

Develop the Do-It-Now Habit by Tom Hopkins

Self-discipline really encompasses nearly everything in life. Do you remember in school when you were given 30 days to write a term paper? Did you start it that first night?

Most of us didn't. Instead, we thought about it every night. "Got to get moving on that ratty project. But I've got almost a whole month left—it can wait." At first the pain of starting the term paper is greater than our concern about the failing grade, so after a week we still haven't started. Two weeks go by. What are we doing every night before we go to sleep? Worrying about that F. "I better start. Tomorrow I'll get moving on it."

A week before the term paper is due, the F is getting larger—but it's still not quite large enough to offset the pain of working at preventing it. All of a sudden there are only three days left before it's due, and at last the F looms larger than the pain of working on the term paper. So we start.

As you lay it out, you begin feeling some enthusiasm. "This isn't bad. I may get an A if I do this and do that." When you walk in with your paper, you're happy, but you wasted 27 days worrying about starting. In other words, you operated at a deficit emotionally for 27 days when you could have been in the profit column the whole time.

Move into the emotional profit column right now; starting today, get your priority tasks and actions handled promptly. Plan your actions, then act on your plans. Apply this determination to every area of your life and it will make an enormous difference in your income, growth rate in business as well as your satisfaction and growth rate personally.

The portrait of a man who was being called the Whiz Kid on Wall Street appeared on the cover of a national magazine many years ago. He was one of the first to put a conglomerate together, and some of the federal laws affecting business in the early '70s came about because of the trends that his creativity set off. At the time he was 42; he was running one of the largest industrial combines in the country, the conglomerate he had built himself. So the magazine had assigned a journalist and a team of researchers to do an in-depth report on this entrepreneur.

One of the researchers went to the small city the dynamic executive had left 15 years earlier. A few items turned up there about an alcoholic with the same name who had been sleeping on park benches at that time. The researcher passed this information along, and as the journalist was concluding his interview with the Wall Street powerhouse in his plush office, the journalist laughed and said, "Believe it or not, a man with your exact name was sleeping on park benches and getting ousted by the police when you lived in your home town. I guess the poor guy was a real wino. Isn't that something?"

The president looked up and smiled. "That was me," he said. The reporter was flabbergasted. "This can't be. You're kidding." The president of the conglomerate leaned back in his leather chair and shook his head. "I'm not kidding. The wino sleeping off drinks on park benches was me."

The journalist realized that now he had a whole new story. When his apologies were waved aside, he said, "I have to ask, what made you change?"

Listen to what he said because so many people fit this mold: "When I was sleeping under newspapers in the park 15 years ago, I knew that someday I would do what I'm doing now. I was just waiting until I was ready to start."

Do you know how many people are like that? "Well, next year's my year. I'm going to get to work then. You just wait and see—right after the first of the year I'm gonna start shaping up." But, of course, the time to get going never quite comes for most people. They have good intentions, but are lacking the two most vital components of any good deed: the motivation to begin and a strategic plan to keep them moving forward.

You see, by not beginning, you're not risking failure, but you're also confining yourself to the level of success you currently have. If you're happy with that, fine. If not, make that plan and get fired up! If your potential for greater success is nagging at you, don't wait. Time is flying by so fast. Start today to achieve the greatness you know is within you.