



30 inspiring stories from those who "Do the Work"

Inspired by the book from Steven Pressfield and The Domino Project

a brief note...

No Idling is a free compilation: Use it, print it, and share it freely. Please don't change or re-sell it.

If you're reading this before May 20th, 2011, you should know that the ebook version of **Steven Pressfield's Do the Work** is still available for free download. [Click here to get your copy.](#)

If you're reading this after May 20th, we hope you'll take a moment to pick up the [hard copy](#) of **Do the Work**. It will inspire and motivate you far more than we can here.

We think you'll love it.

See you soon,

The Domino Project Street Team

NO IDLING



INTRODUCTION

This manifesto is for all of you who want to do work that matters and are seeking a powerful tool for your Ship It arsenal.

Steven Pressfield takes Resistance head on in his latest book [Do the Work](#). This manifesto is helping readers take massive action and get their great work out into the world.

As a thank you and tribute to Steven, members of The Domino Project Street Team came together to write, design, and distribute **No Idling** in under two weeks. We hustled, reached out to the most brilliant do-ers we know, and did the work needed to ship an amazing ebook.

Each of the contributors responded to our call for a very tight turnaround. After all, this is a book about doing the work. These authors over delivered.

The result is the life-changing ebook in front of you.

The action-takers in this book put a human face to the trite sounding clichés. Their stories of overcoming Resistance provide a path from “Just do it” to mentally gearing up and forming habits to help you get things done.

They don’t mince words. “Expect Resistance,” they say. “It’s there. Waiting for you. Be smart. Prepare for it.” It’s our greatest hope that this ebook will inspire you to take on and overcome the biggest challenge of your life - you know which one.

You will be better for taking it on. Along the way, you will grow your discipline and steel your character.

The only way to fail is to stop. When you’re tempted, come back to **Do The Work** and **No Idling** to bolster your resolve. Remember that you took on your great work for a reason. Own it.

We’re now calling on you to step up and work with us. Let’s turn the idea of overcoming Resistance into a movement of action.

Dig into this book. Put its wisdom into action. Generously share it.

Do the work.

ANDREW WARNER

Sometime in my early 20s I was standing outside a networking event at the Puck Building in New York and wrestling with my insecurities.

“Just go across the street and meet people,” I thought to myself. “Everyone in there is running an internet company like you. You have a lot in common with them. It’ll be easy to start conversations. Do it!”

But, the other side of me thought, “you don’t know anyone in there. And they all know each other. You’ll end up standing around quietly while everyone else is having fun.”

Eventually, someone might even say, “That’s Andrew? The guy who runs Bradford & Reed? I didn’t realize he was such a dork. Ha. His company almost had me fooled. I thought it was impressive. Turns out it’s another nothing operation, run by a nothing guy.”

My insecurities won that day. I didn’t go in.

Can you imagine how much of a failure I felt that day as I went home?

I started a company because I wanted to build something huge; meanwhile I couldn’t do a little thing like go to a party. Any five-year-old can go to a party, but I couldn’t.

Years later that day still stung. Badly.

My friends don’t know it, but one of the reasons I moved to LA was to give myself room to learn to break out of experiences like that. I wanted to live in a new city where I could practice meeting people every day, and not stop until I got comfortable being myself.

The first thing I did was commit to a schedule of going out 6 nights a week, no matter what. And when I went out, my personal rule was that I had to talk to at least 5 strangers.

I screwed up a lot at first.

I remember one time walking to a group of people at a party and saying, “How do you know Deb?”

One of them said, “We’re friends of her roommate, Steve.” And he then went back to talking to the group. He didn’t include me in the conversation and I didn’t know what to do next, so I just stood there awkwardly



as they all talked to each other.

I felt like a fool. But I committed to talking to more people that night and to going out the next night and the next night and the next.

Eventually I learned a few tactics that helped me get by. Like, don't interrupt a group of people who are deep in conversation just to make small talk.

But there was something bigger that changed more subtly: I just learned to be more comfortable. Doing it every day, even on days I didn't feel like it, helped me become a natural at meeting people.

A couple of years after I moved to LA, I even hosted my own networking event. The night before the party, I became almost as nervous as I was on the day I stood weakly outside the Puck Building. But when I got to the event, I eased up. All my practice made me feel more comfortable.

I was in a room full of people and I could talk to every one of them. It felt great.

I thought about that recently when I started doing video interviews with my heroes on Mixergy, my web site. The first time Seth Godin came on, I said to myself, "You're not a reporter. You're an entrepreneur. You didn't know the right questions to ask. The guy wrote about a dozen books. You didn't read them all. You're not prepared. You're going to embarrass yourself and all of his fans will know you're a dumb entrepreneur who got lucky in business."

It's true. I was pretty bad when I started. Very bad, actually. But I committed to doing the work every day. Many people wondered why I insisted on posting a new interview every day, since it's more than most of my audience can keep up with.

It's because I learned that showing up every day and putting in the work can turn my life around. Haven't you seen that in your life too?

“I started a company because I wanted to build something huge, meanwhile I couldn't do a little thing like go to a party.”

Any five-year-old can go to a party, but I couldn't. Years later that day still stung. Badly.”

CHARLIE GILKEY

2009 was a catalytic year for me. I attended my first SxSW, and, while the whole thing was inspiring, it was seeing Jonathan Coulton perform live that really changed me. I had known about his [Thing A Week](#) project for a few years, but never really thought much about his creative courage.



It took seeing the man live to appreciate the fact that he had completely changed his life, all by shipping one musical thing a week for a year.

A few months after that, I learned about Michele Woodward's use of the concept "[expanding your comfort zone](#)." Rather than getting out of your comfort zone, you should expand the things that you're comfortable doing. The more you work on expanding your comfort zone, the more things you can do without constantly battling fear and Resistance on their own terms.

I put the two experiences together and made a point to do one thing a week that expanded my comfort zone. I knew I wouldn't be able to commit to doing one type of thing per week - being a polymath can be a curse that way - but I knew that I could challenge myself to do one thing that pushed some creative or personal edge per week.

What I found fascinating about the process was that a lot of my things had nothing to do with shipping something. Sure, creating something that challenged me counted, but there were other activities that counted just as much. Initiating a conversation with someone I admired. Pitching an idea to someone who wasn't already part of my friend set. Saying No to an otherwise great opportunity that wasn't right for me or my business. Co-creating a retreat for entrepreneurs that zigs when everyone else is zagging.

Doing my own Thing A Week adventure reinforced what I had already learned from being an Army veteran: fear and Resistance only keep you from doing things if you let them. Great work doesn't get done in the absence of fear and Resistance, but, rather, it gets done by accepting the fear and Resistance and doing it anyway. Once you understand that, you can see that fear and Resistance are often the signpost to guide you to what you should do.

Just in case you're wondering, fear and Resistance never really go away. You just become a bit desensitized to the fear and Resistance goes more guerrilla. But the same process works, whether you're gripped by fear and Resistance or whether they're lurking in the shadows: do something every week that expands your comfort zone.

What's your Thing this week? It's waiting on you to do it.

STEVE GORDON Jr.

I am what's known in recent years as a "creative." It's a bit of a nebulous term encompassing designers and artists because the world—professional or otherwise—doesn't really know where to put us. Are we viable business and marketing professionals, or people who are only good for grown-up versions of coloring book activities? But that's no far stretch for me to understand. I've been that guy my whole life. I'm the little boy who loved school and learning all the while being ostracized by those who saw intelligence as a negative. I'm a kid from the bad neighborhood who got shipped off to the wealthy prep school for a chance at a better life, only to find that that life didn't necessarily want me there. I'm the world-class jock who dared to be smart, or conversely the smart kid who had the audacity to love and see the importance of excelling in athletics. Yeah, that's still me; Steve Gordon Jr.

I grew up in a lower-middle-class household, in the "bad" neighborhood in town, chock full of all of the stereotypical trappings and pitfalls, so I'm not even going to reference that. Everyone has their walls to scale, hills to climb and hurdles to leap. We've all faced struggles that would seem to be the end of us, times in life when we literally fall on bended knee, certain that we have no more to give. The facing of hard times and overcoming is relative. But I've had it taught to me that the strength, the dignity, the integrity and the success of it all is in the attempt. You don't have to be better than everyone else. Truth is you may not be. But the "trying" is noble. It's not really important to lay out how I've struggled because I'm not so sure that helps anyone else. It only causes our human intellect to draw immediate comparisons. The important ideal is to highlight the mindset of one who will not limit themselves to a finite number of attempts at crossing the divide keeping them from their goals. So instead, I offer what I call my "transfer methods"; how I best get from point A to point B—"A" being where I find myself at the inception of new endeavors and "B" being the end-goal or point at which I establish a new "A."

Find Your Level

There's a saying that says "water seeks its own level," which—in very short—speaks to balance and adaptation. If indeed we are all unique creatures, then we are meant for situations that will unfold to be unique for each of us, even given similar situational set ups. Be brave, be constant, be steady and find the best fit for "self." From there, so many things will present themselves.

Foresight & Flexibility

Anticipation and flexibility of mind is the key for me. The ability to not only think fast, but adapt faster. The skill of shifting your thoughts and refocus-





ing regularly is an amazing tool to have in the hip pocket.

Be a Positive Opportunist

People are always asking when it will be their chance, but in my estimation we let opportunities pass almost daily, out of lack of preparedness or not having the curiosity to check every door or the fortitude to take the leap. And say what you will about the term “opportunist” but the root of the word is “opportunity.” What is a person who looks for—better yet, yearns for the chance that will offer a window to success if not opportunistic? The truth is there can—and must—be a positive spin on the idea of being prepared to be prepared. Ready yourself for the feeling of what it’s like to be ready to take every chance worth taking. Simply being prepared is only half of the work. You have to then be primed to act upon your preparedness. What good is setting your sights on a goal, only to pull back when opportunity presents itself?

