

## Master Follow-Through Now

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We have just ushered in 2017!!! It is common for new resolutions to accompany the starts of new years. Are you planning any new resolutions? Are any of your resolutions carry overs from previous years? Let us explore how we can master our follow-through now and actualize our resolutions during 2017 and continuously.

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### ***Leverage our passion to achieve completion***

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Do you follow-through on many initiatives but mainly just the ones that you have a particular interest in? The more passionate we are about a project the greater the chances that we will see it through unto completion. The key that we can extract here is to leverage our passion to achieve completion. Even when we are not wholly passionate about projects, we can find parts of the projects that we are passionate about, and focus on those interests to derive enthusiasm to complete remaining tasks. For instance, taking on the challenging task of losing weight may seem daunting. Perhaps you loathe exercise and cherish junk food but you are competitive. Consider adding competition with others to your weight loss efforts. Being crowned the winner of walking the most steps for the week will be more engaging to you than simply walking to achieve weight loss.

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### ***Create throughways between the excitement of possibilities and the excitement of realizations***

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Are you in love with potential and underwhelmed with execution and actualization? Do you get excited about what could be and how amazing innovative ideas are but your enthusiasm stays anchored there and your interest in actually seeing those ideas become realities is virtually nonexistent? A solution to this type of failure to follow-through is to create throughways between the excitement of possibilities and the excitement of realizations. We can do this by skipping the possibility highs and setting our sights on subsequent highs. Sometimes we need to skip glamorizing all of the sparkly possibilities of ideas, delay our satisfactions, and induce longings for more. When we get equally excited about making our potentials become our realities we can focus on execution and actualization which are the muscle that is needed to complete projects. When we are able to extend our excitement from the initial eagerness throughout the process of completion we are able to gain the additional celebration and enjoyment of finished outcomes.

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### ***It is okay to move on to another focus as long as we return***

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Do you tend to abandon projects because you lose focus? I have come to the understanding that I work in waves. I tend to start and stop and restart projects a lot but I am always expending energy doing something even if it is just clearing out my DVR or organizing my closets. Sometimes I

work hot and heavy on a project and then I lose interest, or get sidetracked with the start of another project. When this happens I may fail to go back to that initial project - out of sight out of mind. Any project that we undertake is subject to competition with other projects. The easy fix is to build in flexibility and keep track of projects. Know that it is okay to move on to another focus as long as we return. We must keep sight of current projects once we go away from them to focus on other ones.

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### ***Making plans is critical to follow-through***

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Do you stay abstract instead of being concrete and thinking through details? For instance once I was so focused on submitting my flexible spending submissions by the due date that I almost missed the deadline because I had totally neglected to be mindful of the needed steps of gathering the receipts and filling out the submission form. When we do not have specific detailed step by step plans with timelines we may be less likely to execute. Making plans is critical to follow-through. Depending on what works for you plans may be as simple as get a new job, or a detailed as get a new job by updating resume, searching for job opportunities, and applying for 5 jobs a week. Regardless of our preferred level of detail, making plans and sticking to those plans will improve our actual follow-through.

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### ***Tips to sticking to plans***

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One tip for adhering to plans is to record our activity - what we do and what we fail to do. Seeing our nonperformance can really make us come to terms with our inefficiencies and can prompt us to improve. Another tip is to schedule a standing day and time to review our plans, activity, and effectiveness. Checking-in on projects keeps them front and center in our minds and increases our follow-through. This is an especially helpful cure for forgetfulness which some of us are prone to, as well as the problem of out of sight, out of mind.

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### ***Consequences are nuisances***

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Do you fail to follow-through during the times that you feel overwhelmed? There are times that I have so many obligations that I feel defeated. I feel that I just do not have enough energy to address all of my obligations. There are other times that I feel tired, sleepy, hungry, or overbooked and proceeding is just not worth the time, energy or effort because I would rather be doing something else - like sleeping, eating or relaxing. At times we can feel stretched from a lack of resources. When this occurs we have to pick and choose our priorities and we may have to sideline some things. After determining the things that we need to do, we have to gather the strength and energy to get those things done. A few tips from the finishers in my life are to know that consequences are nuisances. Finishers would rather finish a task now and get it out of the way because they do not want to later deal with having not done it. Finishers keep the big picture before them – they picture the outcomes – they picture doing what needs to be done and the

resulting rewards, but more influentially they picture the resulting repercussions from not doing what needs to be done. Sometimes we cannot be lazy; sometimes we cannot take the easy ways out; sometimes we just have to power through wisely understanding that we will reap benefits and curtail consequences when it's all said and done.

