



**Feel the
Fear
and do it
anyway**

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Take Action: Feel the Fear and do it anyway!
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Introduction

You've been to the seminars, seen the videos and read the books. Nothing changes. It's not enough to *have* the information; you need to *act* on the information. You need to utilize what you've learned and applied it to your life, or nothing is ever going to get any better. Learning a new language will be a moot point if you never use it. You will lose your skills in dancing if you don't take the time to get out on the floor. You can learn how to be the person you want to be and forget it all if you don't put any of that knowledge to practical use. Sometimes the only trick is to get up and do it.

Change comes from effort. Change comes from taking action. In this book, we're going to talk about taking action, about being a positive force for change in your life, and about the barriers that keep us from taking that positive action. If you choose, the words you read here today will be the impetus for positive and lasting change in your life.

Frederick Douglass once said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." As humans, we naturally resist change. We don't want it; we don't like it.

What we want is to be different than we are, but that requires doing something different, and that means struggle. Change requires action.

Most of us plan and think and promise ourselves that we will *eventually* change. Today we want you to stop *thinking* about it. You already know what you want to be. Now it's time to *Take Action!*

The Power of Taking Action:

Often any decision, even the wrong decision, is better than no decision. - Ben Horowitz

There is a great deal of power in taking action. Taking action will begin the process of change. In fact, change is not even remotely possible without it. There are no exceptions to this rule. Nothing changes unless there is action. Without maintaining or repairing a house, your home falls apart. Without making exercise a priority, your muscles will atrophy. Taking action is the power that allows for change.

The power of action includes:

Eliminating fear. It's when we wait or hide or give up that fear becomes insurmountable. It's when we take action that the fear recedes. Fear prevents us from acting. Fear prevents us from changes. Therefore, it makes sense that fear would be the opposite of progress. It is through taking firm, positive action, that we regain control of our destinies, thereby reducing fear and eventually eliminating it from our lives.

Change comes from within; action creates the new you. Taking action solidifies the change in you. If you already have an idea of what and who you want to be, then taking action will make that change solid and turn it into a habit. Habits can be good or bad. Choosing the right habits can change your life.

Taking action means changing the way you interact. People will naturally see you the way you present yourself. If you present yourself as an indecisive individual, people will know that you're not the one to go to for decision-making. People who take action and proceed with their plans are respected and even looked to as a potential leader.

Taking action enables you to serve others. Once you're known for your decisiveness, people will naturally gravitate to you for your help and opinions.

There is an air of confidence to the action-taker, a form of self-pride that is irresistible. People want to have that self-confidence and pride and will turn to you as a natural leader because they know they can count on you to be the one who will get things done.

Taking action makes you more self-confident. How? You'll find that when you take action, you feel capable and empowered. Life isn't just steamrolling over you, you're strong and self-assured and taking control of your situation. That means that taking action will put you on the path to be the sort of person you've always wanted to be because you're the one holding the reins.

Taking action allows you to fail. That might seem counter-intuitive. We're all familiar with the phrase "failure is not an option." But what makes for a popular *me* doesn't necessarily make for a good guiding principle to live your life by. Failure is not only an option, but it is in fact, necessary. How will you know if the path you're on is the one for you? We learn what works and what doesn't work by trying. Trying is the very definition of taking action.

A child quickly learns not to touch a hot stove if they have burned their hand on it previously. But it was the *action* of touching the stove that led to the discovery. A slight burn on a fingertip may prevent a more serious scorching later in life.

Likewise, the child that takes the action of crawling or walking for the first time learns valuable lessons in mobility. But if you've ever watched a child learn to walk, you know that there's a lot of failed attempts before they get up and go. Falling teaches them what doesn't work – and what does.

Taking action brings people to your side. Taking action helps us form our social circle. By taking action we find others that wish to see us succeed. And yes, for every nay-sayer in our lives, there are those that *do* want to see us win, who *are* rooting for us. Some people will jump in and not only want to help but will join us on our quest. Believe it or not, some people want to follow an action-oriented person. Change comes from within, but lasting change in the world around you takes the assistance of those around us. Your circle should be made

up of cheerleaders and advisors who will help you towards the next level. Building a loyal circle will help you become the best version of yourself.

