

SELF-EMPLOYED?

A SURGICAL ASSISTANT'S GUIDE

TO BREAKING FREE AND THRIVING

Dan Bump



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Preface

Why write a book about becoming a self-employed Surgical Assistant? When I first stepped into the world of surgical assisting, I never imagined I'd be sitting here, writing a book to help others find their own path to success. Back then, I was just trying to figure out how to survive the long hours, navigate the complexity of the OR, and maybe – just maybe – find a way to make more than just ends meet. Spoiler alert: I did. And you can too.

I've walked this road myself, from Surgical Tech to self-employed Surgical Assistant. I know the struggles of balancing ambition with the harsh realities of the healthcare system. I've felt the frustration of wanting to do more but not knowing where to start. Sound familiar? That's why I'm here – to be the guide I wish I'd had when I was in your scrubs.

So, you're thinking about going self-employed? Good call. If you've ever found yourself grumbling about hospital politics, longing for better pay, or wondering if there's more to life than night shifts and call rooms that smell like old coffee and regret – this book is for you.

Let's be real. You didn't go through all that training just to be overworked and underappreciated. You became a Surgical Assistant to make a difference in the OR, to work alongside surgeons, and – let's be honest – to have a job that makes you feel like a rock star (because you are). But what if you could do all that ***on your own terms?***

By the time you finish this book, you'll:

- Understand why self-employment can be a game-changer – think higher pay, more freedom, and control over your schedule.
- Learn the secret of instant business expertise – because knowing how to suture doesn't automatically mean knowing how to run a successful business.

- Get the inside scoop on billing and getting paid – so you’re not stuck chasing payments like a dog after a mail truck.
- Discover how to turn self-employment into a long-term career – not just a side hustle but a sustainable, profitable business.

Why This Matters

Self-employment isn’t just about money (although, let’s be real, that’s a huge perk). It’s about:

- Freedom – You control your hours, who you work with, and your career path.
- Job security – Strange, right? But if you work for multiple clients, you’re not dependent on one employer.
- Work-life balance – More time for family, hobbies, and finally using that gym membership.
- Earning what you’re worth – No more waiting for annual reviews that result in a measly 2% raise. Give your own self a raise whenever you want one.

Who This Book Is For

- Anyone wanting to become a Surgical Assistant
- Surgical Assistants who want more control over their careers
- Surgical Assistants wondering if they can actually make self-employment work (Spoiler alert: You can.)

Takeaway Checklist

Before you dive into the next section, here’s what you should walk away with:

- ✓ Self-employment as a Surgical Assistant is not only possible but profitable
- ✓ You don’t have to be a business expert – you just need the right guidance
- ✓ This book will teach you how to market, contract, and get paid

☑ Freedom, better pay, and work-life balance are within reach

☑ You're not alone – others have done it successfully, and so can you

Excited? You should be. Let's get started!

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank my incredible wife, Ramona. You have been my rock, my cheerleader, and my partner through every twist and turn of this journey. From the days when I made the bold – and, let's be honest, terrifying – decision to leave behind the security of a weekly paycheck from a Surgical Tech career to starting a new career as a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you stood by me. You believed in me even when I doubted myself.

And then, when I took the leap to leave surgery entirely, taking a huge pay cut to start a school so I could help others transform their lives, you never wavered in your support. Your unwavering faith in our shared vision gave me the strength to keep going, and for that, I am endlessly grateful.

To my family, friends, and the dedicated team who believed in the dream and helped make it a reality, thank you. Your encouragement, advice, and hard work have been essential in building not just a career, but a legacy. From brainstorming ideas to rolling up your sleeves during the tough times, you have all played a part in shaping the path I've walked.

Finally, to the employees who've stood shoulder-to-shoulder with me and worked tirelessly to ensure the success of our school and its mission, I am deeply grateful. Your commitment to excellence and passion for changing lives have been a constant source of inspiration.

And to everyone who pushed, encouraged, and carried me across the finish line of writing this book – this is as much your accomplishment as it is mine. Thank you for believing in me and in the dream of a better future for Surgical Assistants everywhere. Together, we are proving that big dreams, hard work, and a little bit of courage can truly change lives.

Introduction

Welcome to a new chapter in your career and your life – one filled with possibility, empowerment, and freedom. This book is your guide to navigating the exciting world of the self-employed Surgical Assistant, a path that has the potential to transform not only your professional trajectory but also your personal life. And yes, it can also be a little scary. But that’s exactly why we’re here – to take the ‘scary’ out of it and replace it with confidence and certainty.

Whether you're:

- A seasoned Surgical Assistant seeking a fresh challenge
- A newcomer curious about alternative career paths in surgery
- Tired of the daily grind and ready to explore new possibilities

You’ve definitely found yourself in the right place at the right time.

The Promise of a Better Future

Why self-employment? Because you deserve more:

- More freedom – no more rigid hospital schedules.
- More flexibility – work when *you* want.
- More autonomy – you’re the boss now.
- More control – your career, your rules.
- More income – in many cases, a *lot* more!

Being a self-employed Surgical Assistant isn’t just about ditching the 9 to 5; it’s about embracing a lifestyle that allows you to prioritize what matters most to you, whether that’s financial stability, family time, or personal growth.

This book is here to help you reimagine your potential, overcome doubts, and take bold steps toward a better future without letting the fear of failure overshadow all that is good about self-employment. It puts YOU in control of your destiny.

Why This is the Right Place for You

This book is for every current or aspiring Surgical Assistant who has ever wondered:

- *What if I could design my own career?*
- *What if I could be my own boss?*
- *What if I could earn a low to mid 6-figure income?*

No matter where you are in your career – fresh out of training, mid-career, or approaching retirement – self-employment is not just a pipe dream; it's a viable, highly rewarding option for those willing to take the leap.

This eBook Will Change Your Perspective Forever

Here's what you can look forward to:

- Real-life success stories to inspire you
- Practical insights to guide your transition
- Tools to help you visualize and achieve your self-employment goals

By the end of this journey, you'll not only see a brighter future – you'll have the confidence to step into it.

Takeaway Checklist

Before moving on, let's lock in the key points:

- ☑ Self-employment as a Surgical Assistant gives you freedom, flexibility, and financial control
- ☑ You don't need to be a business expert – you just need the right guidance
- ☑ You can take control of your career – without fear holding you back
- ☑ If you are feeling that being self-employed is impossible, you'll start to see just how possible it is. And not just for someone else – but for *you*.
- ☑ Your better tomorrow begins today!

So, buckle up! Let's get started.

CHAPTER 1

THE CASE FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT



Chapter 1: The Case for Self-Employment

So, as a Surgical Assistant you're considering the leap into self-employment? First of all, bravo! You're already ahead of most people just by being open to the idea. Now, let's break it down and make sure you have all the tools (both literal and metaphorical) to thrive in this exciting new path.

Breaking Free from the 9 to 5 Grind

Let's be honest: traditional employment has its limitations. If any of these sound familiar, self-employment might be calling your name:

- Rigid schedules – Your time is controlled by hospital demands, including call schedules.
- Limited paid time off – Vacation is at the mercy of your boss.
- Burnout is real – The constant grind can take its toll on your health, relationships, and happiness.
- Underappreciation – You're vital to the OR but often treated like an afterthought.

When you are self-employed, you're no longer confined by someone else's calendar. Imagine:

- ✓ Scheduling your availability for surgery around your child's soccer games
- ✓ Taking a vacation without worrying about PTO limits
- ✓ Having the freedom to work as much, or as little as you want

If you do it right, being your own boss puts the control back in your hands, offering a level of freedom traditional employment at a hospital, surgery center, or a surgeon's office simply can't match.

The Flexibility Factor

Self-employment is the ultimate antidote to rigid work structures:

- Choose your hours – Work-life balance? Yes, please!

- Pick your specialties and your surgeons – Work in areas you enjoy most.
- Control your reach – Work locally or expand to other cities – it’s up to you.
- Scale up or down – Take fewer cases when life gets busy; ramp up when you want to build up your bank account.

When you work for yourself, your career adapts to your life – not the other way around.

But you might be saying that while you are no longer held to the rigid schedule imposed by an employer, you are still at the mercy of your surgeon’s surgery schedule. To a greater or lesser extent, that’s true at first. However, if you run and grow your business the ACE way, your freedom and your choices grow as your business grows.

Financial Potential: Getting Paid What You’re Worth

Let’s talk money – because being self-employed isn’t just about freedom – it’s about financial power. There is only one person in the world who is going to be willing to pay you what you are worth... and that’s YOU!

- \$ No salary caps – you set your own rates.
- \$ Higher earning potential – work as much as you need to in order to hit your income goals.
- \$ Increase your potential – prepare yourself with the knowledge and skills it takes to assist on the more lucrative procedures. Some of your cases will yield only a couple of hundred dollars while others will be worth as much as \$10,000!
- \$ Financial independence – Build a safety net faster than with a traditional salary.

Finally, it’s you who have control over these matters – not a boss or corporation who may have a different viewpoint about what your time, expertise, and liability you accept are worth.

By building strong relationships with surgeons and healthcare facilities, you can become a preferred provider and get paid top dollar for your skills. Additionally,

self-employment allows you to diversify your income streams. You're no longer reliant on a single employer, which provides financial stability and independence.

Whether you're saving for a home, paying off debt, or planning for early retirement, you achieve your financial goals faster and with greater certainty. And sometimes we set our goals too low. After all, we don't want to seem like our heads are stuck in the clouds. We want to be "realistic." Being your own boss frees you from those constraints.

It's time to think big, to dream again. No more limiting yourself to someone else's definition of what is "realistic."

