

Keeping It Off

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Chapter 1

Just start

We are highly intelligent and reasonable human beings, and yet we have so many challenges beginning activities that contribute to the building of our physical and mental well-being.

We live in a world of convenience where instant gratification can be achieved with little or no effort. In fact, everything we see and hear around us is pushing us towards what is convenient.

Sometimes the goals we want to achieve seem so distant and unachievable. Breaking it down into segments can bring our goals within reach.

Nobody has ever looked back and felt regret at taking action to achieve something of value. We should always keep this in mind.

Why is it that we keep falling asleep and "forgetting" what we want to achieve?

I use an alarm to wake me up every day (or I'd sleep a long time!), so why not set alarms for ourselves for other things too?

Something woke us up when we decided to lose weight, improve our fitness, and get in shape. Something gave us the desire or the sense of urgency to act.

If we are serious about our success, we should set up a framework to help us succeed. We do this in our business lives, so why not for our health and wellbeing? That's why we must "just start."

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Why do we spend so much time in our heads?

We trust our brain because it's us, but our brain is often very unkind to us and not always working for our true benefit.

All the time spent in our heads is a time of zero action. Our brain works quickly with the intention of making a decision, so we can actually DO something.

Unfortunately, when we talk to ourselves, we are likely not learning anything new.

How much of our day is spent in our own heads?

We have about 16 hours a day available to do something. How much of this time needs to be spent thinking as opposed to acting?

When we wake up in the morning, we have achieved zero at that moment in time. Who wants to go to bed that same evening without having contributed anything of value to their life or their success?

With all this time in a day available for us to get what we want, surely we can easily carve out the time we need to move forward. We did this to lose weight, so now we just need to adjust to something new and sustainable to protect the work we've done and live our best lives.

How can we find the connection between the GOOD thoughts we have and turning them into actions?

Remember I said *good* thoughts. Just like a brainstorming session in a work meeting, we are not going to have great ideas with every thought we have. Identifying *good* thoughts is important before we can move to the appropriate actions.

We can be so in love with the idea of doing something great. We fantasize about the great things we can and will do. If we never take the step from thought into action, we inevitably feel regret, frustration, and anger that can spill over into our lives and harm ourselves and our relationships.

The failure to turn thoughts into actions is likely a major contributing factor to why you are here. Let's deal with this together.

What is the value to us of learning something but never applying it in our lives?

A great real-life example is the story of my friend Bryan, who loves to dance. He takes dance lessons regularly to improve his skills and goes dancing whenever possible. Every time I see him after an evening out dancing, he is so alive and joyful. To imagine Bryan never using the skills he's acquired makes me sad. The lesson here is clear. It's the application of what we learn that brings us true satisfaction, not the acquiring of the skill.

Every time we learn something and don't apply it, we have wasted our time. It's true that we can't apply all that we are exposed to or don't have the need for all that we experience. The things we decide we want to learn, because we have the intention of applying them in our lives, need our focus if we want to follow through.

Sadly, our good intentions do not magically turn into action just because we want them to. Turning our learning into action is too important to just leave to chance.

If we hate procrastination so much, why are we so intent on becoming experts at it?

Every time we procrastinate, we make a choice. The choice, unfortunately, is often to postpone something we truly want and put something less valuable first. I consider this the greatest disservice we can do to ourselves.

If only we could find a way to know what things are most important to us *and* give those things priority. I am going to show you how to do this.

I see my procrastination as an enemy who wants me to fail. Taking this saboteur's power away was the key to my success in my weight management, but even more so in paving my way to creating the life I've always wanted.

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How did I learn to Just Start?

In 2001, I was preparing to take the CMA (Certified Management Accountant) National Entrance exam. Statistically, only half of the candidates writing the exam were expected to pass. I was scared! My study group hired a CMA Mentor named Bob Garries to help guide us through the exam process and give us feedback to help us prepare. After writing a few practice exams, Bob took me aside and gave me the advice that would change my life. He said, "Jason, you just need to start writing." That was it. Bob had analyzed my behaviour and concluded that my biggest problem was *not* starting.

When it came time to write the exam, less than a week later, Bob's words reverberated loudly in my mind. I just started writing. In the three hours of the exam, I wrote thirty pages. I can barely remember what I wrote as I was so focused on taking action. I had gotten out of my head. I passed with a very respectable score. The national average pass rate for that year was 51%, so in other words, every other person failed.

While "Just Start" is a key tool for your success, it is still only the beginning.

"Just Start" has enabled me to begin a successful weight loss journey again, and again, and again, but knowing what to do is not the same as doing it. It was to be almost ten years before I found the tool that enabled me to escape that cycle.

What is the five-second rule?

Any valuable tool should be simple. That does not mean it will be easy, but it does need to be simple.

If a tool is not simple, we just won't use it. We need to understand it, and it must resonate with us.

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In November 2020, the book "The Five Second Rule" by Mel Robbins was recommended to me. Like myself, Mel was frozen in the world of inaction, and it was preventing success in her life. Mel's revelation is detailed and deep, and I would highly recommend her book to further understand the science and success behind this simple concept.

"If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within five seconds, or your brain will kill the idea." – Mel Robbins

To summarize Mel's concept, I will state this as simply as I can.

When you feel the thought, idea, or urge to do something, count out loud from five down to one and then move. If you do not act within these five seconds, your brain will eliminate the motivation to act, and you will literally do nothing.

At the end of this countdown, if you were lying down, you might sit up; if you were sitting down, you could stand up; if you were standing, you would start walking; if you were walking, you might

start running. The goal is that you will physically move towards an action that will propel you to achieve something that your own brain has just told you that you need to achieve.

This is how we will turn what we think into what we do, turn thoughts into actions, learning into application, and most importantly, vanquish our procrastination.

Procrastination is the art of thinking of doing something and then doing nothing. When you think of it this way, does it take much skill or effort to be a master of this? Procrastination is the easiest of skills to learn because it involves no work, no research, no study, just inaction. Guess where this leads? Nowhere.

ACTION ITEM FOR THIS CHAPTER:

Find your best tools to help you to "Just Start" something.

Over the next few chapters, I am going to help you uncover an abundance of actions that you will be motivated to "Just Start," so don't feel bad if nothing of consequence is coming to mind right now. Perhaps "Just Start" with something simple for the time being.

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