

I Thought I Wasn't Built for the Pro-Leisure Life - Turns Out I Was Wrong

For years, I believed I wasn't built for the pro-leisure life. In my head, "pro-leisure" meant no work, no goals, no drive – just endless vacations, lounging by the beach or pool, and living without ambition. And since I'm wired for growth, creation, and achievement, that version never resonated with me.

But here's the realization: what I *thought* was the pro-leisure life ([as recently as my last post](#)) was all wrong. It was a stereotype. A hollow, exaggerated version of a concept I've realized is much more nuanced. I have probably said it 100 times on this blog that "I am not built or wired for the pro-leisure life" and 10x more times than that in real life.

The truth? I've actually been optimizing for the real pro-leisure life all along!

I had intended to sit down and write a post defining what the pro-leisure life was and point out all the reasons why it wasn't for me or other ambitious people alike.

However...

As I worked through the ideas, I ended up with the opposite viewpoint and now believe that, as a self-identifying [ambitiously lazy](#) person, the pro-leisure life is the perfect fit. The ideal for the "have it all" lifestyle!

It's ambition without chains. It's the freedom to balance leisure with being a full-time opportunist simultaneously.

Four Ways to Think About Work and Leisure

Over time (really overnight), I've come to see that people fall into four broad approaches to work and leisure.

1. The Anti-Leisure Life

This is the default for most. Work dominates everything. Leisure gets rationed to weekends, holidays, or the scraps of time left over at night. Ambition is fueled by necessity: bills, obligations, and survival. Work is mandatory, and leisure is a luxury.

For those who are intentional, this phase is just part of the journey – a period of paying your dues on the way to greater freedom.

2. The Exaggerated Leisure-Only Life

This is the version I used to picture when I heard “pro-leisure.” It’s a life of no work, all play. Endless travel. Days at the beach. Drinks with little umbrellas in them.

It sounds fun for a season, but it’s not a sustainable destination. For those with ambition, pure consumption without creation quickly leads to restlessness. The lesson here is that leisure without purpose eventually feels empty.

3. The True Pro-Leisure Life

But I’ve come to realize that what the pro-leisure life actually is isn’t about quitting work forever; it’s about making work optional. Leisure in this context means time wealth, the ability to spend your days as you choose. Work supports leisure, and leisure fuels meaningful work.

This is the sweet spot. For those who reach it, ambition doesn’t disappear; it becomes unchained. You get to pursue what matters because you want to, not because you have to.

For me, that means embracing both sides of the spectrum. I love hanging by the beach, getting massages, traveling, eating out, entertaining, and stacking up unique experiences and memories. I love having time to take care of my health and investing deeply in relationships with friends and family. I don’t want to squeeze being a good husband or dad into the scraps of my day.

At the same time, I also love to build, create, compete, and be productive. I like working on interesting projects. The key is autonomy – the freedom to strike the right balance for me, not the balance that’s convenient for someone else’s goals or schedule.

4. The Hustle-Forever Trap

Some people reach financial freedom but never leave hustle mode. They’ve won the game, but they can’t put the ball down. They stay locked into work, not out of necessity but out of habit.

The truth is, hustle is essential early on, especially if you want to compress the timeline to financial freedom. But it’s not meant to last forever. For those who stay stuck here, the lesson is that hustle is a season, not a destination.

A Working Definition of the Pro-Leisure Life

So in my new enlightened state, here’s how I’d define pro-leisure:

The pro-leisure life is one encompassing the intentional pursuit of financial freedom and lifestyle design, where income and obligations are arranged to maximize time for leisure, experiences, and meaningful pursuits without compromising long-term security.

And here are the five pillars that support it:

1. **Time as Wealth** – Money is a tool, but time is the ultimate currency.
2. **Work Optional, Not Work Absence** – Keep ambition alive, but remove obligation.
3. **Sovereign Freedom** – A life of autonomy and optionality, designed to endure for decades while leaving you free to seize opportunities along the way.
4. **Flexible Structure** – Work may be part-time, project-based, or seasonal, but always on your terms.

5. **Margin in Life** - Space for spontaneity, recovery, and exploration.

Then vs. Now

When I look back, I see the shift clearly:

Then (Misconception)

Pro-leisure = no work at all, endless beaches and pools.

Leisure = pure consumption.

Ambition = abandoned.

Income = only passive, no active creation.

Lifestyle = escape from responsibility.

Hustle = permanent.

Now (Reality)

Pro-leisure = work optional, ambition redirected into projects that excite me.

Leisure = time wealth for family, fitness, travel, creativity, spontaneity.

Ambition = unchained - pursuing anything because I *want* to, not because I *have* to.

Income = a blend of passive, semi-passive, and chosen active streams.

Lifestyle = balance of freedom and responsibility, with margin built in.

Hustle = temporary fuel to reach financial freedom - then a shift in gears.

My New Takeaway

I used to think the pro-leisure life wasn't for me because I confused it with the exaggerated leisure-only version. But the reality is, the pro-leisure life isn't the absence of ambition; it's ambition without chains.

The hustle is important, but it's a season, not a destination. Once you hit financial freedom, the point isn't to keep sprinting. The point is to finally arrive at a place where you get to choose.

And that, to me, is the real pro-leisure life.

- Gen Y Finance Guy



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](#)