Guard Your Grill

You have to be willing to fight for what your life is worth, tooth and nail. Swing until you’re in tears and you can’t lift your arms. When you feel that, you’ve tapped into your belief in yourself and what you truly want because there is nothing in the human condition quite like being so moved to fight for survival.

“Earn Your Sleep”

Lastly, a notion that I’ve developed over the course of my short life, and only recently given a name, is the idea of “Earning Your Sleep”. Placing a premium on your time, resting only when you have exhausted the possibilities for that day, not because a clock suggested you shut your eyes.





MARK SILVER

Don't Look Left or Right

Today, this is due, and I have a head cold. I spent the entire morning taking one of my sons to the doctor with the croup. It's early afternoon, I'm exhausted, I'm worn thin. Do I ship or do I rest?

When the guidance isn't clear, I don't follow it. So I stop. I take refuge in my heart, accessing compassion and love for myself in this. What's true here?

Our culture has two forces aiding the devil of resistance. On one side is escapist fantasy, seducing us with all kinds of ways to numb out and avoid our true work. On the other side is the workaholic treadmill, pushing us on to produce ever-more ever-faster. By judiciously using first one, then the other, the devil can tie us in knots, trap us in useless busy work, and exhaust us.

Rather than slugging it out with Resistance, I take some minutes to rest into my heart, to take refuge in compassion and love. I can feel the anxiety ebb away. I can feel the truth of my situation arise. I can taste compassion in my heart for how I'm feeling.

In order to get the work done I don't have a battle to fight. Yet, I do have a struggle. To the left is heedless unconsciousness, lost in the world of fantasy. To the right, busy work, overwork, exhaustion, illness, but with nothing to show for it.

I struggle every day to choose the middle way and rest into the strength and love that carries me through the work that is to be done, and that sets aside the work that doesn't need to be done, at least not now.

Don't look left or right. Choose love. Do the work.

JIM BOUCHARD

Think Like a Blackbelt

When I do a speaking event I'm usually introduced with: "Martial arts transformed Jim's self-perception from former drug abuser and failure to successful entrepreneur and Black Belt..."

That's true, but before I started on the business of transforming my self-perception, I had to stop tearing down the path that by rights should have put me in jail- or in my grave. Today people often ask me, "What was the turning point in your life?"

Turning points are usually only obvious in retrospect. Looking back, I remember two important moments.



The first was a cold winter morning in Maine. I had no money for heating fuel; though somehow had enough for dope. I got up for my morning piss only to find that I had to knock the ice out of my toilet before I could flush. When I turned from that business I was literally looking into my bathroom mirror; I did not like what I saw.

A few months later I smoked a joint that was, without my knowledge, laced with "angel dust." After a night of various creative attempts to destroy myself, I woke the next morning and decided enough was enough. That was the very moment I quit drugs.

About 3 years later I was walking up the main drag in my city. I saw a gigantic vertical sign that read "K-A-R-A-T-E." Later I would realize that this was the beginning of my real transformation. I learned that a happy and successful life is a product of discipline, focus, confidence, courage and perseverance. I began to learn that "perfection is not a destination; it's a never-ending process."

I learned how to think like a Black Belt- and eventually I became one. Now I look forward to the possibility of transformation every day!

ARNE VAN OOSTEROM

I Refuse

I remember it well, as a child, 11 year old, entering a supermarket with my mother. She needs a coin for the shopping-cart and hands me a money bill. She expects me to go up to the lady behind the counter to ask for change. My mother looks at me. I look at the lady behind the counter. I freeze. I can't do it. I'm simply too scared. I don't leave my mother's side.

Why? Did I think she was going to yell at me? Laugh at me? Turn into a green slimy monster and bite my head off? No. Up to this day I can't really understand what it is that scared me back then. But I do know I have had many such moments. And I still do. Not a week goes by without having this fear.

It's a fear of performing, showing myself, in front of others. A fear to fail. A fear so bad I'd rather fail by not even trying to succeed.

I gave up on a running match a few meters before the finish, pretending to be too tired. I refused to be in family pictures. I refused to act in a school play, and made a fool of myself. I refused to go up to strangers at dinner parties when I bitterly wanted to be able to network. I refused to learn how to read music, and study, but wanted to be a musician. I refused to start schools and I refused to finish schools. I refused to be a writer using my dyslexia as a great excuse, my favorite tool to strengthen my reasoning for refusal.

Sometimes I think that I refused to start or finish so many times that finally I could only refuse refusal itself.

And then I let go. Lost the weight that was holding me down and lifted off. I've been a musician and had a comedy act. I present concepts and strategies to deadly serious looking board of directors. I give keynotes at international conferences, work and teach at schools around the world, write and give life to many networks.

What changed? I simply started refusing to pretend I am not scared. I refuse pretending to know everything. I refuse to pretend I don't need help. I refuse to pretend to be stronger than I am. And that changes everything. Being vulnerable made me strong.

But I am still scared to death by everything I do.





MICHAEL PORT

Don't Give Up

Looking back on my life, there isn't much I regret. I live by the saying, "The measure of a man is not how well he starts, but how well he finishes."

But, there is one thing I regret -- not finishing my acting career. I threw up my hands and quit. I was so close. I was right on the cusp of big time success... and I quit.

In 1997, I was a 20-something earning a living as an actor. That put me in the top 1% of the Screen Actors Guild. I put everything into my acting career. I attended one of the best graduate schools in the country. I had a great agent. I was guest starring roles on most of the TV shows you know.

Nonetheless, I quit. I couldn't take the rejection. I didn't like waiting around or leaving my future in the hands of others. So, I gave up and quit.

I remember the day I told my agent. I heard a thunk (quite literally) when her jaw hit the floor. She knew how close I was. I was right at the cusp of going from working actor to big time actor. But I didn't finish what I started.

I tell you this story – and, it's not one I often tell – because I don't want you to look back on your life and have a shred of regret. I don't want you to quit - whatever it is you're doing - unless you have a more important dream. Then quit the worthless thing and pursue the worthwhile thing.

It takes far more fortitude to finish something than it does to start it.

Now, it's likely you are feeling pressure in the business you started. You may feel stalled, waiting and just hoping for your big break to come. The economy is contracted. Lots of people are starting to feel tired. But, we cannot quit. We will not give up.

Sure, you might say, it's easier for me because I've been doing this for some time and have a "brand" name in my field. But I, too, am working harder than I ever have before to find new way to innovate, build the business, extend my brand and be of service to you. I want to help you do the same.

“You may feel stalled, waiting and just hoping for your big break to come. The economy is contracted. Lots of people are starting to feel tired. But, we cannot quit. We will not give up.”

You've heard that frightening statistic out there that more than 80% of small businesses fail within the first 5 years. It's true. However, the common perception is that these businesses fail because the marketplace is so competitive and success is like a blip over the horizon. But, I see it differently.

I think 80% of business owners fail in the first 5 years because they haven't made a non-reversible, do-whatever-it-takes, no-holds-barred, beyond-a-shadow-of-a-doubt, absolutely-no-going-back, stick-to-it-like-super-glue commitment to finishing what they start to make their business work.

Think bigger about what you want to start and finish in the world. Carry on. Get more clients. Make all the money you desire and deserve. I know you can do it. But, you've got to make a non-reversible commitment to yourself, your family and your business, right now.





MARSHALL ULRICH

Closing the Distance

In my early thirties, when my eldest daughter was a year old, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. And though Jean underwent a double-mastectomy and chemotherapy, she died less than a year later.

This was the blow that sent me running faster and longer than ever, pushing me beyond the marathon into ultra distances. The contests became more and more grueling: 50-milers, then 100-milers, then 24-hour races and eventually multiday contests. I ran to deal with my grief and survivor's guilt, to punish and prove myself, to search for ... something. I didn't know what.

As it turned out, I had a natural talent for these extreme distances, and I set records on some of the toughest courses. When other people tailed off, I could hold steady. Seems I was physically built for the sport and emotionally primed to take the pain.

Many years and two failed marriages later ("distance" became a watch-

word for me in many ways), I faced the greatest test of my endurance yet, a 3,063-mile run from San Francisco to New York City. At 57 years old, I would attempt to break the world record, set in 1980 by a man half my age.

I'd been thinking about it for more than a decade, the ultimate ultra.

Why did I even think I could do it? Part was pure desire, and part was experience. The ultrarunning had provided a strong base for me to pursue other endurance sports, like adventure racing (a less luxurious version of what folks did on "Survivor"), which I took up in my 40s, and mountaineering. In my early fifties, I climbed Mount Everest, summiting on my first attempt.

If anything, my athletic pursuits show that the only limits are in the mind, and excuses like "I'm too old" and "it's too hard" don't have to stop you from attempting what other people may think is improbable, impractical, or even impossible.

So of course I'd dismissed the idea that I was too old to make an attempt on this transcontinental record. My experience would be a mental advantage. Though this would be the hardest thing I'd ever done -- amounting to more than two marathons, back to back, every day for at least a month and a half -- I felt sure I could do it. At least I knew that I wanted to try.

And now I had a true partner. In 2003, I'd married a woman who'd cracked through that old, hard shell and taught me to love again. Heather promised to be by my side as I chased after this dream.

