

Bad habits you must immediately break to improve your life in the next 100 days

By [Thomas Oppong](#)

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Habits define us. And nothing sabotages your creativity and productive life quite like bad habits. In the words of Samuel Johnson “The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken.”

To live a balanced, productivity, creative and fulfilling life, ridding yourself of your unproductive habits is an important investment.

It's easier to keep going than to take a few minutes to reflect, plan, and to really look at what needs to change for you to create your own version of a productive week, month, or year.

It's about time you paid attention to the habits that could be hindering your progress in life and career.

Kill the excuses!

Do you ever catch yourself making excuses when things don't turn out as you had expected? Have you ever tried to explain away why you didn't, couldn't, shouldn't or simply wouldn't do something?

I'm too tired. I don't have the time. I am not capable. Someone else will do it. It's too late now. Now is not the right time. I am not talented. I am not ready. I'm too scared. Nobody will help me. What if I fail. I don't feel motivated. I'd rather do nothing. I don't have the money ... yet! Those are the biggest excuses people make.

It's easy to come up with excuses and justify not getting started. The longer you fill your head with rationalizations and empty excuses, the less time you have to take action.

Jordan Belfort said, “The only thing standing between you and your goal is the bullshit story you keep telling yourself as to why you can't achieve it.”

It's easy to say, “I will start when I have more experience, money, time and resources”. By this time next year, you will have a lot more excuses.

It's a cycle. And once you get caught in the loop, it can be difficult to break free and do something meaningful you care about.

Many people are living their entire lives without ever standing up and stepping out. But it's exciting to witness the rare few who dare themselves and step out of their personal bubbles to make a change.

Most of us live with the stubborn illusion that we will always have tomorrow to do today's work. We consistently hold on to this belief and keep procrastinating until work becomes a heavy burden.

Left unchecked, we always default toward a more comfortable path. Your comfortable zone provides a state of mental security. You can understand why it's so hard to kick your brain out of your comfort zone.

Your super connected habit

If you can be reached via smartphone, email, Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn, you're way too available and all these outlets are possible connections that can distract you from your purpose.

In his best-selling book, [The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains](#), Nicholas Carr writes, “The Web provides a convenient and compelling supplement to personal memory — but when we start using the Web as a substitute for personal memory, by bypassing the inner processes of consolidation, we risk emptying our minds of their riches.”

Disconnect and watch as your productivity sores.

Your smartphone might be the biggest productivity killer of all time. Most people just can't put the phone away. If your phone is connected online, the temptation to stay updated about almost everything is very high.

If you can, put down that phone (or power it off) for a while when in the office and witness the effect that can have on your level of productivity.

Multitasking is killing your brain

Multitasking keeps your mind full, busy, and always under pressure. Science has proven that only [2% of us can really multitask efficiently](#). So just give it up already.

Stop multi-tasking, seriously stop. Of all the bad habits, multitasking is among the worst and most common. Multi-tasking does not necessarily make you more productive as you may think. You can actually achieve more in less time when you single task and focus on getting one thing done well.

It takes about 23 minutes and 15 seconds to fully return to a task after an interruption, according to Gloria Mark, Professor at UC Irvine, in Fast Company. So you may be wasting a lot more time than you think.

In his book, [The Myth of Multitasking: How "Doing It All" Gets Nothing Done](#), Crenshaw explains the difference between "background tasking" — like watching TV while exercising — and "switch-tasking," juggling two tasks by refocusing your attention back and forth between them, and losing time and progress in the switch.

More is not necessarily better. In fact, in many cases, the quality beats the quantity.

Focusing on the things that bring the biggest rewards or achievement is a great strategy.

Saying YES to everything

Time is the raw material of productivity and creativity. We are not taught to say "no." We are taught not to say "no." "No" is normally considered "rude". But "yes" makes limits creative and productivity time.

Saying "no" means you have time to focus on your own creation, tasks, and projects, rather than responding and reacting to requests.

"You can't let other people set your agenda in life," says Warren Buffett.

This is how Charles Dickens rejected an invitation from a friend:

"'It is only half an hour' — 'It is only an afternoon' — 'It is only an evening,' people say to me over and over again; but they don't know that it is impossible to command one's self sometimes to any stipulated and set disposal of five minutes — or that the mere consciousness of an engagement will sometime worry a whole day ... Whoever is devoted to an art must be content to deliver himself wholly up to it, and to find his recompense in it. I am grieved if you suspect me of not wanting to see you, but I can't help it; I must go in my way whether or no."

Acting on the directives of your inner critic!

"Remember, you have been criticizing yourself for years and it hasn't worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens." — Louise L. Hay

You are not good enough! You can't do it! Don't even bother trying! It's too late for you! Nobody will share it, like it, recommend it or even see it! Don't waste your time! You have no writing credentials. You're terrible at grammar, punctuation, and using parentheses. No one wants to read your opinions — everyone has their own opinions to sort through.

"Turn down the volume of your negative inner voice and create a nurturing inner voice to take its place. When you make a mistake, forgive yourself, learn from it, and move on instead of obsessing about it. Equally important, don't allow anyone else to dwell on your mistakes or shortcomings or to expect perfection from you." — Beverly Engel

Psychological research shows that success and well-being are associated with high self-esteem and that people with lower self-esteem suffer a disproportionate share of emotional and behavioral problems.

The truth is ...

Nobody is perfect enough to begin anything! You will never be ready for anything...ever! I love to write and share. I'm not a professional writer. I have no writing credentials. I am not Stephen King.

I have no technique, and I am not trained. But I write anyway. It matters that I show up every day. I can only get better with practice. My inner critic has gotten weaker with time.