Personal Fulfillment: More Than Just a Job

Being your own boss isn't just about money and freedom. It's about taking greater pride in your work:

- You're the boss – No more middle management telling you what to do.
- Work with who you want – Choose surgeons you enjoy working with most.
- Shape your career around your passion – Focus on procedures and specialties you love.
- Build a legacy – Every case, every relationship, and every success is yours to own. Do it the ACE way and you'll have an asset to sell or pass on to your family.

A successful business isn't just about making a living—it's about creating a career that fulfills you.

There's something deeply satisfying about running your own business. As a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you're not just clocking in and out; you're building something meaningful. You're the boss, the decision-maker, and the one reaping the rewards of your hard work.

Moreover, the pride that comes from succeeding on your own terms is unmatched. Every case you assist on, every relationship you build, and every goal you achieve is a testament to your effort, skill, and determination. It's more than just a career; it's a legacy.

Even though self-employment isn't for every Surgical Assistant (you've got to wonder why not), but for those willing to embrace its opportunities, it can be life-changing. The freedom, financial potential, and personal fulfillment it offers are just the beginning. In the chapters ahead, we'll explore how to make this transition successfully, step by step. Get ready to take control of your career and discover a life that works for you, not the other way around.

The Future Is Self-Employment

The train is coming down the tracks, and you have a chance to get out ahead of it. Self-employment isn't a fad. It's the future of work, especially in healthcare. Here's what's fueling it:

- Demand for specialized skills is rising – You've seen the rise in new technologies and how they've impacted the need for new skills. Robotics, 3D imaging, AI, and other cutting-edge technologies are reshaping surgery.
- Workforce preferences are changing – Millennials and Gen Z prioritize flexibility and autonomy.
- Hospitals are cutting costs – Surgeons and hospitals alike increasingly value the flexibility and growing expertise that they bring to the operating room without the long-term financial commitments and hassles of traditional employment.

According to studies by organizations like Upwork and the Freelancers Union, the self-employed workforce is growing faster than traditional employment. In the U.S. alone, over 60 million people identify as self-employed, with many citing flexibility, autonomy, and better work-life balance as key motivators. The healthcare industry is starting to reflect this trend as professionals seek opportunities that let them tailor their careers to their lives, not the other way around.

Hospitals face mounting financial pressures, especially with fluctuating patient volumes and reimbursement rates. Utilizing self-employed Surgical Assistants allows healthcare facilities to control costs by avoiding full-time salaries, benefits, and overhead expenses. This makes self-employment a win-win for both parties.

- The pandemic accelerated outsourced workforce trends – The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated shifts in how work is organized. Locum tenens and other outsourced healthcare roles such as self-employed Surgical Assistants became vital in filling gaps as healthcare systems faced staffing shortages. This trend demonstrated the value and importance of self-employed professionals in maintaining essential services.
- Resources are better than ever – Platforms like ACE Surgical Assisting make it easier than ever for Surgical Assistants to establish themselves as independent professionals.
- Changing Workforce Preferences – Millennials and Gen Z, who are becoming a dominant force in the workforce, prioritize flexibility and meaning in their careers. Self-employment aligns perfectly with their preference for autonomy and their desire to craft careers that allow for personal fulfillment alongside professional success.

By embracing self-employment, you're not just keeping up—you're getting ahead. This is not just a career shift – it's a revolution in how professionals thrive in the modern workforce.

Takeaway Checklist

Before moving on, lock in these key points:

- ☑ Traditional employment is limiting, self-employment is freedom.
- ☑ You set your own rates, work when you want, and control your earning potential.
- ☑ Being your own boss lets you focus on your passion and build a career on your terms.
- ☑ The healthcare industry is trending toward flexible work arrangements.
- ☑ Now is the perfect time to take control of your career and embrace the self-employment revolution.

Ready to take the next step? Let's dive into the strategies that will set you up for success!

CHAPTER 2

YOUR PROFESSIONAL VALUE



Chapter 2: Your Professional Value

As a Surgical Assistant, you are an indispensable part of the operating room team. Yet, many in your position underestimate their worth, brushing aside the idea that their skills could command respect – and a premium price. Understanding and embracing your professional value is a critical step toward succeeding as a in your Surgical Assistant business. Let’s explore what makes you irreplaceable, how to own your abilities with confidence, and why your expertise deserves top pay.

What Makes Surgical Assistants Irreplaceable

Picture this:

- The surgeon is ready, the patient is prepped, and the operation is about to begin.
- The Surgical Tech has meticulously set up the sterile field.
- But when it comes to actual surgical assisting – exposure, hemostasis, suturing – you step in.

Without your expertise, the procedure would be far more challenging. You are not just support staff; you are an essential partner to your surgeon. Your ability to:

- Anticipate the surgeon’s needs,
- Perform delegated tasks with skill and precision, and...
- Adapt quickly in high-pressure situations

ensures efficiency, reduces operating times, and improves patient outcomes.

Self-employment amplifies this value. When surgeons or facilities need an expert who can hit the ground running, they turn to self-employed Surgical Assistants. You step in as the trusted professional, offering reliability and skill in high-stakes situations. That level of trust? It’s rare in traditional employment settings.

Specialized Skills = Premium Pay

Let's face it: Not everyone can do what you do. Your training, experience, and specialized skills set you apart and make you a high-valued professional. Whether it's:

- Laparoscopic and robotic proficiency
- Mastery of specialty procedures
- The uncanny ability to remain calm under pressure

...these are not just resume bullet points. They are negotiating power.

💰 Set your own rates. Unlike salaried positions, where your pay is often capped, self-employment rewards your skill level and dedication, reflecting the actual value you bring to the table. And it's you who decides what to charge for your services.

💰 Qualify for insurance reimbursements. As a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you qualify for reimbursements from the patient's health insurance carrier. And even when the insurance denies payment, surgeons and healthcare facilities are often willing to pay a premium for reliability, expertise, and flexibility – qualities you embody.

To position yourself for higher earnings, highlight your specialties and accomplishments when marketing your services. Did you assist in a groundbreaking procedure? Are you adept at handling complex cases?

Confidence in Your Abilities

Does marketing yourself as an expert feel awkward? You're not alone. Imposter syndrome – the feeling that you're "not good enough" – plagues even the most qualified professionals. But here's the truth:

- You wouldn't have made it this far without being highly skilled
- You've earned the trust of surgeons and OR teams
- You've impacted lives with your expertise. It's time to own that.

If that's not proof of your value, what is? These are not small feats. They're evidence of your competence and the foundation for your business.

One of the best ways to build confidence is thorough preparation. Arm yourself with:

- A clear understanding of your professional value.
- The ability to articulate your skills and expertise.
- Mentorship or support from other successful business owners.

The more prepared you feel, the easier it will be to project confidence.

Owning Your Value

You are not just another cog in the surgical machine – you are a highly skilled professional who makes a tangible difference in the OR. Embracing this truth is not only empowering but also essential for building a successful surgical assisting business.

When you understand and appreciate your real value, you can:

- Advocate for fair compensation without hesitation.
- Approach potential clients with confidence and clarity.
- Establish yourself as a trusted expert in your field.

Remember, self-employment is not about asking for permission to thrive. It's about taking control of your career and owning your worth.

By recognizing and showcasing your value, you'll not only elevate your income but also enjoy the personal satisfaction of knowing you're making a difference and thriving – on your terms.

The Future Starts Now

In the next chapters, we'll dive into the practical steps to kickstart your self-employment journey, from building your brand to finding your first clients. But for now, take a moment to reflect on your unique strengths and remind yourself: You are irreplaceable.

Takeaway Checklist

- ✔ Surgical Assistants are essential – not just support staff.
- ✔ Your specialized skills justify premium pay.
- ✔ Self-employment offers financial independence and income diversity.
- ✔ Confidence comes from preparation, experience, and mentorship.
- ✔ Owning your value is the key to a thriving surgical assisting business.

Up next: How to brand yourself and land your first clients. Let's do this!

CHAPTER 3

OVERCOMING FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY



Chapter 3: Overcoming Fear and Uncertainty

Ah, fear – the uninvited guest at every major decision party. It shows up in the loudest outfit, spouting the same tired “what-ifs” like a stale playlist. Let’s face it: stepping out of the familiar and into the self-employment world as a Surgical Assistant can feel like standing at the edge of a high dive. The good news? You’ve got the skills, the drive, and the courage to jump. Let’s tackle those fears, one by one, and replace them with confidence.

Debunking the "What-Ifs"

Let’s shine a light on some of the common fears that haunt potential surgical assisting business owners. Because with knowledge comes courage.

What if I don’t get any clients?

This is the big one, isn’t it? The mental image of twiddling your thumbs in your home office while your bills pile up. But here’s the truth:

- Surgeons need skilled Surgical Assistants. Your services are in demand.
- Marketing yourself effectively is key. You’re not just any Surgical Assistant – you’re a rockstar who helps surgeries run smoother, faster, and safer. That is a service worth paying for.

Marketing yourself begins with understanding the immense value you bring to the operating room. Your specialized skills – providing surgical exposure, maintaining hemostasis, and even performing delegated parts of a procedure – are not only critical but irreplaceable. Recognizing value is the very foundation of your success.

Once you’re confident in the value you offer, the next step is to communicate it effectively. This means crafting a compelling message that highlights your expertise, reliability, and ability to enhance surgical outcomes. Surgeons aren’t just looking for help; they’re looking for excellence, and your ability to convey how you deliver excellence makes all the difference.

The final, and arguably most important, step is to exceed expectations. Following up with a service that surpasses what you promised ensures your clients recognize the true value you bring to their team. This builds trust, encourages repeat business, and earns glowing referrals.

