1:00am weekend nights reading software forums, scanning documentation articles, and watching YouTube videos might have seemed like a pretty lame way to spend extra time as a college student, but I don't regret it one bit. I would not be where I am now without having spent my college weekend time that way.

Fast forward to post-grad, and my first full time employment offer from the company I was already working for. The initial comp package was \$60k base with an \$10k bonus—sounds pretty good right? But remember my high school aspirations of making \$80k a year? With the offer, I was about 90% of the way there my first year out of college. I sat on the offer for a few days and went in with a counter to reach my \$80,000 goal. After a 10-minute conversation, I walked out with an \$80,000 job offer in hand. During this negotiation process I was not afraid whatsoever because I trusted the skillset I worked so hard for and knew the worst answer I could get was a simple "No."

First day of full-time employment was January 2, 2019. At that moment:

- I was \$30k in student loan debt.
- I had only a couple hundred dollars in my bank account (I was very aggressive in taking out as few student loans as possible. Probably too aggressive, but oh well).

This first job was just a normal job and nothing out of the ordinary. No exciting details came until early spring.

That is when the x-factor occurred and really put my potential income on overdrive.

In spring 2019, GYFG and I started a business. Our new business mirrors a one-time gig we did for our original employer way back in the summer of 2016. We currently implement specialty finance and accounting software across all industries for which our clients pay us a very respectable rate. I was granted a minority stake in the business because of my expertise and ability to be a ready to go "plug-n-play" resource on all future jobs from day one.

What if I didn't spend those 1:00am college nights learning the product?? What if I just waited until I graduated to start learning?? This minority stake in a profitable business two months out of college would have never been attainable.

I should also mention that I didn't immediately leave the original employer. I continued to fulfill my duties to earn my full time pay while also growing the business with GYFG. This was a challenge but the way I was able to change my life financially in such a short amount of time was well worth it.

Fast forward to August of 2019, when I'm writing this. My monthly income is hovering around \$20,000 on average.

UPDATE: I finished 2019 with a bang, making \$210,000 for the year as well as reaping the tax benefits of ownership in a business. For 2020 my new goal is \$300,000 - why not?!

If you live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, we are hiring someone to be on the team. Pay range can be between 80k-120k depending on skillset. We are looking for the following:

- Above average Microsoft Excel skills
- Someone that can be macro-managed
- Basic understanding of a P&L and Balance Sheet

If interested, reach out to dom@genyfinanceguy.com. Tell us about yourself, and we'll be in touch.

Closing thoughts: Coming from the *typical* family, living the *typical* life, and thinking with the *typical* mindset was going to achieve me *typical* results. Typical is by no means a bad thing; I would consider it the average, and there's nothing wrong with that. But I asked myself, why settle on average when I'm a young adult, privileged enough to have nothing holding me back? I wanted to push the limits and shoot for the moon. As they say, if I missed - I'd still be among the stars. I'll attempt to push the limits again this year, setting my 2020 income goal for myself at \$300k.



Gen Y Finance Guy

Hey, I'm Dom - the man behind the cartoon. You'll notice that I sign off as "Gen Y Finance Guy" on all my posts, due to the fact that I write this blog anonymously (at least for now). I like to think of myself as the *Chief Freedom Officer* here of my little corner of the internet. In the real world, I'm a 30-something former C-Suite executive turned entrepreneur turned capital allocator. I am trying to humanize finance by sharing my own journey to Financial Freedom. I believe in total *honesty* and *transparency*. That is why before I ever started blogging, I decided that I would share all of my own [financial stats](#). I do this not to brag, but instead to inspire motivate, and also to hold myself accountable. My goal is to be a beacon of hope, motivation, and inspiration for *you*, the reader, by living life by example and sharing it **all** here on the blog. My sincere hope is that you will be able to learn from me - both from my successes and my failures! [Read More](#)