Taking action helps you feel better about where you are. So maybe you haven't achieved that end goal yet. Maybe you aren't where you want to be. Taking action will give you a better perspective on where you are at the moment. Being passive, letting opportunities pass you by, will fool you into thinking you're worse off than you are. Taking action will help you see the progress you've already made and the great things you've already achieved. Taking action by itself is a great thing to have achieved, and the rest will follow naturally.

Taking action encourages you to learn. Yes, allowing for mistakes is part of the learning process. But even more than that, to take action, you need to know what action to take. That means pursuing an education, then taking that knowledge to think about where you're going, and then taking the time to research how to get there. Taking action doesn't mean that you jump in blindly. It means that you figure out how to jump in, and the best way to go about doing it.

Taking action stops the complaints. People who take action don't have time to complain. That's important. Complaining is a way of setting yourself to fail. Our self-talk tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Complaining about not being at a certain level, about not being the person you could be/should be/want to be, is a way of conditioning yourself to fail. Taking action replaces that self-destructive cycle and replaces it with affirmative, positive self-talk. You cannot fight yourself and succeed. Take action to clear the way for your success.

What Holds Us Back from Taking Action?

There are many bright shining examples of people who have succeeded. Not everyone has a success story though. Success is the exception to the rule. Why? Henry David Thoreau said, “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.”

While that may be overstating things a little, the fact is that most of us do not take action. It is that lack of action that leads to that “quiet desperation.” When we feel stuck where we are, the days will eventually take on a sameness that will erode relentlessly of those dreams of doing more, or in being a better person.

The thought that change is something that will come in time, or that it’s not going to work anyway, are both reasons to not be proactive. It is easy to stay put, and not take action when filled with defeatist thoughts. If you’re sure you’re going to fail, you have already failed. If you take no action, you have now guaranteed that nothing will happen to change your life.

So, what is it that holds us back? What is it that prevents us from even trying, let alone succeeding? The truth is, there are many reasons for this particular failure. We’re conditioned to find reasons not to try. What those reasons are might be as different as we are, and as diverse as humanity itself.

That said, there are several basic underlying issues that commonly hold all of us back from taking action. These include:

Analysis Paralysis (Overthinking)

If fear is the opposite of progress, then action is the opposite of hesitation.

Hesitation comes from uncertainty or over-thinking things. It's good to have a plan, but as the famed military strategist, Field Marshall Erwin Rommel once said, "No plan survives contact with the enemy." Remember that your plan may fail, and not because of any flaw in it or you, but because you didn't know everything.

Taking action means that you need to be able to change your direction, and even change your entire plan on the fly.

Keep in mind that it doesn't matter if your plan is perfect. Even the best thought out plan will have eventually have to change. This often happens in the middle of implementation. Overthinking the plan is, in essence, pointless. We do this because we are trying to over-compensate in other ways, trying to anticipate the change in the plan before we begin. That's like trying to catch a fly by analyzing every direction it might take while buzzing about the room. By the time you have the alternative tactics laid out, the fly disappeared long ago.

Overthinking will stagnate you, It will become a way to discover all the ways something could go wrong, rather than finding a plan for change. Overthinking will tie you up in knots and make it impossible for you to proceed.



Worry

Worry is a very common roadblock for many of us. We worry about the plan going forward. We worry about failing and even worry about succeeding. Not surprisingly worry goes hand in hand with overthinking. When we overthink, we have all the opportunity in the world to imagine worst-case scenarios. When we overthink, all the ways things can fail leap to the forefront of our minds. We become incapacitated with worry. Worry prevents action. Worry destroys progress before it's ever attempted.

Sometimes the source of worry is over the perceived loss of what we already have. Remember the fable of the dog that had a bone in its mouth and crossed a bridge? He saw in the water what he perceived to be another dog holding a much larger bone and wanted it instead. When he went to reach for it, the bone he had fell into the water, breaking the reflection and he was left with nothing. Stories like these condition us to settle for what we have or, at the very least, not risk what we have, because at least *we have it already*.