- Your value is undeniable. Providing surgical exposure, maintaining hemostasis, and performing delegated parts of a procedure? That's not just helpful; that's critical to a successful surgery.

With ACE Surgical Assisting as your partner, you'll have the tools and guidance to excel in all three of these critical aspects of marketing. You'll have everything you need to thrive as a self-employed assistant.

What if my income is inconsistent?

Sure, self-employment can have its revenue ups and downs. But guess what? So do traditional jobs. Companies downsize, hours get cut, bonuses vanish, and layoffs happen – often without warning. The only real stability you can rely on is in yourself.

When you work for yourself, how do you create financial stability?

- Diversify your income streams – Don't just rely on one hospital or one specialty.
- Stay ahead of industry trends – Robotics, AI, new surgical techniques? Stay relevant and marketable.
- Save smart - Build an emergency fund. When you have a fantastic month, put some aside for later.
- Think like an entrepreneur – You control your rates, workload, and income. Traditional employees don't have that luxury!

Diversification is effective but it's only a part of the equation. But when you can't rely on a regular paycheck, you need to have another card up your sleeve (some of you know I was an amateur magician in my awkward teenage years). And for some of you who think you're mentalists, reading my mind, and bracing yourselves for the dreaded "B" word – *Budget* – let assure you, that's not where I was going. Instead, let's talk about something equally important (and sometimes

equally dreaded) – *Saving*. When your income fluctuates, having an emergency fund isn't just a safety net – it's your lifeline.

The real trick is to change your mindset. Most people tend to spend more when they earn more – it's an automatic response. But self-employment demands a different approach. When you have an exceptional month, celebrate your success – within reason. Then, stash some of that extra cash for when the inevitable rainy day comes. Unlike living paycheck to paycheck in a traditional job, being self-employed puts you in the driver's seat, and saving is how you maintain control of your journey. By building a cushion for slower months, you give yourself not only financial stability but peace of mind. Remember, self-employment isn't just about surviving the fluctuations – it's about thriving in the freedom they bring.

What if I'm not good enough?

Ah, imposter syndrome – that pesky voice whispering in your ear, *"You're not ready,"* or worse, *"You'll never be good enough."* Here's the truth:

- You've completed surgeon-level training
- You've passed your certifying exam
- You've refined your skills in real surgical settings

You've done the work. Now, own it. Even the most seasoned surgeons started somewhere. Every surgeon had their first solo procedure, their first big challenge, and their first moment of doubt. What got them through? Their training, their instincts, and a willingness to trust themselves in the moment.

You're no different. You've spent hours learning, practicing, and building the confidence to step up to the OR table. It's normal to feel nervous – that just means you care. But don't let fear paralyze you. Trust the foundation you've laid.

And guess what? You're not alone. One of the greatest advantages you have in your surgical assisting business is the professional network you're building along the way. Whether it's through the ACE Alumni Society, your surgeon mentors, or fellow business owners, you have a community to lean on. Need advice? Someone to talk through a tough case you've experienced? Guidance as you build

your business? Your partnership with ACE Surgical Assisting and your network is your safety net.

Confidence doesn't always come before action – sometimes it grows because of it. Every successful case, every surgeon who thanks you, every patient you've helped is proof that you're not just good enough – you're indispensable. So, quiet that voice of doubt and trust in the professional you've become. You've got this.

The 'Safety Net' Myth

Let's have an honest conversation about the so-called stability of a "regular job." It's marketed as the safe, reliable choice – steady paychecks, benefits, and a clear path forward. But is it really as secure as it seems? Here's the truth most people don't like to acknowledge – job security is largely an illusion. Companies restructure, hospitals merge, budgets shrink, and sometimes entire departments are outsourced or eliminated overnight. None of this is within your control. When you work for someone else, you're essentially placing your livelihood in their hands, trusting that their priorities will always align with your best interests. Spoiler alert: they don't.

Being your own boss shifts the dynamic entirely. It's true that it comes with its own risks – income fluctuations, the need to secure clients, and navigating the business side of things. But here's the key difference: *you* are in control. Instead of depending on someone else's budget, decisions, or whims, you build your career on your terms. You get to diversify your income streams, choose who you work with, and adapt as the market shifts. It's a different kind of responsibility, but one that empowers you to protect yourself against sudden upheavals and craft a career that works for you.

Now, if you're thinking, "But being your own boss is risky!" – you're not wrong. It does involve risk. But here's the thing: *everything* involves risk. Crossing the street is risky, but you've learned to look both ways and navigate safely. Driving a car? Even riskier, yet you do it every day. The point isn't to eliminate risk entirely – it's to learn how to manage it. Self-employment is no different. By building your skills, networking, diversifying, saving for leaner times, and staying adaptable, you can mitigate the risks and maximize the rewards.

Ultimately, the real myth is that traditional employment is risk-free. The truth is, you're always one decision – someone else's decision – away from losing that so-called "safety net." Self-employment might feel like stepping out without a net at first, but with time and effort, you'll realize you're actually weaving your own – and it's far stronger than the illusion of security you left behind.

Finding Courage

Lack of courage often stems from a lack of clarity. When you can't see where you're headed or how you're going to get there, it feels like stepping into an abyss. But here's the thing: the clearer your vision, the less courage you'll need to muster. A well-defined goal, paired with a roadmap to get there, transforms that terrifying leap into a calculated step forward. Courage doesn't mean the absence of fear – it means moving forward despite it. And sometimes, the best way to conquer fear is to see that others have taken the same path and not only survived but thrived. For example:

David's Pioneering Transition: David (*the names have been changed for privacy) was a Surgical Tech in the Navy who found himself at a crossroads. The military allowed him to perform tasks in surgery most civilian Surgical Techs never get near: first assisting in cardiovascular procedures, cracking chests, harvesting veins – essentially anything the surgeon needed. But when David left the Navy, his skillset didn't fit neatly into the civilian medical world. The jobs available couldn't come close to matching his training and experience. The transition to civilian life wasn't just challenging – it demanded the complete invention of a new profession.

David didn't let that stop him. Instead, he saw it as an opportunity to pioneer a new path. And pioneer he did. With determination and vision, he carved out a whole new profession in just four steps:

1. **Surveying the Market:** David researched his local healthcare landscape and identified a significant need for the advanced services he could provide.
2. **Building Support:** He approached local hospitals and effectively demonstrated the demand among surgeons in their facilities for his unique skillset.

3. **Earning Privileges:** Since he was able to get the surgeons on record, he successfully secured hospital privileges to perform his services.
4. **Challenging the System:** On a whim, he sent a bill for his services to a patient's insurance carrier. To his surprise, the insurer reimbursed him.

This single bold move changed everything. Until then, no non-MD assistant had ever submitted a bill for first assisting or had been reimbursed by insurance. Yet David not only broke that barrier – he thrived because of it, eventually earning over \$250,000 annually. His story isn't just one of success; it's one of grit, innovation, and courage. While David never received the widespread recognition he deserved for essentially creating a profession from nothing, his legacy paved the way for countless others.

David's story is a testament to the power of vision, perseverance, and boldness. It shows us that courage isn't something you wait for – it's something you create by clarifying your goals, taking calculated risks, and refusing to give up. When you embrace your talents, trust your abilities, and maintain a clear focus on where you're headed, courage becomes less of a leap into the unknown and more of a steady march toward a brighter future.

My Big Move: For over 15 years, I worked as a Surgical Tech in hospitals, feeling overworked and undervalued. It wasn't just the long hours – 50 to 60 hours a week with frequent on-call shifts – but the realization that my contributions were often overlooked.

Everything changed when I attended a surgical conference and heard a speaker talk about his surgical assisting agency in Denver, Colorado. His agency was composed entirely of self-employed Surgical Assistants, and this autonomy immediately caught my attention.

At the time, Physician Assistants in my Connecticut hospital were making about \$50,000 annually – a figure that seemed unreachable to me, earning \$35,000 while sacrificing work-life balance. The opportunity to earn more and have control over my career was too enticing to ignore. I took the leap and joined the speaker's Denver agency. In my first year as a self-employed Surgical Assistant, I earned \$105,000 – and I only worked 20 hours a week. Compare that to the 50-60 hours I was putting in before. Being my own boss gave me not just financial

freedom but also got me out of the rat race. It gave me the time to explore other passions and start my own school to help others achieve their surgical assisting dreams.

If being self-employed could transform my life, imagine what it could do for yours. The next two stories are examples of Surgical Assistants who took even bigger leaps of faith – and the incredible rewards they achieved. Incidentally, they were both students of mine and I take great pride in helping them succeed.

Jacob Beats the Odds: Jacob's journey seemed doomed from the start. He enrolled in the ACE Surgical Assistant Program with big aspirations, but midway through, he was forced to withdraw due to a life-threatening illness. It was a devastating setback, and I honestly didn't expect to hear from him again. But Jacob wasn't one to give up. After resolving his health issues, he rejoined the program with a renewed sense of determination.

He and his wife decided to make a bold move across the country to Arizona before he'd even finished the program. This presented new challenges: finding surgeons who didn't know him willing to sponsor and participate in his clinical training and convincing a hospital to allow clinical training for a role when they didn't even employ Surgical Assistants. Most of our students get to do their clinicals at a hospital they already work at, with surgeons they already work with and who have an interest in their success.

Against all odds, Jacob succeeded. Today, he's self-employed as a Surgical Assistant specializing in robotics. Working part-time, he earns over \$350,000 annually, and his free time is spent with his family, pursuing hobbies like long-distance target shooting, and even taking classes to learn film production (I think he wants to be the next Steven Spielberg). Jacob turned what seemed like insurmountable obstacles into a thriving, fulfilling life. A model for us all to follow.