Ultimately, her presence is what helped me summon the will to run on when I was emptied out, to put one foot in front of the other even though I was suffering from multiple injuries and unprecedented fatigue. She'd cup my face in her hands and tell me everything was going to be all right. She never lost faith in me, even when I'd lost faith in myself.

I realize now that the reason I was able to complete this ordeal in 2008 has less to do with my tolerance for pain than with my eventual acceptance of myself as vulnerable and needing help from others. It resulted from being willing to close the distance, to reach outside of myself and receive love again, not just from my wife but from family and friends who came out to support me. Perhaps that "searching" is finally over. The answer was right under foot: all I had to do was follow my heart.



The phrase, “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer” was ringing in my ears. That’s it! Instead of me being a student of The Resistance, I’ll befriend it and become its teacher. I’ll show The Resistance where it has been mistaken.

PAUL DURBAN

When I first agreed to create a motion graphic video based on Seth Godin’s live [Road Trip presentation](#) in Chicago, my first thought was, “I’m not sure if this is possible. 70 minutes? That’s longer than many of the animated movies I rent for my children! And they have a TEAM of animators!”

The Resistance was in full force and I searched the Internet to prove it wrong. Surely, there must be examples of lengthy motion graphic videos. I can’t be the only one ever charged with such a weighty task. And of course, the stories of such projects will be shared on myriad blogs.

As the days of research passed, I came to realize that the project was one-of-a-kind. Did this make me crazy to accept such a challenge? Perhaps. Had others tried and failed before me? Probably. The average length of a motion graphics project I create for clients is one to two minutes. Tackling this presentation would be the equivalent of 50 of them.

If only I had some evidence that such a long and complicated project could be accomplished by one person. But the Internet was quiet. My only company was The Resistance. And in a strange way, I wanted it around so I wouldn’t feel alone.

The Resistance showed me how animating a live recording with all its natural pauses and inevitable audio glitches would be maddening. It explained that no sane person would have the patience to create such a long video much less watch it. The resistance provided all the necessary roadblocks that are common to anyone trying to accomplish something unique.

As I approached minute 15 of the video, I was stumped. My tank was empty. I was all out of ideas and I still had 55 minutes to go. The Resistance won. I couldn’t believe that I was stupid enough to think this could be done. Sometimes, you just have to admit defeat and learn from the experience.

But then I had an epiphany the next morning as I was just waking up. The phrase, “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer” was ringing in my ears. That’s it! Instead of me being a student of The Resistance, I’ll befriend it and become its teacher. I’ll show The Resistance where it has been mistaken.

I showed The Resistance that editing the pauses and cleaning the irregu-

larities of the audio would destroy the dynamic of the live presentation. I taught it that we all see things differently and that there was no wrong approach to the animation. The Resistance wanted me to add multiple bells and whistles so that the project would never be finished. But I explained that doing that would compete with the message.

When animating, it's not uncommon to spend an entire day on mere seconds of content. So it's quite easy to begin questioning your process and your sanity. Especially when the effect doesn't quite work out as planned and hours, if not days, of work are lost. But I showed The Resistance that the road was winding; sometimes you have to retrace your route, but if you stay on course, you'll eventually get there.

As the days went by, I noticed that The Resistance was listening more than talking. There was a 20-minute period of the video that came so naturally to me, I sincerely do not remember animating it. It seemed the more I did, the easier it got.

Four months later, the video was finally complete. The smartest decision I made was to not engage The Resistance in a long, daily battle. Instead, I became the "expert" whose experience and creativity could not be challenged.

If I can create a 70-minute motion graphic video, can you even imagine The Resistance putting up a fight with a mere one-minute version? Me neither.



WENDY TOWNLEY

Inspiration Rarely Arrives: Write Now

Really? Has it already been a year?

I glance toward my 2011 calendar and refocus my eyes to confirm. A tidy package of 365 days and nights have passed since my first book, Nerdy Thirty, was published and made public to the world.

Where did the time go? How did it all happen?

What is perhaps most worthy of examination is not the year since the book became reality, but the year before the year.

The pregnancy – if you will – of Nerdy Thirty.

It began with the hours, days, weeks, and months of anticipation; the reality of having a book with my own name on the front cover. For a while I simmered and sizzled in the mirage of merely the end product, sans the work. I found myself daydreaming about cover art and typeface, about status updates and tweets, about media interviews and speaking gigs; even, dare I say, the fancy orange dress I would wear to my very first book signing.

Seriously, it was that bad.

Silly me.

And as silly as it may sound, what needed the most examination, effort, and determination was the work before the big party, before the celebration I had so rightfully earned.

The hours of writing and editing. The painstaking process of pouring over every passage to ensure it was as perfect as possible.

The work that, let's be honest, is a very lonely and solitary effort.

Writing is sometimes viewed as a mysterious yet glamorous trade. Much like artists, it is believed writers lie about, awaiting inspiration. And then Poof!, inspiration arrives, and masterpieces follow.

Inspiration and motivation, I quickly discovered in those early months of the writing and editing process, rarely arrive by surprise. Writing is work. It's a calling and a craft, but it's also a job. Writers must be disciplined

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enough to set their own writing schedules, to sit down in front of their computers and write at the same time every single day, WHETHER THEY FEEL LIKE IT OR NOT.

I can count on my left hand the times, during my ten-plus years as a writer, when I have experienced a bolt of inspiration and simply had to find my computer and begin pouring out my thoughts. It just doesn't happen all that often ... if ever, for some writers.

Writers must cocoon themselves in the most private (or public) way possible. They must identify the ideal environment for progress, wherever it may be. (To write and produce solid copy, I need the gentle chaos of neighborhood coffeehouses. The noise and occasional distractions help to move my words forward. The distractions at my home are too numerous to mention, too detrimental to my work.)

Some writers may find glory and satisfaction when discussing a project whose completion has not arrived. Others enjoy keeping their lips zipped until the eleventh hour. I count myself in the company of the latter, wanting to disguise the details until the day of publication is much closer. I suppose it's because I fear the questions of feedback may move me off track. Or perhaps it's because I want to keep my words and ideas under my own personal lock and key.

Because in a very short time, the work is no longer yours. In a sense, once it is published, it belongs to everyone.



BECKY BLANTON

Resistance comes from inside and outside of us. Either way, tactics for fighting it are much the same.

As a reporter for a small weekly in the high desert of Klickitat County, Washington in 2000, I was assistant editor, reporter and photographer for *The Goldendale Sentinel*. As soon as I started covering local politics, including attempts by a small environmental group that was suing for environmental damages, but diverting their legal settlements to personal bank accounts instead of the care of the land as they promised, the threats and intimidation started.

Big businesses may consider greasing the palms of activists and protestors as part of the cost of doing business; but farmers and ranchers don't. Out in the rural west the average family has lived in the county for three or more generations, been raised on the 10 commandments, and does business with a handshake with people they trust. They expected their local newspaper to report the facts and the truth and not to bow down to threats or intimidation. And for a long time that's what they got.

After reporting on the illegality of the group's actions the environmental group I'd been writing about threatened to sue the newspaper and my editor if I didn't recant my story and publicly apologize. I stood by my story. My facts were right and so was the story. My editor initially backed

me up, but then backed down, fearful of a lawsuit we'd probably win, but that would cost us immense time and money. After a fire marshal from the state showed up and tried to shut down the paper for not having enough employees trained in CPR, or enough fire extinguishers, the message came through loud and clear – play along or play hardball. I was given an ultimatum – retract my story and allegations, or be fired.

I refused to retract the story and instead organized a protest – drawing the support and attendance of a state representative and a crowd of 200 people from a population of 3,000. The crowd assembled in front of the newspaper with signs, chanting and protesting the environmentalist's attack on the paper and supporting me, and my story. The protest garnered media attention across the state. Less than a week later I was fired.

Two other employees quit in a show of solidarity. Someone suggested I start my own newspaper and pursue my writing and the investigation. With no job, no income and nothing but a home computer, I let people know I was interested in starting another newspaper if there was support for it.

Within the week citizens organized a yard sale and donated the proceeds, \$250, to me. It paid my first month's rent at an office directly across the street from my old paper. With Main Street only being two blocks long, it was hard not to be within spitting distance of my old job. I moved out of my apartment and into the office where I had a small sink and toilet. I showered at a campground 20 minutes away and traded ad space for meals at the diner next door.

For the next four months I worked 100 hours a week putting out a weekly newspaper – *The Klickitat County Monitor* – one that provided both sides of the highly contentious stories and events between ranchers, Native Americans on the nearby reservation, the Columbia River Gorge Commission, and activists, but in a way that let readers make up their own minds about what was happening and what needed to happen. Where there had once been empty auditoriums and no attendance at city and county meetings, the rooms were packed, often with standing room only. Citizens were getting involved and it was changing the county.

But the intimidation and threats against me didn't stop. I received bomb threats, was forced off of the road by a BLM (Bureau of Land Management) truck early one morning, and finally decided to get a Rottweiler to keep the angry citizens from coming over the counter to beat me up when the paper was too controversial for them.

I was not only writing, doing layout and photography, but I was learning

how to run a business, and how to produce, distribute and promote a newspaper. For four months I scrambled for funding, sold ads, attended rodeos, was chased by bulls, slept on a couch and bathed in a state park campground. But I persevered – driven by the desire to report the truth and to fight against fraud and deceit. The farmers and ranchers supported me and more than once I had a rancher shuffle through the door, or stop by my table at the diner and press a \$100 or \$200 into my hand for an ad, or gas for the truck.