Economist Richard Thaler coined this as *The Endowment Effect*, referring to our natural tendency to over-value something because we already have it. Why?

Losing something hurts worse for us than the euphoria we feel in gaining something. In other words, we may get a moment or even a full day of happiness when we get something new, but the loss of what we once had will linger longer. Possessions are uniquely ours. Often, we are bound to them in ways we don't even realize. Risking the loss of what we have now, *may feel* like risking a part of our identity.

It's important, however, to realize that to achieve your goals, you first have to want to be someone different than you are now. To become the person who attacks their goals, you need to be able to let go of the person that is no longer adequate, the person you want to change.

We also tend to worry about the effect of admitting that we've come so far down the wrong path. Have you gone to a movie you hated but didn't want to walk out because you've already paid for the ticket? Do you know of someone that stayed in a bad relationship because they'd been with that person for so long? They had so much time invested and didn't want to throw all that away for their peace of mind, despite the relationship not being happy or healthy.

We don't like to admit that we wasted time. Whether you watch the movie or not, it's still the same ticket price. Why spend an hour bored or angry or resentful? It's not an effective use of that last hour of the movie to sit there and stew. It saves no money to stay or leave, but it does waste an hour of your time and puts you in a foul mood.

Sometimes relationships are like that. Leaving a toxic relationship after a year or five doesn't change the past or the amount of effort put into the relationship.

Perhaps the last 20, 30, 40 years of your life didn't get you any closer to the life you wanted. But, continuing down the same path when that path hasn't provided what you were after, doesn't justify or make those years unspent.

That time is called *Sunk Costs*. The idea that the time is already "sunk" and no longer able to be recovered. But, we continue to invest, putting "good money after bad."

We worry about being wrong. What if the path we want isn't right? What if the plan isn't right? What if *we're* not right? Here's the quick answer to that: We're not sure of anything. It's that simple. We're not always right, but becoming right is what happens *as you take action*. It's like trying to balance on a bicycle without moving.

Worry over whether or not you're right or wrong is worry over nothing at all because you won't know until you're in motion. TAKE ACTION, then adjust as necessary.

Doubt

Closely related to worry, doubt is the false start. Whereas worry prevents you from acting, doubt will stop you as you begin. You might allow yourself a tentative “toe dip” into the pool and then stop to consider all the things that might be wrong if you continue. Or you might feel that you’re not good enough to get the job done.

We take action. We announce that we’re on this incredible journey and what happens? Friends tell us horror stories of failures and false starts, of people who have followed their dreams and failed.

The internet is replete with tales of woe about people who have fallen on their faces and died, gone comatose, fallen into a slumber, or any number of maudlin foolish tales designed to make us give up and retreat to the safety of our comfortable lives.

When confronted with these stories, we must note that it is always a “friend of a friend of a friend,” or “some guy I heard about” that experienced this trial. Rarely will anyone tell you about their failures? Largely because people who spread these tales of sorrow would *never be the ones to take chances*. These are horror stories designed to keep people in the status-quo.

Most of the time these stories aren’t even true. Or they don’t pertain to your situation. Often the cause and effect of the “moral” are questionable at best. Look into the legend, see if there is anything verifiable. Above all, remember this basic truth: friends aid each other. Friends will help you. Some help you succeed, some not so trustworthy ‘friends’ will help you fester. Whatever the case, the legends of others do not pertain to you. What their choices and decisions created was the path they chose, and you cannot take someone else’s path.

You want to change because the status quo isn't working. As Anais Nin said, "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

Are there risks? Always! But what if you called them "opportunities?" What if every chance you took was an opportunity to excel? What if you had the chance to take a risk and to try something new? How does realizing these things change your world?

Fear

Take a worry, add a few doubts, stir and wait. That's fear. Fear prevents us from taking risks. Fear prevents us from taking chances, or breaking free from our shell. Fear keeps us locked away inside ourselves where it's safe and stagnant. Fear is what prevents us from acting.

The only thing that can quell fear is action. But fear keeps us firmly locked in place. Fear makes us postpone and procrastinate, waiting for a sign to act as though we're looking for a burning bush or a streak of light and a heavenly choir.