Kevin's Bold Escape: Kevin's story is a testament to resilience and prioritizing what matters most. I had the privilege of training Kevin, who later joined the same Denver agency where I worked. Kevin had an incredible knack for building rapport with surgeons and quickly became a valued member of the team. But challenges arose when tensions between his wife and the agency owner's wife reached an unmanageable level. Kevin made the difficult decision to leave his

successful business in Denver and relocate to another state to protect his family's well-being.

Starting over wasn't easy. In a new area where no one knew him, Kevin had to rebuild his reputation and client base from scratch. Using the skills and business concepts he'd mastered in Denver, he succeeded beyond expectations. Today, Kevin earns a mid-6-figure income and is working toward scaling his solo practice into a full-fledged surgical assisting agency. His courage to put family first while rebuilding his career is an inspiration.

The Courage to Write Your Own Story

These stories illustrate a powerful truth: courage isn't about the absence of fear – it's about taking bold steps forward despite it. Whether it's starting over in a new state like Kevin, battling through illness like Jacob, or taking that first leap into self-employment as I did, the common thread is resilience paired with a clear vision.

Your journey may have obstacles, but with the right training, determination, and mindset, you can overcome them. Courage grows from clarity and belief in your potential. These Surgical Assistants didn't just survive their challenges; they thrived, transforming their careers and their lives. Now, it's your turn. Your story of courage is waiting to be written. Take the leap – you'll be amazed at where it can take you.

CHAPTER 4

A BETTER LIFE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



Chapter 4: A Better Life for You and Your Family

The Lifestyle Upgrade

Imagine waking up each day without the dread of clocking in at a job that doesn't value your time, skills, or aspirations. As a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you can design a life that works for you and your family. The flexibility to choose your own schedule could mean no more missing school plays, soccer games, or those precious milestones that you can never get back.

Being your own boss isn't just about financial independence; it's about creating space for the things that matter most. With fewer rigid work demands, you'll have the energy and time to truly be present for your loved ones. Want to plan a long weekend getaway without asking for approval? Need to stay home when your child is sick? Your business gives you the freedom to prioritize family without sacrificing income.

And let's not overlook the benefits of mental health. Less stress from a rigid 9 to 5 grind means more energy to focus on personal growth and nurturing relationships. A balanced life isn't just a dream – it's a choice you can make by taking charge of your career.

Breaking Generational Cycles

For many, the traditional work model has meant living paycheck to paycheck, with little hope of escaping the cycle. Self-employment offers you a unique opportunity to break free from this pattern. By stepping into a high-demand role with earning potential limited only by your willingness to work, you can achieve lasting financial security.

This isn't just about paying the bills; it's about building wealth that can impact generations. Picture yourself saving for your children's education, investing in a family home, or even starting a college fund for your future grandchildren. If you are your own boss, you have the key to rewriting your family's financial story.

It's empowering to know that the steps you take today can break chains of financial insecurity. Your decision to break free of traditional employment shows

your family that there's another way – a better way – to achieve stability and success.

Inspiring the Next Generation

Your career as a self-employed Surgical Assistant doesn't just change your life; it inspires those who look up to you. Your children will see firsthand what it means to take bold steps toward independence and success. By choosing to forge your own path, you're showing them that hard work, dedication, and a willingness to embrace change can lead to a fulfilling life.

This isn't just about telling your kids to dream big – it's about showing them how to turn dreams into reality. When they see you managing your schedule, negotiating contracts, and providing for the family, they'll learn valuable lessons about courage, adaptability, and resilience.

You're not just building a better life for yourself; you're laying the groundwork for the next generation to thrive. Your story will become a blueprint for them to follow, proving that taking risks can lead to incredible rewards. After all, who better to teach them about perseverance and success than someone who has lived it?

By choosing to start a Surgical Assistant business, you're not just upgrading your lifestyle – you're creating a legacy. This chapter in your life isn't just about your career; it's about rewriting your family's story for generations to come. You have the power to show your loved ones a better way forward. So, take the leap. The future is waiting for you, and it looks brighter than ever.

CHAPTER 5

THE SELF-EMPLOYED ADVANTAGE



Chapter 5: The Self-Employed Advantage in Surgical Assisting

Meeting Surgeons' Needs on Your Terms

Surgeons are always on the lookout for skilled, reliable, and adaptable professionals to join their surgical teams. As a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you have the unique ability to meet these needs without the constraints of traditional employment. This flexibility is a win-win for both you and the surgeons who utilize your services.

One of the primary reasons surgeons prefer self-employed assistants is their specialized skillset. Surgical Assistants play a direct role in the surgical procedure. Your ability to provide exposure, maintain hemostasis, and even perform delegated parts of the surgery can make you an invaluable asset. The self-employed are often contracted for their expertise in specific procedures, giving surgeons confidence in the quality of their team.

A significant business advantage you'll enjoy is a surgeon's strong reliance developed on their favorite assistant akin to an addiction. Once a surgeon experiences your services, likes you personally, and starts to rely on your high-level of expertise and surgical skills, they quickly recognize the value of having you on their team. Unlike hospital-employed Surgical Assistants, who may be assigned to various cases without consistency, you can be there for nearly every case. This reliability fosters a strong professional bond, making you an indispensable part of their surgical team.

Business owners approach their work with a client-focused mindset, treating surgeons as valued partners they aim to please. This level of dedication contrasts with the mindset of many hospital employees, who might see their role as just a job and perform only to the minimum standard required to keep receiving their paychecks. Business owners, on the other hand, go the extra mile to ensure every aspect of the surgery runs smoothly, which significantly enhances the surgeon's experience and confidence.

The role of a Surgical Assistant is to be a close and trusted partner to the surgeon during every procedure. Imagine having a partner who makes your work experience more enjoyable, who understands your preferences inside and out, who works seamlessly alongside you, and whose skills you trust implicitly. Imagine that because of their assistance, your patients enjoy more positive outcomes and fewer complications.

It's no surprise that surgeons develop a strong preference (addiction) for self-employed Surgical Assistants who consistently deliver this level of support. On the rare occasions when they must work with someone else, the difference is palpable. The smooth rhythm of the operating room can falter, and the surgeon's confidence may waver, affecting the entire team. Continuing with the metaphor, it's akin to the onset of withdrawal symptoms – a testament to the invaluable role an entrepreneurial Surgical Assistant plays.

Flexibility is another key advantage. You'll have the freedom to choose which cases to take, allowing you to tailor your schedule and focus on procedures you excel at or enjoy most. This autonomy makes you an ideal choice for surgeons who need skilled assistance on short notice or for complex surgeries requiring advanced techniques.

Additionally, surgeons appreciate the efficiency and professionalism the self-employed bring to the table. By contracting with one, they bypass the red tape and long onboarding processes associated with hiring full-time staff. This streamlined approach allows surgeons to quickly assemble top-tier teams, ensuring optimal outcomes for their patients.

Becoming an In-Demand Surgical Assistant

Your business doesn't just help you meet surgeons' needs – it positions you as a sought-after expert in your field. When you work independently, your reputation becomes your most valuable currency. Positive experiences with surgeons, hospitals, and surgical centers lead to glowing referrals, making you a go-to professional for high-stakes procedures.

Independent assistants often have the opportunity to specialize in a specific area or areas of surgery, such as orthopedics, cardiovascular, or OB/GYN procedures, or in special surgical approaches like robotics. By honing your skills in a particular

niche, you set yourself apart as an authority in that domain. Surgeons and medical teams quickly recognize the value of a Surgical Assistant who brings depth and precision to the operating room.

Visibility is another advantage. You're not confined to a single hospital or surgical group. Your work takes you to multiple facilities, exposing you to a broader network of healthcare professionals. Each new team you work with expands your professional reach, ensuring your name is top of mind when they need a skilled assistant.

Networking Opportunities

Self-employment fosters unparalleled networking opportunities within the medical community. Every case you assist with introduces you to new surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. These connections are invaluable for building your career and expanding your business.

Surgeons, in particular, are a vital part of your network. Many independent assistants find that strong relationships with surgeons lead to consistent referrals and long-term collaborations. Once a surgeon trusts your skills and work ethic, they are likely to request you specifically for future cases. This not only builds your reputation but also ensures a steady stream of work.

You are also well-positioned to connect with other Surgical Assistants and professionals in related fields. These peers can offer guidance, share best practices, and even refer you to opportunities they can't accommodate. You can end up covering for them when they are unavailable and vice versa. By attending medical conferences, joining professional organizations, or participating in alumni networks like the ACE Alumni Society, you position yourself as a well-connected professional in your industry.

Finally, self-employment provides unique insights into the inner workings of various healthcare facilities. Working in different environments exposes you to diverse techniques, workflows, and surgical innovations. This knowledge not only enhances your skills but also makes you a more versatile and valuable team member.

Being self-employed offers a unique blend of independence, professional growth, and networking potential. By meeting surgeons' needs on your terms, becoming a

recognized expert, and cultivating valuable connections, you position yourself for a rewarding and sustainable career. The self-employment path isn't just an attractive alternative; it's a strategic choice for Surgical Assistants ready to take control of their futures.

CHAPTER 6

PARTNERING WITH ACE SURGICAL ASSISTING



Chapter 6: Partnering with ACE Surgical Assisting

Leveraging ACE's Expertise

Embarking on an independent surgical assisting career can feel like navigating uncharted waters. Fortunately, ACE Surgical Assisting is a lighthouse for those who feel apprehensive about leaving the seeming stability of a weekly paycheck. But here's the truth: real stability is what you create for yourself. Not to mention the rewards of freedom and financial independence. By partnering with ACE Surgical Assisting, you're not just stepping into your own business – you're launching into a future designed for success, freedom, and financial independence.