Within four months the subscription rate matched that of my two competitors – the old paper and one in a nearby town. I was distributing the paper myself once a week in 32 retail locations in two states – Washington and Oregon. Month four I came down with pneumonia and decided to sell the paper to protect my health. Local citizens bought it, kept me



on as editor for another couple of months. At six months the paper had enough support and the county's endorsement and became the first newspaper in the state of Washington to become a paper of legal record in 20 years – the first in 40 years to do so with less than \$1 million in funding. One woman, a home computer and a fire in the belly for justice and truth is all it took.

My tips for fighting the Resistance?

Know what your objective is and be intensely passionate about achieving it. You can't beat the resistance if you aren't wholeheartedly committed to a goal.

Don't expect or depend upon others to support your passion. It's great when they do, but mostly they won't, or at least not in the way you'd always like. Accept what people have to offer, but rely on yourself. Make your own choices because you're the one who is going to have to live with the consequences – not your coach, not your friends, not your family – YOU.

Nike was right - Just do it. Most of the time it's not going to be fun. It's going to be hard to do it every day or even an hour of every day. Focus on one thing, one step, one objective at a time. Slow and steady wins the race. Take time to celebrate your milestones and accomplishments and remember there will be more to come if you stay focused and committed.





DAVID SITEMAN GARLAND

It wasn't exactly one of those light-bulb moments. It was a bit slower and more confusing than that.

My book, Smarter, Faster, Cheaper was selling well. I was getting booked for speaking gigs. I was interviewing amazing entrepreneurs and business experts on my Internet-based talk show. Business life should have been good, right?

But there was a problem....I just wasn't excited about it. There was some kind of resistance. The question became...what kind of resistance was it?

Was it the type of resistance you just need to fight through?

Resistance that meant it was time to give up?

Or perhaps resistance that causes change?

For me, it was the latter. Why wasn't I excited? What was the problem? I realized that I didn't want to be perceived as a business "expert" or "advice guru" or whatever the catch-word of the day is.

Instead, I wanted to continue down the path of being a broadcaster and interviewer. It is my passion and worth fighting for. I started my show *The Rise To The Top* in 2008 with my Bar Mitzvah money.

I realized after some introspection and many conversations, that it was time for a change in business. A resistance induced shift.

And so, I fought the resistance like hell. And released this on my website:

Watch Out Piers Morgan and Charlie Rose: The Rise To The Top Is Moving Beyond Business Interviews

So, exciting news today. I've been keeping this under wraps for a little bit as there has been a bunch of behind-the-scenes organization.

I have this saying: You are either changing and evolving, or you aren't really living. To me, life is about reinvention.

The Rise To The Top is moving beyond business interviews and will now be focusing on a wide variety of interviews with interesting folks in a variety of industries ranging from entertainment to sports (and there is a heck of a lineup on its way).

It was just that time and I couldn't be more pumped to tell you about it. After 2.5 years of doing purely business interviews with great people, I could feel it in my bones that it was time to evolve. Time for something new.

Does this mean I'll never again interview entrepreneurs or talk business? Not at all. My goal is to bring you interesting interviews with awesome people and that is going to continue to happen in a HUGE way.

For example you might be seeing interviews from:

- Best-selling non-business authors*
- Comedians*
- Musicians*
- Entertainers*
- Performers*
- Athletes*
- Artists in all types of fields*

*-Wrestling superstars from the 80's.
...and more. MANY more.*

I'm shaking a bit as I write this. Not out of nervousness, but out of anticipation. When I started The Rise To The Top in 2008, we had maybe four viewers/listeners including Dad, Mom, Grandma and myself. Now, well over 100,000+ are tuning in on computers, mobile phones, tablets, and even TV's (through Roku and Connected TV) which is extremely humbling and I'm excited to grow even further.

Let the new era begin! None of this would be possible without you.

-David

The lesson? Resistance might be the catalyst to change. Allow it.





JOHN ROOKS

Doing More Than Promote

As a career marketer and environmental activist I had trouble reconciling the two. Marketing was not Sustainability. I struggled with this cognitive dissonance. I searched for answers. Finally, I realized that no one was going to connect the two to my satisfaction. Most eco-marketing was pabulum for the masses. It was capitalism giving permission to itself to thrive and “be green” at the same time.

I wanted marketing to be The Thing, not a representation of The Thing. Linguists before me and marketers around me said it could not be done. Language (verbal and icon) is all marketers have, but symbols are not things.

Unless of course, we remove the symbols from the dialogue and make the act of sustainability the marketing, instead of marketing our acts of sustainability.

So we launched [More Than Promote](#), built an on-line community of competitors and giant brands who were interested in doing more than saying.

We wrote a book that explained how to do it. We lecture to high schools and universities and at tradeshow teaching people how to do it. It starts with a pledge:

“Wherever and whenever possible I will architect promotions that have corporate, civic and cultural value. I will engineer promotion that has intrinsic social value.”

The theory said it could not be done. The practice showed otherwise.



Photo credit: Angela Klempler, angelaklempler.com

GEORGE GRAVES

Lessons Learned

Since graduating college, my focus has been entirely on finding a full-time design job. I had other goals, but a full-time job came first. Literally. For the better part of a year, I put life on hold while I looked for work.

I wanted to become involved with AIGA Maine, to continue my education, and to meet letterpress printers. In the pursuit of society's norm, I tossed these goals in a bin labeled "life" and hid them under my bed.

As Creatives, our daily lives in and out of work are not easily separable. By trying to separate them, I trapped myself in a place of permanent transition without the tools to move forward. I told myself there would be time to pursue those things later, when all my ducks were sitting neatly in a row.

I let my fear of failure, my desire for stability, and my rational mind prevent any progress. Instead of finding a balance, I put myself in a perpetual state of instability and waiting.

Then something clicked. Instead of scouring the job-postings and applying to companies who had never heard of me, I introduced myself to letterpress printers, to the AIGA Maine board members, and to others I admired. Rather than attempting to connect with companies, I began connecting with people. Real, live, human beings with hearts, souls, and connections of their own. We found common ground and we found ways to help each other. The connections I made in life started presenting me with opportunities for work.

I stopped making excuses. I put aside my fears and rational theories, and I made that initial effort. I took one step in the direction I wanted to go and each further step has been easier. Because I took the tools available to me and tackled the work, I received an offer for a job pursuing the work that I love the most. A job that my excuses had me believing I'd never have.





NEIL PASRICHA

Getting to the light at the end of the tunnel

My world was spinning in 2008.

After finishing school in Boston and going on a cross-country road trip with my friends Chris and Ty, I moved to a dusty suburb to live with my brand new wife in my brand new life. Yes, we got married young, we got married quick, and after living on opposite sides of the border we were finally moving in to get busy living.

So I slapped on a crisp, fresh shirt and started a new office job while trying to settle into a brand new town where I didn't know anyone. My high school and college friends had long scattered like marbles so I was looking for a new place in a new world.

Now, my wife had been teaching for years so she had a bit more going on. She'd coach baseball tournaments and I'd stroll around waving at old folks on their porches. She'd play volleyball and I'd eat cookies and flip past reruns. She'd watch Gray's Anatomy with friends and I'd practice the fine art of taking long naps and playing video games.

I was feeling pretty lonely and whenever I flipped open a paper the news didn't exactly cheer me up, either. Polar ice caps were melting, pirates were storming the seas, wars were raging around the world, and the stock market was in a deep freeze.

It seemed like everything outside my window was just bad and everything inside was a little ... sad. Yes, although my wife and I had respect, trust, and admiration for each other it was becoming clear after a few months that ... something was missing.

So one chilly Spring night in 2008, alone in our dark house, feeling cut off from the buzzing world of bright lights outside, I went online and on a whim started up 1000 Awesome Things. I wrote about broccoflower to kick things off.

I think I needed to remind myself there were bright spots in the darkness. I think I needed a cold breath away from the hot swirling clouds around me. I think I needed a place where I could smile at the little things we all smile silently at throughout our days.

Over time our nights at home grew a bit quieter, our dinners a bit shorter, and our laughs faded into polite smiles. While 2008 rolled on we kept liv-

“I think I needed to remind myself there were bright spots in the darkness. I think I needed a cold breath away from the hot swirling clouds around me. I think I needed a place where I could smile at the little things we all smile silently at throughout our days.”



ing together but were growing further apart. She'd coach badminton and play on her volleyball team and I'd stay at home writing for hours about nachos and gasoline.

We kept trucking, kept slugging, kept soldiering on, until the rubber finally hit the road one quiet night while we were sitting on the couch. She looked me straight in the eyes and through painful tears summoned the courage to tell me she didn't love me anymore. It was heartbreaking.

Tears spilled all weekend and wet pillows, sweaty blankets, and headaches came in waves. By Sunday night I blinked bleary-red eyes and suddenly realized I didn't have anything to write about except crying. So that's what I did.

When I look back on that post it reminds me of heavy times at the bottom of a dark well staring way, way up at the tiny pinprick of light at the top. But it also reminds me of the pure joy and relief of letting awesome things cheer me up while I struggled to keep moving.

I guess I'm addicted to letting thoughts of new bed sheets, fresh bakery air, and wobbly couch cushion forts swirl in my head and lift my brain sky high. I love talking with all of you and reminding ourselves of the many awesome things we all have to share.

For us, we just happened to be two different people walking two different paths. Sure, it was painful as painful can be, but we need to grieve, we need to let emotions overcome us, and we need to choose to walk towards those bright lights in the distance. Even if that walk seems pretty far away.