While we're looking for that sign to begin, the truth is, we're scared.

Fear is what holds us back, keeps us down, keeps us from becoming what we can be and what we want to be. Fear is the thing that can take us over, control us, and drive us to seek comfort in the tried-and-true.

Fear is a killer. When we're busy running from rock to rock trying to stay ahead of predators with sharp claws and large teeth, we don't have time to find out if the person we meet is friend or foe. That worked in those primal days when fear kept us alive. It was, and often still is, a valuable feeling – when used in the right context.

Fear is a warning, a siren that says "here is a risk." But it is not a way to live. Fear keeps us from jumping into the lion's cage at the zoo. Fear keeps us from walking down the middle of the freeway. But fear also keeps us from saying "hello" to a new friend. Fear keeps us from taking the first step into a new life, and fear keeps us from taking the risk that maybe there is something better out there for us. Or from admitting that change is good, and that to become the person we want to be, we need to take that step.

Don't ignore your fear. Use it. Channel it. Actors who walk on stage learn to use their fear to bring up energy which they then use to speak loudly and to become

larger than life. People in extreme sports use fear to focus their attention until everything takes on a sharp visual property.

Use fear to CREATE action. Fear brings adrenaline; it sharpens the senses. Fear should be harnessed when taking action. Welcome the fear, and then start what you need to do anyway. If you can push past the initial resistance, it will bend to your will, and you will control the fear.

Thoughts of Others

The early man survived because he was part of a tribe. Whereas one man couldn't hunt and kill a large animal, a group could. Having a tribe was nothing less than survival. We are still conditioned that way. In school, we split into groups, the popular kids, the nerds, the sports clubs and so on. In college, we use study groups to better our chances of getting good grades. In work, we're often part of a team and "teamwork" becomes a part of our evaluation.

Losing a tribe at one time meant certain death. Being an outcast, or an exile was a death sentence. In the ancient world, being exiled was a punishment reserved only for the worst offenders.

Taking action means risking your place in the tribe. The dramatist Lillian Hellman said, "People change and forget to tell each other." People do change. We can't help it. Even when we're staying still, we're learning new things, new reactions, and new ways of seeing the world. Sometimes this change is directed, sometimes we gain it by taking action. Some people do not like change, as it's frightening. If you change, you run the risk of being ostracized. If the group you are in now has accepted you as you are, will they continue to accept you if you take action and improve yourself? It might be that they won't.

That's another reason why friends will often discourage us by trotting out tales of woe encouraging us not to change and not to take action. Look around at the tribe you're a part of, the group that goes to the bar Friday nights, the group who works that extra job or hangs around the office drinking coffee. Are there many people in that group that have attempted to become what they want to be? Have any of them taken that risk? If the answer is no, then it's possible that you may not have found your tribe.

Keep in mind; some relationships are toxic. They tear you down or hold you back. They are not healthy. On the other hand, they *are* safe, they *are* known, and they

are comfortable. But they are *not* healthy. Healthy friendships encourage you to grow. They challenge and support you.

Losing a part of the group you're in right now is not an end. There are others who are taking chances, who are actively changing their lives. They will understand and accept you. After all, you have the greatest thing in common - the big journey that comes from taking action.

In the movie *My Fair Lady*, Eliza learns to talk and walk and act as if she was a lady of means. Once the lessons are over, she finds that the people she'd called "friends" no longer recognize her and treat her with a difference reserved for an upper-class woman. She did, in effect, lose her tribe. On the other hand, you might argue that what she gained far outweighed her loss.

When the plan fails, and they often do, the people in your circle may laugh. Sometimes it's meant kindly. Sometimes it isn't. Keep the ones you can laugh *with*, and try to realize that the ones who laugh *at* you were never your friends to begin with.

Take Action!

So, let's take away the barriers and focus on how we can become action takers!

Where do we go from here? How do we start taking action that propels us towards our desired future? How do we make the changes that will turn us into the person we want to be? Sitting on the sidelines, waiting and overthinking isn't going to work. Neither will the hope that some miracle will happen out of the blue.

So get up, get ready and do what exactly?

