

MOVING FROM INSPIRATION TO ACTION

How many of your great ideas have gone unrealized? It might have been a great idea for an invention, book, or unique business proposal.

If there's one self-criticism that most people have, it's the inability to take action with any consistency. For example, you might have the inspiration to finally lose weight and get in great shape. But then you're unable to get started on your exercise routine.

Common excuses include being too tired or busy. Life just seems to get in the way.

Follow these few simple steps and you'll be tackling those goals before you know it:

1. **Create the necessary space in your life.** How much time do you need each day to accomplish your objective? If you're training for a marathon, you probably ought to be spending an hour a day,

a few days a week, and a 2-3 hour block once a week. Make this time part of your routine.

2. **Begin with baby steps.** Immediately jumping into a new activity for 30 minutes can be overwhelming. ***Start with 5 minutes and add a little time each week.***
 - Getting started is frequently the most difficult task.
3. **Avoid letting yourself off the hook.** On those inevitable days when you don't feel like taking action, just stop. It only takes a split second to convince yourself you have a good reason for avoiding a task.
 - If you freeze and don't do anything else for a minute, you might be able to get yourself back on track. But if you let yourself turn on the TV or get on Facebook, all is lost until the next time.
4. **Generate reminders until you develop a habit.** Even with the purest of intentions, it's easy to forget something for a few days. After some time off, it's easy to lose momentum and enthusiasm.

- *Leave notes, signs, and any other type of reminder to ensure you remember to take action each day.*
5. **Consider where your discipline is lacking.** Are you distracted by the TV or internet? If so, do your work where these distractions aren't present. Are you less likely to be compliant in the evenings? Then, get your work done in the morning.
- Add in the necessary structure to maintain discipline.
6. **Measure your progress.** Quality experts are fond of saying, "*When you measure something, the thing you measure changes.*" Just by keeping tabs on your progress, you're likely to make more headway.
- Measuring your progress also provides proof that the activity is important to you.
7. **Focus on the end.** If you think about how miserable it will be to ride your bike for 100 miles, it's tough to get out the door. But if you focus on the feeling of crossing the finish line in the big

race, training is a lot easier.

- ***Have a vivid picture of you reaching your goal in your mind.*** Then you can call on it to provide motivation at a moment's notice.

8. **Realize that conditions aren't perfect.** If you wait until all the stars align in the universe, you'll rarely accomplish anything. Learn to work through less-than-perfect conditions and situations. There's a saying, *"The best time to plant a tree was last year. The second best time is right now."*

Avoid being someone that spends an excessive amount of time learning, planning, and thinking. Simply come up with a decent plan and work it with enthusiasm. ***Learning to take action is one of the most valuable skills to have in life.*** Think about the most successful people you know. Are they thinkers or doers?