So, come on: When bad news squeezes your lungs and the weight of the world pushes you underwater, let's always try to catch our breath by focusing on the best things in life. Yes, let's focus on hitting a string of green lights on our way home from work, getting free time on the parking meter, and flipping on the cold side of the pillow. Let's focus on beautiful pick-me-ups like getting long hugs when we really need them, laughing hard with friends, or the last day of school. Let's focus on all the magic moments, eye-twinkling memories, and small special touches that make every day so sweet and make every day worth living.

Yes, life's too short to swim in the deep forever so when it hurts remember to focus on the end of that tunnel and let those lights guide you forward and forward and forward and forward and forward and forward and forward.

AWESOME!



JAYESH SACHDEV

Exhilaration of Victory

Growing up in India, in a town trying hard to turn into a metropolitan city, in a middle class family, my father, an owner of a small sports shop, my mother a teacher, I had a very interesting upbringing. I was brought up with deeply rooted values and principles, encouraged by my mother to think on my own and be responsible for my actions and decisions, and on the other hand my father, more protected, old schooled, who wished for me to join his shop and sell hockey sticks to kids; and then there was me, with larger than life aspirations and ambitions. I was a dreamer. I wanted to be a designer in a country and environment which had no respect for it.

After several rejections to art school, I landed a job as a Graphic Artist at a Television Channel, facing rejection for close to a year, never having a single design approved, I continued my quest for design school until I was finally admitted to one in Singapore at the age of 22. Financially and socially outcast, I immersed myself into my art and design often doing homework of my classmates to pay off my rents, often freeloading food off the near by Sikh Temple. I graduated with an impeccable record and moved back to India to found my own studios, Emblem.

Having been disconnected with the creative industry in India I had no in roads into the industry and clearly no work. I translated my depression into my passion for art and soon started painting, and was encouraged to exhibit my works. To my dismay, the pseudo art culture only accepted renowned artists with credible history or fine art schooling. Struggling to find galleries I managed to open my own space in retaliation, allowing only first time or new artists to showcase at my gallery, soon Emblem became a national rage.

Over the next 2 years, I went on to showcase often at my own studio/gallery and won national accolades for my works and soon began exhibiting world wide. Now I am a graphic designer, artist, photographer and fashion designer. I accept the challenges so that I can feel the exhilaration of victory.





ANISH KAPOOR

“What’s success really when it comes to art? A nice table in a restaurant? A better seat on a plane? People being nice to you in front of your face? I’ve learned a lot of lessons over the years and I admit I’ve been ambitious, but I have to say the real lesson I have gleaned, the one that matters to me, is this.” He gestures around his studio. “You can be as well known as you want; you get the awards, the acclaim. But if it’s not happening here, within the studio, with the work, then that’s that. Here is where it begins and ends. You have to remember that. Art is only what you create.”



BOB POOLE

Photographers working for newspapers and magazines back in the 70's were like tourists at a buffet – they just showed up and were fed a steady stream of assignments. So as a young photojournalist, I rarely lacked for an assignment or a paycheck. Editors consistently shoveled us work and there wasn't much idea selling involved or needed. After years of work up and down the east coast, I decided to settle down and move into a studio. So, at the ripe old age of 22, with all the confidence born of youth, and the ignorance of all things business and marketing related, I started

my own business.

As a studio owner, I had to manage the overhead of my own studio and find my own clients. I was a kid by today's standards and really had very little understanding of marketing. How hard could it be? I asked myself. After all, I was a very good photographer, and once people saw my work I was bound to be a success.

I was wrong. A little over a year later I had exhausted all my funds. While the business was growing every quarter, it wasn't growing fast enough for me to make a living and pay the bills, including a small start-up loan I had secured from a local bank with the help of a co-signer. With no access to money I might invest in the business, it didn't take long to realize I needed to learn how to sell myself and my business or I was going to be out of business!

Friends and family were pressuring me to get a real job, and as much as I tried not to, I was starting to listen to them. I was already beating myself up for a whole host of reasons - not enough money, not enough experience; maybe I wasn't even that good a photographer. Call it fate, or call it luck, but I took a Civil Service Exam to become a fireman and placed first on the list. I hadn't told anyone else, but the next opening for a fire fighter was mine. Or it would have been if a hiring freeze didn't go into place shortly after my test results came back. I never did get that call to be a fire fighter, but I did get another call – a wakeup call to revisit how to sell.

Without customers and with an exhausted business loan, I knew I couldn't sit still and wait for people to find me. I had tried advertising before, and while it got me some name recognition and the occasional new customer, I knew that it took too long to produce results.

I needed to find something that would get people talking and at the same time wouldn't cost much. Even better, I decided I needed to stir up word of mouth for my business. I decided to do some kind of community project that would showcase my photography. But, things were so tight financially; I knew I had to get someone else to pay for it.

I looked at all the local newspaper and billboard advertisements and realized the local banks seemed to spend the most money on advertising. I took a good look at the ads from the largest bank (the same one that handled my now exhausted business loan), and paid attention to what they were advertising. I decided that I could create a promotion for them that would be better than their current advertising. Yeah, I had big co-jones.



The next week, I made an appointment with the president and outlined a promotion that I called “Faces of the Tri-State Area.” (This bank was in Ohio, on the border of Pennsylvania and West Virginia—hence the tri-state area.) I told him how I would go into local businesses, steel mills, potteries, schools, and churches—everywhere the bank’s customers lived, worked and played—and that I would create vivid black & white portraits of the people I found there. I’d then enlarge, mat and frame them, and we’d hang the whole display in the bank’s main lobby.

I also offered to write and design some print and radio ads for the bank to bring people in to see the gallery I told the bank VP that focus of the new promotion would be “Customers are Our Most Important Asset.”

He loved the idea and asked how much. I named a figure that, besides the photography, included building the gallery display and writing the advertising copy. It was a large number for me at the time, but they went with it and the show was a hit! Having my name and business credited for the photography and the show brought in many new customers, but that wasn’t the best part of the project. I also got to make fantastic contacts at the local businesses where I did the photography, which led to more commercial business.

The chairman of the board of the local competing bank stopped me on the street about a month later to compliment me on the promotion and ask how it came about. I told him my story, including my realization that I

had to learn to market or starve. Later on he and his son became very influential in guiding more business my way—including that of his own bank. And, we’ve maintained that relationship for almost 40 years now.

I gained more than business from the experience. Learning I enjoyed the creativity of marketing and sales helped me transition into full-time marketing and sales consulting. I found I enjoyed the creativity of marketing and more and more companies sought me out to help build their own businesses.

My tips for fighting the Resistance?

What looks like a brick wall may actually be a blank slate for you to create something on. Look at obstacles as clues to the solution.

Share your story with anyone who will listen. They may hold a piece of the puzzle or be part of the solution.

Whatever the problem, there’s always a solution, keep looking for it.

Persistence in finding solutions means going down avenues you haven’t tried – not just repeating things you have tried and failed with.

You’re the one person who’s most invested in your dream – if you quit believing in it why should anyone else?

DONNA MCCARTHY

Schooling School

Resistance doesn't always come from the outside, but too often from within. The voices in your head that can either nurture you, spur you on, tell you how much you have to offer or pummel your spirit with dejection, and thoughts that create fear and deter you from not only success but attempting anything where the end result might be failure.

I have experienced an ongoing battle between the two for as long as I can remember. And in retrospect it is easy to see how much the battle of the brain kept me from reaching my potential in many instances. Running this particular gauntlet has been the biggest challenge of my life.

Slowly, but steadily I have learned to conquer the negative voices and recognize what I thought to be circumstances beyond my control as excuses. I have never considered myself a leader. I have always seen myself as a good "team player" - one who would offer innovative and creative ideas that sometimes would be recognized with a smile and a nod but rarely implemented. I learned during my career as an educator that maintaining the status quo became the rule and with all the complaining of low achievement few educators are willing to change, innovate, re-evaluate, re-invent. Few educators are willing to destroy and rebuild. Its simply too hard.

Teaching is a good match for me. I have taught every age from pre school to older adults. I have been teaching high school for the last 12 years. In my own classroom I can innovate, inspire and direct my curriculum and guide my students. The greatest joy it brings me is to help young people reach a potential that many had no idea lay within. I would never claim to be a perfect teacher but I know I am effective and I know I have a gift of communicating, inspiring and nurturing the gifts of others. This is recognized by colleagues yet they seem satisfied with achievements being isolated to just a few classrooms and lack the vision to create a school where exceptional teaching is the rule rather than the exception.

One day in my third year of my fifth school and 19th year of teaching I realized this school would be just like all the others. A voice in my head prompted me to open my own school. How much longer would I allow myself to be placated before realizing that I can do what I do on a larger scale? I realized that I could create effective change and offer my community something it greatly needed - a school that attracts teachers like myself - one that is innovative in its approach to curriculum and instruction and doesn't just attach the phrase 'continual improvement' to every



thing, but practices it.

Two years ago when this venture began I knew next to nothing about starting a charter school, writing a business plan and any number of details that go into planning a school. If I had made a list of all that I didn't know I never would have begun. What I realized was that I do possess a passion for education, an immense desire to create positive change for others, and the ability to acquire and apply knowledge that I need to make something happen. To quote Seth Godin, my job didn't match my passion so I am creating one that does. So, without a doubt, by the time this is read a brand new school for the arts and sciences will be underway in a little obscure town in the southwestern United States.

JAMES ALTUCHER

Forgive, Forget, Succeed



I'm a bad son. That's what started this line of thinking. I was thinking, "What am I bad at?" and the first thing that occurred to me was I'm a bad son. For the six months before my father had a stroke, I refused to speak to him. We were in an argument. After he had his stroke. I'd visit. He'd sometimes open his eyes. But he couldn't speak. Three years looking at a ceiling. I pasted a chessboard to the ceiling but I don't know if he ever really saw it. When you feel guilty about something, sometimes you avoid thinking about it so it doesn't consume you.