At ACE, we understand that transitioning to self-employment requires more than surgical skills. It demands a firm grasp of business systems, strategic marketing, and the confidence to position yourself as an indispensable asset to surgical teams. That's where our expertise shines.

You may know ACE Surgical Assisting as a premier Surgical Assistant training organization but there is something you may not realize: we are also experts in the 'business' of surgical assisting. We have the business knowledge, experience, and expertise you need to successfully navigate the world of self-employment.

According to the E-Myth (www.emyth.com), the biggest reason most businesses fail is because the owner starts a business simply because they're good, maybe even the best, at what they do – surgical assisting for example. The book calls this an 'entrepreneurial seizure,' describing it as 'the moment where you realize you should... no, absolutely must... start your own business.' Why should your employer keep the lion's share of the financial rewards? Why not bypass your employer and keep the lion's share for yourself? Let's be honest – it's a tempting thought.

But here's the catch: being an exceptional Surgical Assistant (what you do) doesn't automatically make you an expert at running a successful business (what you don't do). This is the trap that leads many skilled professionals down the path

to failure. The dream is real, but the tools to achieve it are often missing. That's where ACE comes in.

With ACE, you gain access to a framework that equips you for success. Here's how we help:

- **A Proven Business Model:** Why reinvent the wheel? ACE offers a tested blueprint that simplifies the process of launching your business career.
- **Real-World Knowledge and Experience:** Our team has walked the self-employed path and knows the challenges and opportunities firsthand. We'll guide you through the nuances of starting, running, and growing your business.
- **Unmatched Business Acumen:** Knowledge and experience lay the groundwork, but business savvy or acumen is what keeps you moving forward when challenges arise. ACE brings a wealth of acumen honed through years of practical experience.

Partnering with ACE is the cure for the entrepreneurial seizures that cause so many to stumble. You bring the surgical expertise, and we bring the business expertise. Together, we'll build the foundation for your success. So, let's take the leap – because independence isn't just a career choice; with ACE by your side, it's a transformation.

Business Model

A successful surgical assisting career doesn't happen by chance – it's built on a solid business model. At ACE Surgical Assisting, we've developed a framework that simplifies the process of starting and running your business, giving you the tools to create a thriving career. Let's break it down:

Do the Math

Let's be honest—math isn't everyone's favorite subject. But trust me, you're going to *love* this kind of math. It's not about abstract equations or imaginary numbers. It's about real numbers, real results, and real opportunities for financial freedom. Let me show you how Surgical Assistant self-employment can transform your earning potential.

When I was independently assisting in surgery, I made **\$105,000 a year** by working **20 hours a week** – assisting on about 10 cases per week. That’s not a hypothetical; it’s a real-life example. Now, let’s take this information and turn it into a financial model that could work for you.

The beauty of this model is its scalability. It already worked, and now we can build on it to create an even more lucrative future.

What if you worked **40 hours a week** instead of just 20? You are probably working more than that now. That’s twice the cases and double the income – an easy way to hit **\$200,000 a year**. No complicated formulas, no risky changes – just working more hours within the same proven system.

But let’s not stop there. Let’s dream a little bigger. What if you wanted to make **\$400,000 a year**? Can it be done? Yes, absolutely. But here’s where we get creative. Working 80 hours a week might technically get you there, but let’s face it – that’s a recipe for burnout, not success. Instead, let’s look at smarter, not harder, ways to scale.

Here’s where the math gets exciting. The income you’ll earn doesn’t just depend on how many hours you work; it also depends on how much you charge.

The fees for surgical assisting services are often calculated as a percentage of the attending surgeon’s charges. This is known as the **usual, customary, and reasonable charge (UCR)** – the amount insurance companies are willing to pay for your services. The first company I worked with in Denver was charging insurance carriers **18% of what the surgeon charges**. While that might sound decent, it was actually far below the UCR, which was and is **35%**.

Why were we undercharging? The owner believed that offering lower rates would attract insurance companies and secure exclusive contracts. But guess what? That strategy didn’t pay off. There were no exclusive contracts, and we left a lot of money on the table.

Let’s do the math again, this time using the full UCR of 35%:

By charging the full 35% for the same work, my annual earnings would have jumped from **\$105,000 to \$210,000** – without working a single extra hour.

Now, let's revisit the dream of earning \$400,000 a year. If you work 40 hours a week (still manageable) and charge the full UCR, it's entirely within reach.

This isn't pie-in-the-sky dreaming. This is real math based on real data – and it shows how you can earn more by working smarter and charging what you're worth.

By now you must be really loving math. A Surgical Assistant business isn't just a job; it's a financial game-changer. By understanding your value, charging appropriately, and leveraging a proven business model, you can dramatically increase your income without sacrificing your work-life balance. And that's math worth loving!

Mentoring and Modeling: The Shortcut to Success

Success leaves clues. One of the fastest and most effective ways to achieve your goals is to find someone who has already accomplished what you want to achieve, study their path, and then model their behavior. This concept isn't just an inspirational mantra – it's grounded in science and proven to work over time.

The Science of Modeling Success

Research in neuroscience reveals that humans are hardwired to learn by observing others. Mirror neurons in our brains modulate their activity not only when we perform a specific motor action but also when we observe someone else performing the same or similar action. This means that when you watch someone succeed – whether it's mastering a surgical technique or building a thriving business – you're mentally rehearsing those same actions.

This ability to learn through observation is why modeling works so well. It allows you to bypass the arduous and often painful trial-and-error phase that most people endure and go straight to strategies that are already proven to work. You're not guessing anymore; you're following a roadmap created by someone who has already made the mistakes, learned from them, and finally succeed. They failed their way to success so you don't have to.

Finding the Right Mentor

The key to successful modeling is choosing the right person to emulate. Look for someone who has achieved the kind of success you envision for yourself. This

might be someone who has built a thriving business, commands competitive rates, and maintains a healthy work-life balance. A good mentor doesn't just show you what to do – they also share insights into *why* they do it.

But finding a mentor isn't just about proximity. It's about alignment. Your mentor should not only understand the technical and business aspects of surgical assisting but also share your values and aspirations.

How ACE Can Help

Here's where partnering with ACE Surgical Assisting gives you an incredible advantage. Initially, while the demand is smaller for this kind of partnership, I'll personally be mentoring you and guiding you to business success. But let's face it, I'm just one man – although with an incredible support group. But as this concept catches on and demand for these services grow, I'll be building a team of experts who are eager to share their knowledge, strategies, and lessons learned. They'll be well-trained and equipped to help me mentor and pass on my business model to a larger number of aspiring Surgical Assistant business owners just like you.

Why an ACE Mentor Makes the Difference:

- **Real-World Experience:** ACE mentors are not theorists – they've been in the trenches. They know what it takes to succeed in independent surgical assisting and can provide insights you won't find in textbooks.
- **Customized Guidance:** Unlike generic advice, ACE mentors tailor their guidance to your unique goals, strengths, and challenges.
- **Built-In Community:** Through the ACE Alumni Society, you gain access to a network of peers and professionals who offer ongoing support, encouragement, and accountability.

Modeling a Proven Business Framework

ACE's partnership goes beyond mentorship. By aligning yourself with ACE, you're also modeling a business framework that has been refined and proven to work. ACE offers a franchise-like approach to self-employment, complete with templates, systems, and tools to help you hit the ground running.

Here's how ACE's modeling approach sets you up for success:

- **Step-by-Step Guidance:** You don't have to reinvent the wheel. ACE provides a roadmap that's already been tested by professionals who have achieved what you aspire to.
- **Avoiding Pitfalls:** Through mentorship and modeling, you'll learn to sidestep the common mistakes that derail the newly self-employed.
- **Confidence Through Clarity:** Knowing exactly what to do and how to do it builds confidence, helping you take decisive action in your business.

Mentoring and modeling aren't just shortcuts – they're game-changers. By learning from those who have already succeeded and leveraging ACE's proven framework, you can accelerate your journey to a thriving independent career. With ACE, you're not just partnering with a training organization; you're joining a legacy of success that you can emulate, personalize, and build upon. So why go it alone when you can follow a proven path? The blueprint is here – all you have to do is follow it.

Franchising as a Model

We're not actually building a franchise – we're building a partnership. But we are using the franchising concept as a model because it takes the guesswork out of building a successful business. Instead of starting from scratch, you replicate a proven system, leveraging the experience and expertise of those who have already achieved success. It's a model that has transformed industries – think McDonald's in fast food or Anytime Fitness in gyms. These businesses thrive because their franchisees aren't left to figure them all out alone; they're equipped with processes, branding, and support that have already been refined and work perfectly every time.

The same concept can apply to your surgical assisting business. By modeling your career after a proven system – like the one ACE provides – you're not just working harder – you're working smarter. You're setting yourself up for sustainable success with the potential for a legacy that outlives you.

A Business That Outlasts You

Most independent Surgical Assistants face a sobering reality: their business begins and ends with them. When they can no longer work, the income stops, and the business disappears. But it doesn't have to be this way. A properly built assisting

business can run without you, grow systematically, and even improve over time without your direct involvement. It becomes a self-sustaining money machine that works for you rather than you working for it. Let's explore what this can mean for your future.

