

Someday My Ship Will Come In



© 2009 Alex Fayle

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written, dated and signed permission from the author, except for personal use in completing the exercises.

DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:

The information presented herein represents the view of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update his opinion based on the new conditions. This workshop is for informational purposes only. While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this program, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional. If advice concerning psychological, legal, or other professional matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought.



Chapter 2: Too little optimism.

Someday Lesson:

Too little optimism: not expecting very much from the world and getting depressed when the world lives down to our expectations.

There are three sources of a lack of optimism: drama, fear and inertia.

Western culture tends to revere the negative. “If it bleeds, it leads” is the motto of the nightly news. Entertainment shows revel in the downfall of the famous. Even a maven of positivism like Oprah Winfrey had her start in tabloid television before turning to stories about personal growth and spirituality.

Tabloid television and the need for intense emotional injections into what most people consider their boring lives contribute to this lack of optimism. When the world throws itself into a fit of despair over the death of a three-year-old somewhere in the world because the media tells them too, it confirms that the world is bad place, not worth having any sort of positive expectations. When we see the moment that a mother learns her missing child is dead repeated four times an hour for a week, we learn to fear the world. When we see the super-rich buy four or five \$10 million homes while we work hard to afford the mortgage payments we wonder why we should bother working at all.

We have so many opportunities to block our dreams. The words we hear, the things we say, the thoughts we have often focus on the negative, on drama, on fear and on procrastination.

To change this, we need to be aware of our negative thoughts and actions, then to act anyway as if the negativity didn't exist. If you want the life you have always dreamed about you need to have courage. Courage isn't just about acting brave; it's about acting despite panic, fear and procrastination – moving forward not knowing if things will work out. A courageous person is someone who pursues their dreams even if they are nearly paralyzed with pessimism.

“The point of living, and of being an optimist, is to be foolish enough to believe the best is yet to come.”

– Peter Ustinov, 1921-2004, British Actor, Writer and Director



Finding excuses in the past.

Someday Lesson:

Understanding your past bring self-awareness, but it does not excuse inaction.

My former industry, Professional Organizing, comes out of the New Age/Oprah tradition of self-help, of understanding causes and reasons for actions, of not laying blame but discovering opportunities for growth.

As an Organizer I needed to empathize with my clients. I always understood their intentions and reasons for disorganization. In my blog I empathize all the time. I create reasons for things. I pop-psychologize and draw conclusions. Each post offers a piece of empathy and understanding about my life and the lives around me.

I'm all for self-awareness as something everyone should strive for, but we go too far, and we explain away rude behavior as "oh she acts that way because it was the only way she got acknowledgment from her workaholic parents."

Whatever.

When we over-understand, we excuse our inaction. We don't take responsibility for our choices.

And therefore we also block ourselves from realizing our dreams. By being too understanding, we don't ask much from ourselves. We cover up negative actions with excuses. We ignore our dreams and coast through life finding reasons for not achieving anything.

The self-awareness movement offers great opportunities for growth, but it also provides us with a wonderful procrastination tool. If you talk about growth then you appear to others like you are growing, but until you actually DO something about it, it's only talk and actual growth happens only accidentally.

I... because...

It's easy to say: "I'm going to stop making excuses for myself " but you can't expect it to happen all at once – years of habit don't change overnight. Change does start, however, when you become aware of things. I want you to start being aware of when you make excuses. Don't stop them. For now it's enough that you know when you make them.

So, for the next 24 hours, listen for the word "because." Every time you say it, ask yourself if you are making an excuse. If you are, make a note of it and write it down. Other trigger words include "just" or "only" (I just/only wanted...) and "meant" or "but" (I meant to... but...).

Continuing despite the chill of fear.

Someday Lesson:

Yes, fear demotivates; acknowledge it and keep going anyway.

When I moved to France to write I chose to live in a very small village to avoid distractions. I spent a lot of time alone to give myself time to write, but instead of writing I often procrastinated. I would go for a walk, hang out with my cousins, watch TV, talk online, and play computer games. I would even clean! All because I was afraid.

I was afraid of not finishing my novel, so I didn't want to start. After the initial 1% inspiration part I had hit the 99% perspiration part. In all my years of writing I had never finished a project like this. I wasn't sure that I could write a whole book. Experience told me that I wouldn't succeed.