I haven't always been the best father. When my kids were little I'd work six days a week sometimes in the city and miss the whole week. Miss plays. Parent-teacher conferences. The whole thing. What was I so focused on? Who knows. It's ancient history. But I still have time. Maybe I'll make up for it.

The other day I dropped them off at school. And when you see these tiny little creatures with their own thoughts and feelings, trying to get comfortable in their winter jackets and backpacks, going off into the brick school, you get scared for them. Because being a little girl is a lot to have to deal with and I can't be inside their brains helping them through every step of it.

I haven't been the best employee. I've worked multiple jobs and businesses at the same time to make a good living. I've quit without notice. I personally think that just about everyone would be happier if they escaped their cubicles but I realize it's a scary leap for many.

I haven't always been the best entrepreneur. By my last count, I've been a co-founder in twelve companies but with only about four good exits. I've raised a lot of money. I've lost a lot of money. Every now and then, though, I've made more than I've lost.

I wasn't the best college student. I don't want to send my kids to college. I think it's an over-inflated waste. I can't remember even attending a

single class in college. I graduated in three years so as to avoid borrowing another \$40,000 for a fourth year. But I needed a 3.0 grade point average and I had a 2.999. I had to beg my Fortran professor to upgrade his grade on me from D- to D+ so I could get the 3.0. Thank god he did or... nothing. Nobody's ever even asked me if I've gotten a college degree. For all I know I don't even have one. I've certainly never seen it.

I'm not the best homeowner. I've owned twice. Both times it's been a miserable experience for me. Home owning is a scam. We have a trillion dollar banking industry that borrows money from you at 1% (your checking account) and lends to you at 5% (your mortgage) so everything in this country is geared towards hypnotizing you into thinking that owning a home is the American Dream. Otherwise trillions of dollars gets lost. Which is what happened in 2008 when the hypnosis wore off for awhile.

I wasn't the best boyfriend. Even from a tender age I would get jealous. I would sometimes be a little obsessive. Dating is a full time job. It's all about making sure you aren't spending energy in the wrong direction. You have to have goals and every day work towards those goals. And if anything deflects you from those goals, even for short-term gain, you have to avoid it.

I haven't been the best brother. One of the last times I saw one of my sisters she hit me in the face and I fell to the ground on the corner of 42nd and 5th. I'll take this line out if she wants me to. But she had her reasons. And she was much stronger than I thought she would be.

I'm not the best writer. Most of my books have been flops. Probably because I hate writing about investing. Here's the reality: most people should not buy stocks. Financial media is financial entertainment. If someone tells you you should buy a stock you should take that same money and go on a nice vacation instead. As someone who has been involved in every aspect of the financial media community for ten years I can tell you that most people have no clue what they are doing and should not be listened to except in special circumstances. And everyone, no exceptions, should do their own research and due diligence before acting on any financial advice.

But despite all of this, I want you to know that no matter what you've done, I forgive you.



JOEL D CANFIELD

You Don't Need Permission

Six months ago Best Beloved and I decided life would be better if we weren't tied down, with a lot of stuff we didn't need, yearning for a life of travel.

We're happiest when we're driving; music on, writing our next book, talking about life. It just stopped making sense to have a fixed place of residence. Despite the surprise of more orthodox friends, we gave notice on the house we were renting and started emptying it.

It wasn't easy giving up all that stuff I'd been hanging onto. In the end, some of it went to a friend's closet-but precious little. Besides a few cases of books and vinyl LPs, we only own what fits in our minivan. Half

of that is my musical equipment; instruments and performing and recording equipment.

Giving up a fixed place of residence to travel frees mental and emotional energy. As a result I've found that I'm not an entrepreneur, I'm a philosopher.

Every business I've started during the past decade has shared a common thread: it's never been about the work to be done, but the reasons. Why people choose what they choose. Why they do things-or don't. Why they work against their own judgment in order to please others.

I'm fascinated by motivations, the "why" of choices. I've discovered that finding "why" makes "what" and "how" become clear. A good reason to act creates motivation. Realizing there is no good reason frees me to abandon pointless activities.

Best Beloved and I still have to eat, and prefer to sleep indoors, so we still do the work we love doing for others. Rather than my business, though, I've changed my focus to finding "why" and helping others find it, too.

This time, others seem less surprised-or maybe it's just that it matters less to a nomadic philosopher.





BOB BURG

Stop These Thoughts... PLEASE!

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a very strange and insidious phenomenon. Put simply, OCD is a chemical disorder which manifests itself in two ways, often combined.

Obsessions are thoughts, images, or impulses that occur over and over again and feel out of your control. These unwanted ideas are accompanied by sickly, horrifying feelings of fear, disgust, doubt and, mainly, intense guilt.

Compulsions are a “magical” way of trying to make the obsessions go away. They are acts the person performs over and over again, often according to certain self-imposed “rules.”

Because everyone experiences the above to some degree and at some time during their lives, when trying to explain this to people – especially the intrusive thoughts aspect – most people respond by saying, “Sure, I’ve had that too.” But they haven’t. Not to the “insane degree” OCD sufferers have.

The long road to diagnosis and the road traveled since has been long and there have been many, many setbacks along the way.

One summer evening many years ago, leaving work during a rainstorm, I sat outside waiting for the rain to let up so that I could get to my car without getting drenched. As I sat there, I had a particularly horrible OCD thought which set off a chain of other related thoughts. I’m still not sure if the downpour of rain or outpouring of horrid, disturbing thoughts came more furiously. I – a grown man respected in the business community – just sat there bawling my eyes out, and pleading to G-d, “Stop these thoughts . . . PLEASE!”

Through medication and behavior therapy, the symptoms are now a bit softer and, for me anyway, most definitely livable. One never actually overcomes OCD, but can learn to deal with it more effectively.

Living with OCD is a “different” sort of life. You’re never totally free from its grasp. You can’t exactly decide to simply “not participate” in its manifestation.

You live your life and you work around it. And you hope that your story can help others to know that there are lots of us who do understand them, and that there are places that have a wealth of information about it, such as the OC Foundation in Boston, MA (www.ocfoundation.org), which has done marvelous work in this field for close to 25 years.

While there is nothing intrinsically good in OCD to the sufferer (in other words, one doesn’t succeed because of OCD but in spite of it), there is one aspect of it that has helped me add positively to the lives of others. Because of my experience, I have an almost extraordinary amount of empathy for others who are suffering; suffering with and/or from anything. This has allowed me to help many others in different ways and has clarified for me the message of The Go-Giver.

Is that worth having OCD? No, absolutely not. But, for whatever reason it is in G-d’s plans that I have this disorder, I’m glad I can at least be a conduit for helping others.

I live in gratitude at how fortunate I am to do work I love, touch lives in a positive way, and be surrounded by close family, friends and acquaintances, both online and off.

If you have faced challenges – even horrendous ones – (and we all have), how can you use that experience to foster empathy and bring value to the lives of others?

CAROL ROTH

Risks and Rewards, Opportunities and Downsides



The call came on an early March evening in 1995, while I was wrapping up my senior year at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. My college boyfriend of a year and a half had been killed in a car accident by a woman driving recklessly to escape the police. Within two months, I was a 22 year-old college grad with a heavy heart and a wrecked emotional state, \$40,000 in debt and a plane ticket to a new city with a new job where I knew nobody. It was not an auspicious start to my professional career.

Within two years, another call came- my mother had been diagnosed with Leukemia- a battle she lost within 12 months. That was followed shortly thereafter by my stepmother losing her life due to lung cancer. And since tough things seem to come in waves, I then endured my own undiagnosed mystery gastrointestinal illness that at the same time bloated my abdomen to the size of a third trimester pregnant woman and sucked the life out of me, which itself endured for almost three years. The weight of each incident created a cacophony of emotions that I can't even describe, from depression to frustration and anger to exhaustion.

Over the course of a decade, I endured death- three of them- from three of my closest confidantes, but managed to also find love again with my husband. I went from the burden of debt to a seven-figure net worth. I navigated a new city where I hadn't one friend. I battled against an illness that no doctor could figure out, being a veritable guinea pig, until the debilitating sickness was no more.

But despite what you may think, these challenges were not my biggest roadblocks in life. My biggest roadblock was me.

In each of the above situations, I persevered by being willing to do anything. I didn't let fear, sacrifice or environment hold me back; I told myself that "no" was not an option.

I got past my grief to find love again by being willing to be vulnerable. I put myself and my heart out there, facing the fear that it could be taken away again.

In my financial situation, I passed over the everyday luxuries that many of my peers were indulging in and focused instead on paying off my debt and building my bank account. I was willing to live meagerly and sacrifice until the debt was gone.

With my illness, I tried just about everything that could be imagined. I took pills, I did acupuncture, I went to a real-life witch doctor who hooked me up to a computer and had me hold metal balls (they weren't brass, but that would have been fitting). I was so willing to be open, that I- the linear, financial thinker- even agreed to see a person called a medical intuitive. She told me that my stomach issues stemmed from, "the soul of an unborn baby that wanted to be born through my body" and that I had to have discussions with this soul to make it understand that that wouldn't happen. My first reaction was, well, not fit for print. But I did it anyway- I talked aloud to the mythical baby soul (it didn't work, by the way...). I kept on keeping on, until one day, some unknown combination of the dozens of efforts that I was undertaking worked. I pressed on when there was no answer to my problem.