What a Money Machine Does for You

- **Extended Vacations:** Imagine taking a month-long vacation, enjoying the sights of Europe or relaxing on a tropical beach. While you're away, your business continues to operate, and when you return, it hasn't just survived – it's grown. With a well-structured system in place, your income doesn't rely solely on your presence in the operating room or directly managing your business.
- **Retire on Your Terms:** Most independent assistants retire when they *have to* – either due to physical limitations or burnout. But with a scalable, self-sustaining business model, you can retire when you *want* to. Better yet, your business can finance the retirement you've always dreamed of. Picture a life where your income doesn't stop just because you do.
- **Sell Your Business for Top Dollar:** If the day comes when you no longer want your business, you don't have to walk away empty-handed. A business built on a proven model, with systems in place and established income streams, is a valuable asset. You can sell it for top dollar, using the proceeds to fund your retirement or other dreams.
- **Leave a Legacy:** When you eventually leave this world – hopefully many decades from now – you'll leave behind more than just memories. A thriving business can be passed down to your descendants even if they don't want to work in the operating room, providing them with a lasting financial foundation. Or, if you've sold the business, they can inherit a large bank account, giving them the resources to build their own legacies. Either way, your family will have you to thank for their head start in life.

Why an ACE Partnership That Models Franchising Works So Well for Self-Employed Surgical Assistants

Franchising provides a framework for success, allowing you to focus on what you do best while leveraging systems that handle the rest. When you partner with

ACE, you're not just adopting a model – you're investing in a future where your work creates lasting value. You're building a business that serves you in life, supports you in retirement, and secures a legacy for generations to come.

It's not just about making money today – it's about creating a system that ensures your hard work continues to pay off tomorrow and beyond. So, ask yourself: do you want to work until you can't anymore, or do you want to build something that works for you? With ACE's model, the choice is yours.

Business Knowledge and Expertise

When it comes to building a successful surgical assisting business, knowledge is power – but how you gain that knowledge makes all the difference. There are two ways to acquire the knowledge you need:

1. **Painful Trial and Error:** You could spend years learning through mistakes, losing time and money as you figure out what works and what doesn't. This method is costly, both financially and emotionally, and it's why so many businesses fail before they ever hit their stride.
2. **Partnering with Expertise:** Instead of starting from scratch, you can partner with someone who already has the knowledge and experience you're missing. This approach allows you to skip the missteps and build a business that's whole from the beginning.

Theoretically, I could pass along all my knowledge and expertise to you by writing a book – or, more realistically, multiple books. Those books would give you two critical things you need for success:

- **A Proven Business Model:** A structured framework that has been tested and refined for the ultimate business success.
- **Essential Business Knowledge:** The foundational principles you need to operate and grow your business.

But even with those tools, there's something missing – something books alone can't provide. And that brings us to the difference between knowledge and something far more valuable: **acumen**.

Instant Business Acumen

Knowing Is One Thing, Acumen Is Another

Business acumen, also known as business savvy, is the difference between book smarts and street smarts. It is the ability to make sound decisions, recognize opportunities, and adapt to challenges in real time. It's not just about knowing the theory; it's about applying it effectively. Acumen comes from experience, intuition, and a deep understanding of how businesses, or a particular business like surgical assisting, operate in the real world (no pun intended).

Think of it this way: you might know the rules of chess, but acumen is what lets a grandmaster anticipate their opponent's moves, adapt their strategy, and win the game. In business, it's what separates success from mediocrity.

Gaining Instant Business Acumen with ACE

By partnering with ACE, you don't have to spend years developing business acumen through trial and error. Instead, you gain access to the collective experience and expertise of a team that has already navigated the challenges of independent practice. This "instant acumen" allows you to make informed decisions and act with confidence from day one.

How Business Acumen Benefits You

Partnering with ACE gives you more than just knowledge – it equips you with the savvy to thrive. Here's how that benefits you:

1. **Faster Problem-Solving:** With ACE's experience backing you, you'll be equipped to tackle challenges quickly and efficiently, avoiding costly delays and mistakes.
2. **Recognizing Opportunities:** Business acumen helps you spot opportunities others might miss – whether it's negotiating better rates, identifying new client markets, or scaling your services.
3. **Adapting to Change:** In a fast-moving industry, flexibility is key. ACE's guidance helps you adapt to market shifts, regulatory changes, and client demands without losing momentum.

4. **Building Confidence:** Knowledge provides a foundation, but acumen gives you the confidence to take risks and pursue big goals. With ACE, you'll have the tools and mentorship to back your decisions.

Partnering with ACE isn't just about avoiding mistakes – it's about gaining the insight, intuition, and experience you need to succeed, even if you don't personally have those things. Business acumen is the missing piece that transforms knowledge into action, and action into results. Together with ACE's proven model and guidance, you're not just starting a business; you're building a thriving career with a solid foundation. Why struggle to figure it all out on your own when you can gain the expertise and acumen to succeed from day one?

Opportunities to Build an ACE Business

Are you ready to take your surgical assisting career to the next level? Whether you're an ACE alumnus or a Surgical Assistant trained elsewhere, the opportunity to partner with ACE is open to you. Maybe you're already practicing independently but find yourself struggling to manage the business side or achieve the income you dreamed of. An ACE partnership could be the game-changer that helps your business thrive.

The ACE Standard

When you build an ACE business, you're not just representing yourself—you're representing the ACE name, a name synonymous with quality and professionalism. This means holding your services to the highest standards.

Our **6-Day Surgical SkillLab** is your quality assurance tool. Whether you're providing services yourself or preparing future hires, this training is essential to ensuring consistent, top-tier performance. This isn't just about honing skills; it's about maintaining the standard of excellence that ACE stands for, setting you up for the success you long for.

Ready to take this step? Visit www.acesatraining.com or just call 866-223-2778 to learn more and enroll.

Tailored Opportunities: Let's Find the Right Fit

Not all markets are created equal and the potential of your business depends on your location and goals. Here's how we approach it:

- **Solo Business:** If you're in a rural area or limited by access to cases, a solo business may be your primary path. Even so, a well-run business in these markets can still achieve mid-six-figure revenue. The key is learning how to maximize your opportunities, and that's where ACE can help.
- **Scaling a Business:** If you're in an area with abundant surgical opportunities, you may have the chance to build a larger, scalable business. This could involve hiring additional Surgical Assistants and expanding your reach. However, doing so requires strategic planning and a willingness to lead, both of which we can guide you through.
- **Relocating for Opportunity:** Some regions offer more fertile ground for surgical assisting businesses. If you're open to relocating, ACE can help you identify the best markets and create a plan for success in a new territory. Of course, this isn't the right fit for everyone, but for those willing to make a move, the rewards can be substantial.

The Application and Interview Process

Not everyone will have the same fertile market to work in. Some will only ever be able to own a solo business due to limited access to cases. Maybe you live in a very rural area. But hey. You still may have mid-6-figure capacity. Others may live in areas where they can build a larger business. If you want a different kind of business opportunity, you may have to move to get it. Not everyone is up to that.

But we can figure this out together. It will just take an application and an interview. In the interview we get a chance to know you better and you get a chance to know what it will take for you to get the best out of your territory and how you can qualify to partner with us.

- **The Application:** This helps us understand your background, goals, and the opportunities available in your area. Just call 866-223-2778 to get your application started.
- **The Interview:** This is where we get to know each other better. We'll discuss your goals, assess your market potential, and outline what it takes to succeed as an ACE partner. You'll also have the chance to ask questions and ensure this opportunity aligns with your vision.

An ACE partnership is more than a business opportunity – it's a chance to align with a proven model, elevate your career, and create a future that works for you. Whether you're looking to refine your solo practice or build a scalable business, ACE offers the tools, guidance, and support to help you succeed. Let's figure it out together. Your future starts here.

CHAPTER 7

MINDSET OF A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR



Chapter 7: The Mindset of a Successful Entrepreneur

From Employee to Entrepreneur

Making the leap from employee to entrepreneur is a thrilling yet challenging transition. As an employee, you're used to a set schedule, predictable paychecks, and someone else calling the shots. Being self-employed, however, requires a complete mental overhaul. You're not just performing your craft – you're running a business. This means wearing multiple hats: marketing expert, negotiator, accountant, and customer service representative, all while excelling in your role as a Surgical Assistant. This is where having a business expert on your team you can consult with.

To thrive in business, you must embrace the mindset of an entrepreneur. This starts with taking full ownership of your career. Instead of waiting for opportunities to come to you, you seek them out. You create value for your clients by identifying their needs and positioning yourself as the solution. Every interaction is an opportunity to build relationships and your reputation. Remember, business success is not just about having the skills to assist in surgery – it's about presenting yourself as the trusted partner surgeons can rely on.

Another critical element of the entrepreneurial mindset is self-motivation. Without a supervisor overseeing your every move, you'll need to hold yourself accountable for showing up on time and consistently delivering top-notch results. Your success is in your hands, and while that can feel daunting, it's also incredibly empowering. If you don't have enough success, you can do something about it.

Resilience and Adaptability

Self-employment is not for the faint of heart. It's a career path filled with highs and lows, and your ability to navigate those fluctuations will determine your success. One day, you might feel unstoppable, juggling multiple surgeries and receiving glowing feedback. The next, you could be facing unexpected cancellations or a slower period. The key to thriving in this environment is resilience.

Resilience means bouncing back from challenges without losing focus. For instance, if a potential client chooses someone else, resist the urge to take it personally. Instead, view it as an opportunity to refine your approach. Perhaps your pitch could be more tailored, or your follow-up more consistent. Each setback is a chance to learn and grow.