Aiming for perfection

The root of procrastination is the fear of not doing a good job. Perfection kills creativity. Don't fuss over details as you move forward. What matters is that you get something done.

The real world doesn't reward perfectionists. It rewards people who get things done. Give yourself time in your life to wonder what's possible and to make even the slightest moves in that direction.

Done is better than perfect.

You will screw up in the process but it's okay. Don't beat yourself up for making a mistake or making a wrong choice. It will only lead to self-destructive behavior.

Bob Pozen, author of [Extreme Productivity: Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours](#), says while perfectionism is a "learned habit," it can be an "unlearned habit" if you work at it.

It's okay to screw up as long as you are willing to try again. Non-conformists and originals screw up a lot. But they move on, knowing that at some point, the breakthrough will happen.

No matter how many mistakes you make, or how slow you progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.

Creativity flourishes when you don't seek perfection but focus on getting stuff done. What you do matters, not what you think or say or plan. And doesn't have to be perfect.

The real world rewards those who create stuff and get things done. Give yourself space to think and wonder. And don't be afraid of what might happen.

Creating is the result of thinking like walking. Left foot, problem. Right foot, solution. Repeat until you arrive.

Give yourself time in your life to wonder what is possible and to make even the slightest moves in that direction.

Delaying the launch of your passion project

You cannot stay in your comfort zone forever. Career magic happens outside your safe boundary. Until you make that all important decision to take that crucial step, you will feel stuck for a very long time.

Don't just think about it, Act!

Action begets outcome. Outcome begets more action. You can only create or build when you make a move. Momentum builds through action.

You can't see the results you expect until you overcome your fear of starting and begin to take the first step at actually creating a new business, starting a new project or building the life you want.

The only thing worse than failure is not starting.

Failure is not final. There are way too many people out there who want to stay in their comfort zone and take no action but still complain of their current life. Don't be one of them. A single step gets you closer to your dream career.

Don't discount the power of action no matter how small.

Figure out the best time outside your normal work hours to get something done. You don't even have to do most things yourself. You could outsource or get someone else involved.

Set aside the time for your meaningful project and consider marking it on your calendar so you'll actually do it. Make time to check in with yourself about your hopes, dreams, and goals.

If you are still not sure about your passion project, Chris Guillebeau has insightful ideas to help you find and launch a project you deeply care about.

In his book, [Born for This: How to Find the Work You Were Meant to Do](#), Chris writes, "Finding the work you were meant to do is rarely a linear journey. It's a process of exploring many little twists and turns that lead us to the place we ultimately belong. THE WINNING"

Worrying about your weaknesses

It's easier to play to your strengths. Chances are you are paying too much attention to negative information. Millions of people are worried and always thinking about how to get rid of their weaknesses.

What if you turn things around and focus on your strengths instead. The bitter truth is, you may never overcome your weaknesses, but you could make significant changes to how you live and work if you focus on what you are good at. The key here is that you don't have to change who you are; you have to become more of who you are.

"Focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses. Focus on your character, not your reputation. Focus on your blessings, not your misfortunes," says Roy T. Bennett

In a study by Harvard Business Review, it was noted that while people remember criticism, awareness of faults doesn't necessarily translate into better performance.

It was further discovered that knowing your strengths offers you a better understanding of how to deal with your weaknesses — and helps you gain the confidence you need to address them.

Inaction

Despite the many options the new have as a generation, we are still left with a paradox of inaction. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed."

On one hand, we instinctively tend to stick with the default: get an education, get good grades and pursue a career society deems "respectful".

Those careers promise financial security devoid of risks. Safe over risk has always been the choice of millions. It's a safer bet.

Nobody likes to rock the boat. We feel safe in our comfort zones, where we can avoid the sting of regret.

And yet, at the same time, we regret most of those actions and risks we did not take.

Studies consistently show that when we look back on our lives the most common regrets are not the risks we took, but the ones we didn't.

Of the many regrets people describe, regrets of inaction outnumber those of action by nearly two to one. Some of the most common include not being more assertive and failing to seize the moment.

When people reflect later in life, it is the things they did not do that generate the greatest despair.

But you can do something about what you truly want in life now. You don't have to have many regrets when you can seize the moment today. There are more opportunities to completely reinvent your role in the system than ever before.

Stop giving a f*ck

"A man is likely to mind his own business when it is worth minding. When it is not, he takes his mind off his own meaningless affairs by minding other people's business." — Eric Hoffer

It is human nature to want to be liked and accepted, hence the insane pursuit of conformity. But you can make a conscious effort to stop giving a damn; to let yourself free.

It's a skill that needs to be practiced, like any other skill. Once you truly understand how to let go, you will see the world from an entirely different perspective.

The world is constantly telling you that everything you are not is what makes you happy. The other persons "great" job, a better car, a new and bigger house etc. Giving a f*ck about everything the world wants you to have makes you more miserable about what you are not or don't have.

Don't focus your life and efforts on chasing a mirage. It causes mental health problems you don't want.

You are probably too busy giving a f*ck about so many things around you that you've practically stopped living.

Mark Manson writes in his book, [The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life](#), "In my life, I have given a fuck about many people and many things. I have also not given a fuck about many people and many things. And like the road not taken, it was the fucks not given that made all the difference."

The key to the good life you really need is giving a damn about what's important to your growth, career, and total well-being.

When you stop giving a damn about what people think, your self-confidence will definitely shoot through the roof faster than you can ever imagine. You'll start to believe in yourself and what you can offer the world, without letting outside influences stop you or sway your decisions.

The more you desperately want to be like someone else, the more unworthy you feel. The more you desperately want to be happier, the lonelier you become, despite the awesome people surrounding you.

Mental toughness, happiness, and living life to the fullest come from knowing what to care about – and most importantly, what not to care about.

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