So, how ironic is it that I got past the roadblocks in every other aspect of my life, but in planning the rest of my professional and business life, the things that would stop me would be my own ego and fear. It was a fear of failure, a fear that if I set a big, balls-to-the-walls crazy goal, I might not achieve it and then, ostensibly, something awful would happen (like people pointing and laughing in a fit of hysterics a la Tickle Me Elmo).

I apparently was MacGyver when it came to dealing with death, finances and illness, but I could not figure out how to get past my ego when it came to the thought of failure. I was not willing to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, perhaps because change had a recent negative history.

I realized that I wasn't happy. I was the "successful underachiever", accomplishing milestones like raising over a billion dollars in capital, but not feeling like I had even scratched the surface of contributing what I could.

So, eventually I asked myself what the downside was in going for what I wanted in my professional life. When I evaluated it, the downside truly was limited, especially in the face of everything else that I had endured. If I went for a big goal and I didn't make it, I would pretty much be in exactly the same situation that I already was in (and would be for the foreseeable future), with the real risk being not much more than a bruised ego. But if I did go for it, and even made it part of the way towards the

goal, the upside was immense.

That was my turning point and I haven't looked back.

I challenge you to figure out what is truly holding you back and ask yourself about risks and rewards, opportunities and downsides. Do the preparation, and if the risk/reward tradeoff makes sense, you must "do the work". Be willing to be comfortable with being uncomfortable for the situations that have enough upside to justify what you are risking.

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen? Will you let "no" be an option for you?

Don't let yourself get in the way of being all you can be.

JACKIE SAVI-CANNON

Life Threatening is a Matter of Perception

Crisis=Fear – an innate, human response learned through our culture. Reaction and adaptation to crisis is purely individual. Hearing the words ‘You have Cancer’ feels like a sledgehammer smashing your safe, predictable world into millions of pieces.

I liken my diagnosis to being in a playground: a romanticized, heroic place by day; desolate, lonely prison by night - the pivotal moment when you are alone with your horror and only the shadows. My first instinct is to run. We underestimate our ability of handling something so monumental. Crisis was and is a call to change. It reminds us we are built to adapt and evolve – understanding moments of crisis are meant to be dynamic and impermeable. Much like our physical bodies.

So as I sit in my own perceived horror - tragic narratives of my life flashing by, I begin to notice the intense noise and aftershock giving way to quiet. Eventually it was just me, cancer and stillness. I was still here. Despite everything, I was still standing amongst the shadows. Now 5 years Cancer-Free, I stand side by side with them.

The real opportunity-cost of any challenge is not seeing the opportunity. The key is to let the crisis speak to you. Faced with your own mortality it's like staring into a black hole. Time morphs, barriers no longer obstruct your view of what is possible. You now understand how choice dictates perceived quality of life.

My crisis gave me the vision to create economical health and resource programs that are teaching people how to cope and adapt to life altering events. The quality of the content I create and practical solutions I offer come from a deeper, more profound place. When you absorb yourself in pure mindfulness, there is no room for something as small as FEAR.





KEVIN BRUSIE

The Death of Photography or The Birth of a VSP

The past decade has seen a massive change in the business of commercial-still photography. On more fronts than we even knew existed a decade ago, the profession has been under assault. Initial lower cost of entry (more competition), Photoshop as the “great equalizer”, broad usage rights demanded (and for good reasons) from buyers, increased cost of technology to remain a high end player, not to mention my favorite: “Mediocrity is the new Excellence.” Monitor any pro-photography forum and inevitably a thread will develop on how difficult it is to even squeak out a living, let alone profit like the ‘good old days’ - as in the entire 20th century. The incredible irony is that there are more outlets, and therefore a greater demand, for high quality imagery than ever before.

Enter - The V.S.P. Or, a Visual Solutions Provider. It occurred to me I would need to offer more than just pretty pictures at the end of the day. I am becoming more involved in my clients imagery needs, both still and motion (OK, I do have a secret weapon: a wife who is a talented director & editor). We produce TV spots AND print/web media content. I am consulting on Digital Asset Management issues, as clients amass libraries of images. I have worked as a producer for shoots at distant locales where there is no budget to send me. I have produced multimedia projects for web based Annual Reports, coordinating a team of web designer, programmer, motion graphics artist, and my still & motion images.

Key to this is adjusting my business model to the needs of my clients, and aggressively seeking out new clients.. The old (hah - ten years ago!) formula has lost its legs. The new model is focused on meeting their needs, quickly, efficiently, and artistically - and it IS working.

Now... the biggest challenge by FAR is to convince myself of this. All of this means NOT sitting around on the pity pot. It is way too easy (please don't ask me how I know) to linger in the presumed safety of the old world. “Well, it used to work. If I just wait it will come back around.” While I doubt those words have ever been thought exactly, the little fearful reptilian beast lurking in the shadows sure can grab hold of that concept and sabotage even the best of plans. My current best is a 3:5 ratio. Meaning for 3 out of every 5-day weeks, I am on the hunt, moving forward. The other 2 days, Mr. Lizard takes over. And you can sure bet I can easily recall a week (or many weeks) that had a ratio of .25:5... slip sliding back to the depths of the cave. My best friend in this battle is my Big Ass Whiteboard. If I can list it, I can do it. I am currently constructing a new office space... and a Really Big Ass Whiteboard, prominently placed, with easy access, will be the centerpiece of the room. Wish me luck!



WILLIAM A VERDONE

Teaching Beyond Teaching of Victory

Having been a teacher in the New York City Public School System for many years, I retired back in 1999 - and ironically, I've never been busier. I am a Board Member of Ensemble212, a regional symphony orchestra here in NYC; a Board Member of a women's college allied with the University of Rajasthan, in Northern India (more to come on that). I am also an attendee to the International Peace Institute (IPI), across from the United Nations, as well as a member of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.

Many of these organizations have experienced inspirational adventures, filled with enormous challenges, and undertaken by brave and far-sighted people. The following highlights one such endeavor with passionate people who persist in success.

A personal disclosure: although there were no "hurdles" or "challenges" for me to push through here with regards to "internal resistance," my

internal compassion ("compass," in a sense) pointed me toward the following efforts and initiatives THEY were endeavoring to conquer!

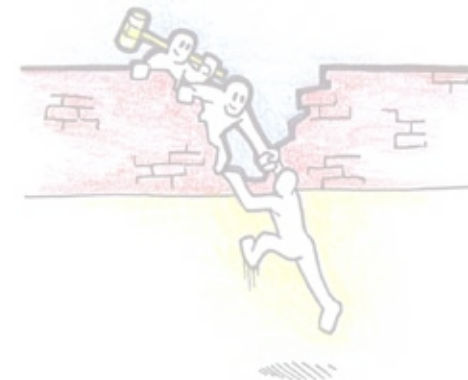
As mentioned, I serve on the Board of Directors for a women's college flourishing in Rajasthan, Northern India, open to ALL(!). Dr. Surendra Kaushik, the founder of the college, would never take "no" for an answer, would never allow the dream of providing an education in empowering women in that bleak part of India to be derailed, and would never accept payment for those who enroll - www.helenakaushik.org

We fundraise, we become stubborn into thinking "we can!," we accept the energy of what students want – a passion to learn, to go out and become a productive partner in their communities, to become part of an educated humanity! These women are doing their best to persevere through cultural and political internal and external resistances. We help remove the external resistances, empowering them to reach their full potential.

"We can easily forgive a child for being afraid of the dark, but the real tragedy in life is when adults are afraid of the light." – Plato

Defy that darkness!

"We can easily forgive a child for being afraid of the dark, but the real tragedy in life is when adults are afraid of the light." – Plato



GRAHAM LEE GIOVAGNOLI

Don't Wait. Do the Work Today!

If you had a second chance at life, would you recognize it? Would you do everything in your power to live as if there were no tomorrow?

Last year the threat of “no tomorrow” was very real for me, but the universe offered up a gift, an opportunity to learn the true nature of acceptance and gratitude. Although disguised as a malicious malady, it was no less rewarding to receive, and I am a better person because of it. I learned so much about myself, the world and my relationship to it. Cancer is increasingly becoming a household name and will continue to touch our lives as all things get harder, better, faster, stronger.

It's been one year and I'm well. In fact, I haven't felt this strong since college, so I thought this is as good a time as any to ride my bicycle from Chicago to the Panama Canal. That's 3,000 miles, 6 weeks, 9 countries. I've been training for the last 4 months, and even got a job as a bike courier during the day for efficiency's sake. I will take off Sunday May 8th at 9am from The Bean at Millenium Park. If you're in the neighborhood, stop by and see me off.

I'm going to maintain a travel log throughout the trip, documenting the unique and curious experiences I encounter along the way. If you have experience in places on the route, or know of anyone/anything I simply must see, don't hesitate to let me know! I can use all the support I can get. I'm getting incredibly excited as my departure draws near and I'd like to invite you to follow me on the web. You can visit the link attached to my name above for more info. Click the links at the top of the website for details.

I look forward to to connecting when I am back.

Until then, don't stop 'til you get enough.





KARL STAIB

Doing Great Work Always Comes Down to One Thing

Think of one business leader who is doing great work right now. Now hold this person in your mind. What do they possess? Why are they doing this great work?

There are a myriad of reasons that this person is a doer of great work. She probably loves what she is doing, but that's not really the answer. A person may love Facebook, but that's not really doing great work. It's not that scary to interact with your friends on Facebook. It may take a little thought to post something, but just writing on someone's Facebook wall is not great work.

This leader that you hold in your mind does this amazing work because she is compelled to take action. This is great, but how does she really let go of the resistance and do great work?