Adaptability is equally crucial. As an independent Surgical Assistant, no two days are the same. You might assist in an orthopedic procedure in the morning and switch to a general surgery case in the afternoon. Or you might need to travel to different hospitals and adapt to their protocols. Staying flexible and maintaining a positive attitude will help you navigate the unpredictability of business while keeping your clients happy.

Finally, adaptability extends to the business side of your career. Market trends, technology, and even healthcare regulations evolve constantly. A willingness to pivot your strategies and keep pace with these changes ensures your long-term viability in this dynamic field.

Continual Growth

Business isn't a one-and-done deal – it's a journey of continual growth. To remain competitive and elevate your career, you need to invest in yourself and your business over time. This includes honing your surgical skills, expanding your knowledge, and refining your business acumen.

Start by committing to lifelong effective learning. For example:

- ***Surgical Conferences:*** Attend ACE Alumni Society conferences offered in your region, or why not travel to other regions when you don't have one in yours.
- ***Take Continuing Education Courses:*** The Society is offering a growing number of CE courses designed with value in mind – not just credits. You'll be a better assistant for having taken them.
- ***Independent Study:*** When you were in the ACE Surgical Assistant Program, you had to write 3 papers 1) about the Patient having this surgery; 2) about the relevant anatomy of the patient having this surgery; and 3) about the

intricate steps of the procedure the patient is having. And this all had to be surgeon-level.

Not only is this a valuable part of an excellent curriculum for Surgical Assistant students, it's also a model for how to properly prepare for assisting on various cases. This kind of case preparation is essential if you are ambitious and aiming to become the best assistant you can possibly be.

- **Continuing Education Credits:** You get CE Credits to maintain your ABSA certification by attending those conferences, taking those CE courses, and, if you put your case preparation in writing, you can get credit for those too.

Remember, surgeons are looking for assistants who can operate at their level – or better. By staying at the top of your game, you'll not only meet their expectations but exceed them.

Next, focus on building your professional network. Join associations like the ACE Alumni Society, where you can connect with peers, share experiences, and gain insights into new opportunities. Networking isn't just about finding jobs; it's about cultivating relationships, becoming a mentor, and finding mentors that can support your growth and success over time.

Lastly, don't neglect the business side of being self-employed. Learn how to manage your finances effectively, market your services, and maintain optimal client relationships. Consider tools and software that can streamline administrative tasks like scheduling, invoicing, and tracking expenses. The more efficiently you run your business, the more time you'll have to focus on **what you do best and enjoy most: assisting your surgeons** and delivering exceptional patient care and outcomes. A partnership with ACE will give you a huge competitive advantage in the business side of what you do.

Success as a self-employed Surgical Assistant starts with the right mindset. By shifting from employee to entrepreneur, cultivating resilience and adaptability, and committing to continual growth, you'll set yourself up for a fulfilling and lucrative career. The path won't always be easy, but it will be worth it.

Self-Employed? Why not? It gives you the freedom to shape your future, the opportunity to make a meaningful impact, and the satisfaction of knowing you've

built something truly your own. So take the leap, embrace the challenges, and watch as your career and confidence soar.

CHAPTER 8

ROADBLOCKS: HOW TO OVERCOME THEM



Chapter 8: Roadblocks; How to Overcome Them

Starting an independent career as a Surgical Assistant is an exciting journey, but it's not without its roadblocks. The good news? Every challenge has a solution – and with the right mindset and strategies, you can overcome them all. Let's dive into the common obstacles the self-employed face and how to tackle them head-on.

The Business Knowledge Gap

One of the most intimidating aspects of independence is realizing you're not just a Surgical Assistant – you're also a business owner. If the idea of managing contracts, marketing, and finances makes your head spin, you're not alone. But don't let this overwhelm you.

Start with the basics. Identify the most immediate skills you need, such as creating invoices, marketing your services, or understanding your legal obligations. There are countless free or low-cost resources available online, from YouTube tutorials to courses on platforms like Coursera and Udemy. You don't need an MBA – you just need to focus on learning as you go. And the most valuable business relationship you could hope for is a partnership with ACE Surgical Assisting.

Another tip? Find a mentor or join a professional group like the ACE Alumni Society. These connections can offer guidance, share their experiences, and help you navigate the business side of surgical assisting with confidence.

I Don't Have a Market

It's a common fear: "What if no one needs my services?" The truth is, demand for Surgical Assistants is growing, but identifying your market is essential. Begin by researching local hospitals, surgery centers, and private practices. If you already have a job working with surgeons who enjoy collaborating with you, you're in a prime position. You can launch your business with a built-in clientele. Best of all, these surgeons don't necessarily have to pay you directly – your compensation can come from the hospital or the patient's insurance carrier.

Your market research might be as simple as talking to the surgeons you already know. Let them know you're considering self-employment. Many will support your decision and may even be the first to hire you. Perhaps they already have an assistant, but it's worth finding out where they're experiencing gaps in assistance that you could fill. You could start by covering those gaps, demonstrating your value, and building trust. If you excel, they might transition to using you exclusively.

If you don't already have relationships with surgeons in your area, your task becomes a bit more challenging, but it's absolutely achievable. Your success will depend on three key factors: the types of cases you assist on, the volume of cases available, and the insurance mix. You'll need to schedule meetings with surgeons to understand their needs and assess the potential for assisting opportunities.

But what if you discover that the local insurance mix won't support a viable business? Don't give up. If surgeons value your services enough, hospitals may contract with you directly to cover your fees, or the surgeons themselves might pay for your assistance. Keep in mind that just \$200 per case, with as few as 10 cases a week, will generate a six-figure income.

Even in a saturated market, there are still opportunities. This business thrives on relationships. Surgeons need to trust your expertise, but they also need to enjoy working with you. Many assistants overlook the importance of building strong personal connections, which can leave an opening for someone like you who prioritizes both skill and likability. In any given market, there are surgeons seeking an assistant with superior skills and a personality that clicks with theirs.

You can also consider broadening your reach. Explore opportunities in nearby cities or states and be open to traveling or moving if necessary. Another effective strategy is to focus on niches or underserved specialties. By carving out a distinct place in the market, you can set yourself apart and cultivate a loyal client base.

You Don't Believe Insurance Will Pay You

It's a common concern: "What if insurance won't pay for my services?" Maybe you've heard stories of others who tried and failed. Perhaps well-meaning friends are warning you against taking the "risk" of starting your own business. Or maybe

you're facing skepticism from people who – let's be honest – might feel a twinge of jealousy seeing you do something they wish they'd had the courage to pursue.

Why do some people fail at their surgical assisting businesses?

- ***Billing Doesn't Work (At Least Not Right Away):*** In some areas, the concept of billing for Surgical Assistants is still relatively new or even unheard of. It takes time to establish processes and demonstrate viability.
- ***They Didn't Give It Enough Time:*** Billing can be slow to start. Claims might take 3 to 6 months to get processed and paid or even to work through appeals. Many people give up before they see results.
- ***They Weren't Good at Billing:*** Medical billing isn't as simple as submitting a claim and waiting for payment. It's a complex process involving follow-ups, appeals, and persistence. For some, it's overwhelming. But with the right resources and support, this doesn't have to be you.

The reality of billing in untested markets

In some areas, billing for Surgical Assistants hasn't been widely tested yet. This doesn't won't work - it just means you might be the trailblazer. But a proper test needs to be real, systematic, and done in a way that doesn't jeopardize your financial stability.

What makes a test "Real?"

- ***A substantial caseload:*** Testing with just a handful of cases isn't enough. Insurance companies will likely deny some claims, and a small sample size might not give you accurate results. Instead, submit a substantial number of claims. This way, you'll know whether billing can support a sustainable business model. For example, I received no payments for an average of 4 out of 10 weekly cases. However, the 6 paid cases provided me with a lucrative six-figure income. What if your small sample only gave you denials. This could color your perspective when a much larger sample would give you an accurate picture.
- ***Enough time:*** This is going to take a lot of patience on your part. You probably won't see any results for 3 to 6 months. You've got to stick to it. Some people give up during this waiting period. This is where it will be very

helpful to have an ACE partnership. We'll be able to remind you that waiting is an important part of the test. We'll mentor you, encourage you, and even console you when you need it.

- **Expert Billing Support:** Don't attempt to do the billing yourself. This test is about determining whether billing works – not whether you can master the complexities of medical billing. Hire a company specializing in Surgical Assistant billing. They understand the unique challenges and will fight for your reimbursements. Look for a company incentivized to get you paid and paid well – their earnings should be tied directly to your success.

Why Specialist Billers Matter

General medical billing companies, especially those focused on surgeon billing, may lack the expertise needed for Surgical Assistant billing. Successful billing in this niche often involves extensive appeals and persistent follow-ups. A specialized billing company will ensure every claim gets the attention it needs. They only get paid when you do, so they'll pursue payments with the tenacity of a bulldog, ensuring you're compensated fairly and promptly.

At ACE, we've partnered with such a company. With an ACE partnership, you'll have access to superior business expertise and proven billing support, creating a test process you can trust and a reimbursement structure that sets you up for success.

How to test without risking your finances?

The key to testing is to avoid quitting your current job immediately. Treat your business as a side hustle at first. Build up your accounts receivable until your business income surpasses your current job's earnings. Only then should you transition fully to self-employment. This approach minimizes risk and ensures you're financially stable while testing the waters.

Also, since it takes 3 to 6 months for you to see revenues, you'll have enough time to build up the kind of caseload you'll need for a thorough and real test you can count on to make a good decision regarding your career.

What if billing doesn't work?

While it's unlikely, there's a chance billing won't work in your area—at least not initially. But that's no reason to give up. If surgeons value your services, hospitals may contract with you to cover your fees, or the surgeons themselves might step in to pay.