I did my best to ignore the past, however, and took steps to change the usual outcome. Previously I would edit as I wrote, but that meant I never got past chapter one, so this time I kept the editor firmly locked inside my head. I allowed myself to write crap, just as long as I moved the story forward. Writing had become my job, so from Monday to Friday each day, I made myself produce at least 1500 words (that doesn't sound like a lot, but sometimes it took all day to get just that much done).

I also set myself a goal of two months to finish. The first draft took four months instead of two, and I spent every single day of those four months scared that I would run out of ideas or get bored, that my writing would deteriorate as I went, choosing cliché over real substance, that I'd yadda yadda yadda...

In the end I had to decide that there was no way to know for sure if I would finish. I had to simply acknowledge my fears and keep going despite them. And although it took me longer than I thought it would, I got it done.

And just because I did it once, I have no idea if I can do it again. I face the same fears with every writing project. Sometimes I forget that I have succeeded in the past and stop moving forward. But then I remember to push on anyway and I get it done despite the fear.



I fear...

Fear freezes all action. Most people fear of change at some level, and we let that fear stop ourselves from growing and keep us from realizing our dreams and living the life we want.

I want you to explore those fears. When you think of your dreams, your Someday Story, you likely experience fear. Usually the fear is related to success, failure or the risks involved in pursuing your dreams. Picture yourself achieving your dreams – having no more somedays in your life. As you do this, you'll likely feel the chill of fear. When you do, write it down.

And if you don't know what your dreams are? Examine the fear you experience when looking at that blank future.

STOP READING AND GO DO –

WORKSHEET #4: I FEAR ...



Pushing the limits.

Someday Lesson:

Inertia drags success to a halt faster than a baby covers himself in pureed carrots.

I've never been much of a try-hard type. School was easy for me. I never had to push myself to do well. After that, my early career bored me, so I never put in any real effort there. Then I decided to open my own business as a Professional Organizer. And discovered that I had to work. Hard. But wait a minute; did this hard work guarantee success? Not necessarily. Hmm... Then why bother?

It's very easy to say that most things don't really matter. Whether things get done or not, for the most part, isn't a matter of life or death. When life is really hectic, this is a good attitude to have or you might end up with an ulcer or a heart attack, but taking this attitude when life isn't hectic can mean that nothing gets done.

For example, I often feel lazy about running. I know it's good for me and it makes me feel fantastic, but getting dressed, stretching, running, cooling down, stretching again and taking a shower all just seems like too much work.

When I first started running, I had no problem getting going – it was new and exciting and I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it.

And then I got sick and had to take a month off of running. Getting back to it felt nearly impossible. I had other things to do – this book to edit, my services to market, my novel to write, blogs to read...

But then a friend called and asked me to go running with her. So I did and remembered how much I enjoyed it. And now when I feel like I can't be bothered, I think about the feeling I get after I finish a great run and I turn off the computer and get out of the house. Yes, it's hard work and some days I feel like I'll die before I get home, but I use it as a metaphor for the work I need to do to grow my business and find a publisher for my novel.

I have a passion for running (and coaching and writing). And that passion makes the hard work worthwhile.

I can't be bothered doing...

Inertia can stop you from realizing your dream life faster and more easily than fear. The latter is easy to recognize. We know when fear strikes because we can feel it in the pit of our stomachs. Inertia, however, has no such clues. We can only recognize it from what is NOT getting done.



Look at what you want to achieve in your life – what are the Somedays you're putting off? Write down all the things that you aren't doing that you *think you want to be*. Next, determine for each if it's a lack of passion (*i.e.*, you really don't care about it) or inertia that's blocking you. If it's a lack of passion, cross it off the list. If it's inertia, leave it; we'll work with it later.

STOP READING AND GO DO –

WORKSHEET #5: I CAN'T BE BOTHERED DOING...



Too little optimism: Summary

In this chapter we learned:

- Western culture loves to focus on the negative and on bringing people down.
- We are conditioned to complain and taught that talking about the good stuff is bragging.
- Our past does not offer an excuse to do nothing now.
- Personal development involves minimal wallowing and maximum action.
- Fear distracts us from what we really want.
- Use fear as a compass – the stronger you fear something, the more likely it's what you really want.
- Getting started often feels impossible, but once you're off and running stopping becomes unthinkable.
- Inertia can be overcome by passion.