Super Powers

This leader does great work because she believes in her superpowers. She believes that if she isn't doing this work she is letting people down. I guess we should step back for a second.

You have superpowers. We all have superpowers. The thing is it's what we do with these superpowers that matter. If I'm afraid to use my superpower of writing to encourage people to change then I'm not going to see any results. My superpower may as well not be a superpower.

I used to be very afraid. Scratch that I'm still afraid.

Arch Nemesis

I've learned to embrace this fear, give it a big hug and have a conversation with this fear. I actually like to call this emotion my arch nemesis. That little voice in my head that holds me back or at least tries to hold me back. We've formed a pretty good bond these last few years, so he doesn't have the power over me that he once did.

My arch nemesis and I flew around Texas for a while. Ok, neither of us has the superpower of flight, but man it would be so cool if we did. We actually go for walks together to sort out our differences. I realized he just wants the best for me, but doesn't know how to express it in the right way. He's just so negative and we are working on this together.

Last week we went for a walk and we talked about my business and where I want to take it. I've been working on one of my blogs for over 3 years, my longest running blog. I have some great Google juice and a lot of links from some pretty high profile blogs. I realize that I have to give this blog up. I'm not sure how I'm going to do this yet, but this old blog is near and dear to my heart, but not the direction my new business is heading.

Bold

If I hadn't formed a friendship with my arch nemesis I would have made the safe decision. I would hold onto the blog and slowly let it die. This isn't right to my readers or me. It would have been a waste of everyone's time. So I know what direction I need to go. I know I need to take action and it may take a few more walks with my arch nemesis to hash it all out, but I look forward to this new blogging journey. I'm not afraid of taking this bold step because I understand what is best for my readers as well as my business.

Your arch nemesis is there for you to listen to and to use to help you take smart action. He is there for a reason. Don't ignore him. The more you try to stuff him down the angrier he gets. Believe me I've thrown my Mazda 3 a half block. Ok I don't have the superpower of strength, but I love day-dreaming about it. I did scream really loudly in my car a few months ago and punch my steering wheel because I was ignoring my arch nemesis. His chatter kept getting louder. I now know that ignoring him is doing me more harm than good.

You have superpowers that need to be unleashed in your work. Your arch nemesis is your friend. Listen to him/her and just talk. You'll be surprised by how much it helps relax your mind and improve your decision making ability.





NEIL PATEL

When I was 21 I quickly learned that business ideas don't matter as much as the people you are working with.

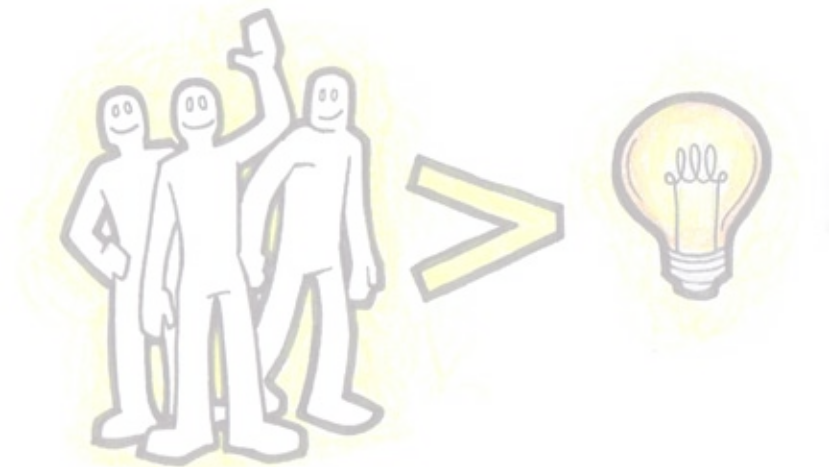
I had a few entrepreneurs come to me with a hosting concept that was similar to Media Temple's Grid Server before it came out. Over the course of a year I spent over a million dollars on the project and in the end I ended up losing everything.

My losses occurred not because of the idea, but because the entrepreneurs I was working with ended up taking my money and running away with it.

So in the end, if you are going after a business idea, make sure you are working on it with good people. Models change over time and you learn new things as your company evolves, but the one thing that needs to adapt is your team members.

Before you pick your team members make sure you get to truly know them, and how they work. Even if they are talented, you have to make sure they gel with the rest of your team and they fit within your company culture.

“Models change over time and you learn new things as your company evolves, but the one thing that needs to adapt is your team members.”



KYM DAKIN

Acting Up

I was an under-employed actor, who had moved out of New York to save a marriage - which couldn't be saved. I had given up my apartment, social circles, professional contacts to work at a radio station in Portland, Maine. I felt like I had moved to the dark side of the moon.

But I got lucky. I got a voiceover exclusive contract with GMC Truck that lasted for 10 years. I bought a house, remarried, became a mom, and figured out that what really jazzed me was using improvisational theatre as a learning tool for business - so Short Fuse was born. Companies hired us instead of the usual sexual harassment videos. This was an exhilarating time - but our service was next to impossible to explain, so I joined a BNI group that would force me to make the pitch weekly to realtors and insurance guys. At first, I felt like a circus act, but I paid attention to the language used to pitch their services, and I learned to "translate" our quirky art form into business-ese. We expanded into leadership development, communications, sales training. I completed my Masters the year the recession took hold... and my professional life slowed to a crawl...



I got lucky again. A local producer called me to record a series of audio books, and after a few years, and an Audie award, I thought - now I can really gain some traction... but changes in the industry - Audible - meant narrators had to become producers. Technology. Lots of reasons not to take this on - my daughter was still in grade school, my husband lost his job and money was dwindling. But there was no future in narrating if I didn't learn to record, and financial panic was gaining the edge. It was like the stages of grief: denial, outrage, and finally, acceptance. I had to take on the monster in the closet. So I built a recording studio in that closet and committed to produce two books on spec - forcing myself to learn the technology. It was not easy. I had to ask for help and I had to ask stupid questions but I learned. The internet makes creative work possible anywhere, once you commit to continued learning.

Yes, we need to become specialists in our singular professions. But I pendulum between two different yet connected callings. Currently, along with e-learning programs, I develop trainings for doctors in need of communication and leadership skills... Legacy MD.

Years ago, I read a Times article about medical training as charts, graphs and numbers, producing doctors with no bedside manner whatsoever, I thought "They need what we do". Now, with Legacy MD, it is my privilege to prove it.

FRANK MCKINNEY

Relentless Forward Motion



We have these insurmountable, incomprehensible, impossible opportunities that lay themselves on our heart in the form of relationships, business opportunities, and physical challenges.

More often than not, based on the perceived resistance that we're going to experience as we deviate so far from our 9-5 comfort zone, we think of reasons why we shouldn't pursue these radical changes.

The best metaphor I can use is my love affair with the world's toughest foot race, the Badwater Ultramarathon. Running 135 miles across the Death Valley desert in the middle of summer.

Non-stop. From 282 feet below sea level to 8,360 feet above sea level, transversing three mountain ranges.

I've completed this grueling race five times and currently am training to run it for the sixth time.

This race presents a microcosm for life in these two days baking in the hot sun, waiting for human will to be scorched. As in life, making it across that finish line is solely up to me.

When the gun goes off, I'm feeling great. By mile 92, I find myself flat on my back, eyes rolled back in my head, suffering from heat exhaustion, maybe a breath or two away from heat stroke. I am quivering with chills in 125 degree weather.

What am I going to do? This is the question we all must answer.

My answer comes down to three words: Relentless Forward Motion.

My choice is to pack it up or keep moving forward. I know that the regret I would feel looking in the mirror and seeing that I quit would last much longer than the pain I'm enduring at mile 92.

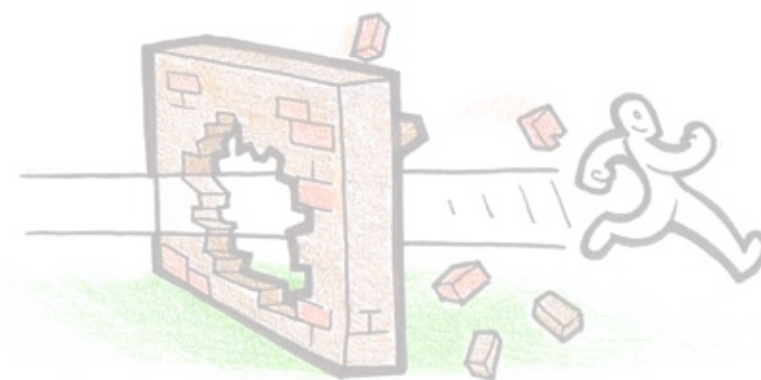
This race has taught me that with faith, patience, and the passage of time, we can overcome almost any debilitating moment in life.

Regardless of whatever challenge you have presenting itself to you, when you don't fall back on these three things, more often than not, you quit. You will move on to some new person, venture, or physical challenge.

What great challenge is laying itself on your heart? Pursue it. Simply choosing to start will change you as a person. Then prepare to hit resistance – expect it.

When you do, have a little bit more faith. Have some patience. Rest a little. Take your time. Then start walking again in the right direction.

Relentless forward motion.





CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading this book.

It was produced at breakneck speed through an enormous groundswell of collective talent and efforts. Let's keep this wave of action going.

Think of five people who will benefit from the profound insights and tools generously shared by our contributors. This ebook will be of special interest to those who get in their own way of doing their best work.

Share **No Idling** right now with those who need it. Then use it, again and again, to push over the dips and through the walls as you bring your great work to the world.

Take that, Resistance.

More information about [Do the Work](#) and [The Domino Project](#) can be found at www.thedominoproject.com.

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