

The importance of doable tasks

I remember the last few months before getting my Master's degree. I had to write my graduation paper and, as any diligent student working on a big project, I kept postponing it.

This is how it went: every morning I looked at my list and the first task was "write graduation paper". What followed was an interior dialogue in which my responsible self said "I'll work on it today" and my emotional self grinned. I postponed it for the evening, because I wanted to work on my other important tasks so I could be free to work on it in the evening. In the evening: "oh well, there's no more time, I'll work on it tomorrow!"

The problem:

We all make plans. We plan to fulfill our dreams, to finish our projects, to participate in different events and also get some well-deserved relaxation. But how many of these do we actually do?

We can't work on many of them because we don't consider them important enough. We can't work on the others because we haven't saved enough time for them. In a lot of cases we simply weren't capable of motivating ourselves and acting!

Lao Tzu (Chinese philosopher, considered the founding father of Taoism) said that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". But how can you make that first step if your plan is vague, undefined; if you're not certain you truly want to make that trip?

Regardless of your working style, you still use some way of writing down your tasks and meetings. But you don't write them down in a motivating and doable form!

You don't believe me? What would you choose?

a) "write graduation paper"

or

b) "write the introduction for graduation paper"

a) "write speech"

or

b) "brainstorm ideas for the speech"

a) "I want to learn how to dance"

or

b) "look for a dancing class by Tuesday"

Have you noticed how in all cases "b" sounds easier to do than "a"? Wouldn't it be great if, from now on, all your tasks were as easy to do as those in the "b" category?

The solution:

To create a motivating and doable task list, remember the following 5 principles:

1) Ask yourself : "why?".

Is it truly necessary that I do this task?

If you feel you're avoiding that task, ask yourself:

- Is it a task that I have to finish now?
- What happens if I don't work on it?
- Does it have anything to do with any of my goals?
- Is it truly important?
- Could I use my time otherwise now?

Knowledge of the domain motivates you. If you're aware of the importance of the task and how easy it will be to do it, you'll be motivated to start. If one of the two criteria presented above is not checked, procrastination kicks in.

By asking yourself these questions you can establish, both consciously and unconsciously, the importance of the task. Point 4 will clarify the second criterion: how simple and clear the task is.

2) Assign tasks to others

Sometimes people are afraid to do this. They're either perfectionists and prefer to do their work as only they know how, or they don't trust others and are thus forced to work on it themselves.

Take responsibility for your task!

Assign tasks to others as often as you can. Most of the time, when you show others you trust them by assigning tasks to them, this trust will come back to you in other forms. If you can assign a task to someone else so that you can work on a more

important one, do it without hesitation. You cannot and don't have to work on the project by yourself. Learn to trust others and build relationships by assigning tasks!

3) Only worry about the next step of your plan

Don't write on your todo list all 10 things that have to be done to complete a project. To constantly look at the 10 tasks that must be done (and that you're certain you can't do today) is demoralizing. Simply write the first thing that you can do and write the rest of the tasks on another list that you can check when needed.

4) Divide big projects into small tasks that can be done in no more than an hour

Why? So there's no chance you're interrupted from doing what you planned. When you have to do a task that can be finished quickly, you fool your brain into thinking it did its job, even if the project is ample and takes months to finish.

Remember the example I gave you before: a) "speech" or b) "brainstorm ideas for the speech". a) is an abstract, intangible task, whereas in the case of b), the task is clearly doable: "brainstorm ideas for the speech".

5) Rephrase them into something actionable

A task named "Jane" doesn't help you in the least. It doesn't tell you what to do, on the contrary, it gets you out of your focused state and makes you wonder about what you meant. When you write down a task always use verbs: do, call, work, finish. For example: "call Jane to wish her a happy birthday"

The result?

Phrasing your tasks in this manner stimulates you to act. Your list will be filled with tasks that are clear and that you can do now, not tasks that are abstract or imprecise.

The benefits:

If you write vague things in your todo list you will not be motivated to work on them. Our brain cannot work on abstract things; when we work on things that we can't touch or move, we are under the impression that it's beyond our powers.

Some of us tend to focus on complex techniques to manage time. They learn a technique, it turns out it doesn't work for them and they try to learn another one. They continue in this way until they're buried in organizing systems, forgetting about what they have to do.

Others have a strategic way of thinking, they have a vision in their mind, but they don't know how to implement it. They are the ones who are lost in the big picture and can't get their feet back on the ground.

The solution is not complex. As in any field, you need a foundation. Do you want to achieve every goal you set for yourself? Follow these 5 steps:

1. have a clear reason in mind
2. assign tasks to others if possible
3. be ready for the first step
4. make sure it can be done in an hour

5. phrase it so that it sounds doable

Ready, set, GO!

You can watch the rest of the videos at: [http://
time.onlinepersonalitytests.org](http://time.onlinepersonalitytests.org)

First of all, thank you for taking the time to go through the entire material.

The emails and feedback that I've received from the community motivates me to offer materials tailored to your needs.

As a next step, you can take the MBTI test on <http://www.onlinepersonalitytests.org> . It's a highly regarded personality test that helps you discover yourself and understand those around you.