With ACE's support, your chances of securing contracts with hospitals or surgeons are significantly higher. We provide the guidance, templates, and processes you need to explore alternative payment options and build a thriving surgical assisting business.

You've Heard It's Not Legal

It's important to familiarize yourself with the laws in your state regarding who is permitted to assist in surgery. But what if someone in the OR tells you that what you want to do is illegal? Don't just take their word for it without verification – this is your career and you owe it to yourself to get the facts. A good response would be, "Where did you find that law?" Often, these claims are based on rumors, misunderstandings, or unfounded assumptions. Some people might even assume that someone with your credentials shouldn't be allowed to assist and therefore must be illegal. Asking them to provide evidence cuts through these assumptions and helps you get to the truth.

Generally speaking, if it's legal for you to assist in surgery, it's also legal for you to get paid for your services. At this time however, it isn't legal in the states of California, Washington, New York, and New Jersey for Surgical Techs to assist, even if they graduated from a Surgical Assistant Program. Only licensed healthcare providers can act as first assistants. This excludes Surgical Techs and unlicensed Medical Doctors. It's essential to know your state's specific regulations so you can operate confidently within the law.

Additionally, it's illegal for Surgical Assistants to bill Medicare or Medicaid unless they are approved providers. Becoming a Medicare or Medicaid provider is no small feat; it literally requires an act of Congress. Currently, only Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, and licensed Medical Doctors are authorized to receive Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements for services they perform as Surgical Assistants.

Understanding these legalities ensures that you not only comply with the law but also build a reputable and sustainable practice.

Others Try to Talk You Out of It

Not everyone will understand your decision to go self-employed. Friends, family, or even colleagues might question your choice, often because they don't fully grasp the opportunities that independent practice offers. While they may be genuinely concerned about you and want you to be secure, don't let their doubts derail your dreams.

Instead of arguing, share your vision. Explain how being your own boss offers flexibility, growth, and a chance to create something of your own. Surround yourself with people who support your goals – whether that's other business owners, mentors, or the ACE Alumni Society. Having a strong support system can make all the difference.

Tackling Financial Challenges

Business ownership comes with financial uncertainty, but planning ahead can make it manageable. Start by creating a budget that accounts for irregular income. Set aside funds during high-earning months to cover slower periods and establish an emergency fund to handle unexpected expenses.

Taxes are another big consideration. As a business owner, you'll likely need to pay estimated taxes quarterly. Work with an accountant or use tax software to stay on top of this. Dedicate a portion of each payment to a separate account for taxes so you're never caught off guard.

Some people cite the prospect of paying more in taxes as a reason to avoid self-employment. While it's true that taxes will look different, this is primarily because you'll be earning significantly more money. Yes, you'll also be responsible for covering the full payroll taxes, which includes Social Security and Medicare. As an employee, you're accustomed to paying half of these taxes while your employer covers the other half. When you are self-employed, you'll pay both halves – but even with this added expense, the increased income you'll earn will more than make up for it. The bottom line? Your business will leave you in a much stronger financial position, with greater earning potential and improved overall financial health.

Building Confidence

Stepping into the self-employed world can feel daunting. Self-doubt is natural, but it doesn't have to hold you back. Building confidence starts with acknowledging your skills and experience. You've trained hard to become a Surgical Assistant, and that expertise has value.

Set small, achievable goals to build momentum. Celebrate every win, whether it's securing your first client, receiving positive feedback, or learning a new skill. Over time, these successes will reinforce your belief in yourself.

Finally, remember why you started. Self-employment offers freedom, flexibility, and the chance to create a better future for yourself and your family. Keep that vision in mind, and let it fuel your confidence as you take each step forward.

Every roadblock you encounter on your journey towards independence is an opportunity to grow stronger and smarter. By addressing gaps in knowledge, identifying your market, and overcoming financial and legal challenges, you can build a thriving career. Remember, the doubts of others (and even your own) are temporary, but the rewards of self-employment are lasting. Stay focused, stay resilient, and believe in your ability to succeed.

CHAPTER 9

THE FUTURE OF SURGICAL ASSISTING



Chapter 9: The Future of Surgical Assisting

Self-Employed as the New Norm

The healthcare industry is changing, and fast. The rigid structures that once defined hospital staff dynamics are beginning to loosen, paving the way for a more flexible workforce. Self-employment in healthcare is no longer the exception – it's becoming the standard. This shift is particularly true for Surgical Assistants, where the demand for highly skilled professionals who can adapt to various surgical teams has skyrocketed.

Hospitals and surgical centers are recognizing the benefits of contracting with independent providers. It's not just about cutting costs – it's about efficiency, expertise, and the ability to scale staffing based on surgical volume. As a self-employed Surgical Assistant, you can offer your services to multiple facilities, filling gaps in coverage and ensuring patients receive high-quality care. Surgeons value the ability to work with experienced, adaptable professionals who seamlessly integrate into their teams, and working for yourself allows you to meet those needs.

Your Role in Shaping the Industry

As an independent Surgical Assistant, you're not just a participant in this shift – you're a pioneer. The self-employed are at the forefront of shaping the future of surgical care, setting standards for professionalism, skill, and adaptability. By demonstrating the value of this flexible approach, you're helping to redefine how surgical teams operate.

Your role goes beyond the operating room. You're also a business owner. That means you're managing contracts, negotiating rates, and maintaining relationships with multiple facilities and surgeons. You're proving that Surgical Assistants can thrive independently, creating a path for others to follow.

Additionally, your success can inspire systemic changes in how hospitals and surgical centers approach staffing. When facilities see the positive impact of working with skilled Surgical Assistants, they're more likely to embrace

this model. That means better opportunities not just for you but for the entire profession.

Leaving a Legacy

When you choose independence, you're doing more than creating a career for yourself – you're leaving a legacy. Your decision to step outside the traditional employment model and forge your own path sends a powerful message: Surgical Assistants are indispensable professionals who deserve flexibility, recognition, and opportunities to grow.

By succeeding in business, you're paving the way for future Surgical Assistants to follow in your footsteps. You're showing them that it's possible to have a career that's both professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling. And when others see what you've accomplished, they'll be inspired to consider self-employment as a viable option for themselves.

Your legacy isn't just about the work you do today – it's about how you'll be remembered tomorrow. Whether it's mentoring new Surgical Assistants, advocating for the profession, or simply demonstrating excellence in your work, you have the power to elevate the field. And in doing so, you're not just shaping your future – you're shaping the future of surgical assisting as a whole.

Independent surgical assisting isn't just a trend – it's the future. The industry is evolving to embrace this flexible, dynamic model, and you have the opportunity to be at the forefront of this transformation. By choosing to be your own boss, you're taking control of your career, shaping the industry, and leaving a legacy that will inspire others for years to come. So, take the leap. The future of surgical assisting is bright, and it starts with you.

CONCLUSION

CHARTING YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS



Conclusion: Charting Your Path to Success

Recap of Why Being Self-Employed Is Worth It

Being self-employed offers more than just a career change – it's a lifestyle transformation. Throughout this guide, we've explored the unparalleled freedom, financial potential, and professional satisfaction that come with being your own boss. It allows you to take charge of your schedule, align your work with your personal goals, and create a thriving business that's uniquely yours. It's about designing a future where you have the flexibility to work with surgeons, hospitals, or private practices that value your expertise, all while building a career that fits your life's vision.

You've seen how self-employment gives you the opportunity to:

- **Earn what you're truly worth** by negotiating your own rates and bill the patient's insurance for your surgeons.
- **Create a work-life balance** that allows you to prioritize your family, passions, and well-being.
- **Gain professional recognition** by working alongside surgeons and making a tangible impact on patient outcomes and the entire surgical team.
- **Take control of your destiny**, rather than relying on the limited opportunities that come with traditional employment.

These benefits are within your reach. You don't need a business degree or years of entrepreneurship experience – just the willingness to take the leap and a guide like this one to show you the way.

Your Call to Action

Now that you've learned the ins and outs of self-employment as a Surgical Assistant, it's time to take the first step. Whether it's signing up for a professional certification, researching your local market, or simply deciding that independent practice is your next move, action is the bridge between where you are now and where you want to be.

Here are a few steps you can take today:

1. **Define your vision.** What do you want your independent career to look like? What's your ideal work schedule? Start with a clear picture in your mind.
2. **Develop your plan.** Use the strategies in this guide to outline how you'll get started. Consider factors like licensing, medical billing, contracts, and building your professional network.
3. **Reach out for support.** Join the ACE Alumni Society, connect with other Surgical Assistants, and seek mentorship to keep you grounded and motivated.
4. **Take action.** Start small but start now. Whether it's setting up your LLC, drafting a resume, or networking with surgeons, every step forward matters. And remember, partnering with ACE from the

The path to career and financial freedom doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to begin. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll be on your way to enjoying the rewards of this career.

You Can Do This!

If there's one thing you take away from this book, let it be this: *You are capable.* You have the skills, the drive, and the passion to make self-employment work for you. Yes, there will be challenges, but you've already faced challenges to get to where you are today. Becoming a self-employed Surgical Assistant is simply the next chapter in your story – and it's a chapter filled with possibility and growth.

Remember, every successful business owner once stood where you are now – with questions, doubts, and a dream. They took the leap, and so can you. Picture the future you want for yourself and your family: a career that aligns with your values, a schedule that allows you to attend every milestone, and an income that provides true financial freedom. This is what self-employment can offer.

So take a deep breath, gather your courage, and step forward. You have what it takes to succeed – and we're cheering you on every step of the way. Now, it's your turn to show the world what's possible. Go for it – because you can do this!