

Not taking action is a great recipe for failure

By John Madden

Winston Churchill said, “I am less impressed by what people say than I am by what they do.” Do you talk the talk but not walk the walk? That’s the story of your life if you are a non-action person.

Examples of a non-action person’s talk:

1. “One day I’ll write a book. I know there’s a book in me.” I was like that once; then I finally did it after listening to someone tell me what I’m telling you now.
2. “I coulda been a contender” Marlon Brando in “On the Waterfront”
3. “As soon as the kids are all gone, we’ll take a trip to China ... Florida ... Branson? Before that it was “As soon as the kids are in high school ... “
4. “I’ll get back to you.” When?
5. “That’s a great idea; I must try it” Did you?
6. “That’s just my luck. I never get any breaks.” Right, especially if you talk to yourself like that

What people say about you, or to you, when you’re a non-action person:

1. “Don’t waste your time on him, he’s all talk.”
2. “She’s unreliable.”
3. “He’s a mediocre performer.”
4. “Quit whining and tell me what you’re going to do about the problem.”
5. “When you perform and show me some results, we’ll talk about a raise – not before.”

Why do you not take action? Here are a few of the most common reasons:

1. You're not sure what your priorities are, or you can't decide which priority to work on right now.
2. You put it off. "I'll take care of that later."
3. You don't know how to do it or you don't have the authority to do it.
4. You're hesitant to take risks and you're afraid of failure.
5. You're disorganized and you forget.
6. You're lazy and an inventor of excuses.
7. You can't say 'No', so you take on other people's "happy work" to the detriment of your own important work – for which you need a good excuse to skip. Yes, I've been there.

How can you change your life by becoming an action person?

1. Don't make promises unless you have the ability, the authority, and the intention of keeping them. Say 'No' firmly to people who take advantage of your good nature - and give them a reason for your inability to help them right now.
2. Have your goals with you at all times. I have 3 X 5 cards with me constantly that list my goals. Whenever I'm lethargic or unmotivated, I pull out the cards and read them aloud to give me a boost and re-charge my batteries.
3. Know last thing at night what action you're going to take first thing in the morning, or as soon as you get to work. As you sleep, your "system" gears you up for success.
4. Have a sign that's visible to you at all times, which reads; "What is the most important thing I should be doing right now?" Write it on one of the 3 x 5's and carry it around with you.
5. Plan (in advance) to reward yourself as soon as you accomplish a task or project that you have difficulty working on. Now you have something to look forward to.
6. Affirm in advance your sense of accomplishment and pleasure at the completion of this tough task. See yourself enjoying the reward you planned.

7. Dwell on what people will say about you now: “She’s an action person”, “He’s made such a difference around here.” She’s a go-getter, I wish I had more like her.” Write this on 3 X 5 cards that you will carry around with you and view regularly. It’s called action programming.

John Madden is an international speaker, trainer, **and author of “Leap, Don’t Sleep”** (How to get different results by doing something different). He helps businesses and individuals become more profitable through customer service training, changing present results, networking for profit, coaching skills for managers, stress management through humor, time management, and interpersonal skills. You can reach him at 316-689-6932; email at john@LeapDontSleep.com; web site: www.LeapDontSleep.com