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***(Have) clear contingencies to counter obstacles that are foreseeable***

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Mitigation is another method to overcome feeling overwhelmed. Anticipating roadblocks and having plans to combat them will put us at an advantage over obstacles. Moreover thinking ahead and developing constructs and habits will help establish frameworks so that ultimately we do not have to work so hard. These include internal and external supports and accountabilities, clear visions, clear plans, and definitely clear contingencies to counter obstacles that are foreseeable. For example, planning meals and snacks, fulfilling set grocery lists, and packing meals and snacks ahead of time will help us stay on track and avoid poor eating choices made out of hunger. Another way to mitigate is to have back-up plans to our back-up plans and to be prepared to embrace other projects when needed to prevent losing productivity when our original plans do not pan out.

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***It is essential to find cures for nonchalance***

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Do you fail to accept the full magnitude of some things? Do you fail to ascribe relevance to things that really matter? Do you pay attention to small insignificant things and ignore big meaningful things? Do you let unhealthy relationships derail you? It is essential to find cures for nonchalance. One cure is to develop eye-opening fear of negative and undesired outcomes. So many times we brush off serious situations like health complications disregarding the reality that they can actually result in serious discomfort or death. Adopting mandates to just do things no matter if we are at 100% or 1% can precede us being able to accept the magnitude of major issues and operate accordingly. There are certain situations that we cannot afford to be comfortable with the status quos, we need to force ourselves to feel the full weight of exasperations that those situations are causing us, and we need to crave relieve from those situations. We may need to envision the delight of those situations finally being resolved and being able to move past them. We may benefit from visualizing feelings of elation and ecstasy from defeating worrisome adversaries. Ignorance isn't always bliss, most of the time ignoring serious situations just delays and further complicates things. Accepting that our serious situations need our attention can fuel us to follow-through at resolving them.

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***We can choose to be more action-oriented and act right away***

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Do you put things off, even simple things that could be completed in a matter of minutes? There is an alternative to sticking pins in things and putting them off until later, sometimes with no real intention of revisiting them. Alternatively, we can choose to be more action-oriented and act right away. For example, when someone suggests that we connect for lunch, we can go ahead and schedule the date right then instead of having no real intention to revisit making meeting plans.

Doing the quick stuff right away eases our load of things to do and immensely increases our productivity.

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***We should seek shortcuts, be direct***

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Do you tend to make things harder than they have to be, making things overly complicated, elaborate, or convoluted? It may seem contrary to modern advice but there are times that we should seek shortcuts, be direct and stop making all of our solutions Rube Goldberg machines. The shortest distance between two points is still a straight line, we can improve our follow-through by remembering that simple truth.

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***We should re-evaluate why, what, and how we are doing things***

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Do you ever get frustrated or discouraged with a task that that you cannot quite figure out and so you just quit the task altogether? Do you ever let your mind get in the way and talk you out of taking action? Perhaps we need to assess if we are doing what we really want to do. Sometimes tasks are hard to finish because we are not addressing the real issues, or we are not going about things in the best ways for us. Whenever we feel that things are going in an uphill battle kind of way, we should re-evaluate why, what, and how we are doing things. Being true to ourselves and our values is a critical imperative that causes chaos in our lives any time that we lose sight of or sacrifice that imperative.

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***Time will pass regardless***

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Time will pass regardless, do you want to look back and feel great that you followed-through, or feel bad that you are still fighting the same old tired pitiful fights? Mastering follow-through by being solutions-oriented will allow us to complete our resolutions this year and clear the way for brand new resolutions in the future. Let us use the techniques above to master follow-through now.

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