Make a decision

Decide that you will take action and make a plan for what action you want to take. Firm up your strategy. Decide to decide. Tell yourself that you're not going to be deterred by horror stories and cautionary tales. Decide that you're going to do this, you're going to make the change, do the work, and take action.

It's not something you decide to do tomorrow or next week. Do it now. You must decide that you want this enough to work for it and then make your first move. Want it as strongly as breathing. Make the decision that you want the future you've dreamed of and that you are going to make it happen.

Find out where you are

Just because you want to change doesn't mean that you are currently in a bad place. It's just not your final destination. To get anywhere, you have to know your starting point.

Don't demean what you've already accomplished. Take a fair and impartial look as best you can about where you are, how you're doing and what you have at your command. You might be surprised to find out that you're closer than you realized.

Longing for a goal, keeping your “eyes on the prize” as the saying goes, is often an action unto itself. Unfortunately, it’s a passive action, and the results are slower and less dependable than the kind of action we’re talking about here. On the other hand, you might find out that contemplating the result means that you’ve been on the path for a while now.

Sometimes we’ve already accomplished so much over a long period that we didn’t even realize how far we have come. Take an inventory and be honest. If there is something you’re proud of, be proud. It’s not the time to assume false modesty. You know where your strengths lie and where there are gaps. Be honest with yourself. Ask the people that know you best for their opinions.

Determine What You Want

Determine your goal in clear and measurable steps. If your goal is something nebulous such as “I want to be a better person,” then how will you know when you have reached that goal?

If you show an act of kindness to someone you have never shown kindness to before, you’re a better person. So you could say that you reached your goal by tossing a coin into a musician’s case as he plays on a street corner. While that is a kindness, and a good thing to do, ... it’s not the change you seek.

Determine how you will know you’ve reached your goal. Find a way to measure it, to draw a line and say, “Once I reach this goal, I will have succeeded.”

Avoid comparison goals, like “better,” “prettier,” and “happier.” Use measurable terms. Instead of saying you want to be “thinner,” set a goal, such as losing 10 pounds or 15 pounds. If you want to be “better” financially, have a set goal. How much net worth do you want to achieve? If you want to be happier, how does that look? What would make you happier? Would owning your own home make you happy? That’s a measurable goal. How about getting a pay raise? Again,

measurable. Getting engaged? Dating? Being able to support college for your kids? All are measurable goals.

Make a plan

You probably will have to change your plan (not your goal) as you progress. You're going to encounter problems you hadn't expected and couldn't foresee. That does not mean that plans are invalid. Fixing and refining is expected on your journey.

Going in without any plan at all is chaos and writing it down is a must. You will be directionless and adrift without it. Changes you make are less likely to last, and the first barrier you come to could stall you entirely without a solid written plan.

Make a plan. You need something as a base, a foundation. Having a written plan will give you something solid to build your foundation from, to refer to, and to go back to while staying on course. Stick to the plan even if it needs changing.

Do research. Learn from people who have made a similar journey. Take the horror stories from your friends and learn from them too. Don't let them deter you but instead find out what the fatal flaw was and work that into the plan.

Learn what you have to learn. Becoming the best you involves things you haven't even thought of yet. Try to figure out what you don't already know. If your measurable goal is to buy a house, find out what it takes to get your credit score higher, and how much of a down payment you will need. What sort of institution would be best for your loan? You need facts to create the plan, and this research is part of taking action.

Get organized

Too often, things fall by the wayside because we're unorganized. For example, to boost our credit scores, bills need to be paid promptly. If you cannot make timely payments, it makes it harder to accomplish your goal. Finding a bill under a pile of

papers three feet high a day before it hits collections is not going to further your goal of home ownership. Accountability is a key to improvement.

Clear the decks and get a clean workspace. Clutter prevents growth. It's most likely a collection of links to your old life, the one you want to move on from, so clean it away.

Don't get discouraged. Take things one step at a time and go slow. Do a little bit today and then do a little bit more tomorrow. You don't have to sweep your entire life into a garbage bag. You're not going to throw out your furniture and all your possessions. Just know where important things are and make it easy to get to them.

Take advantage of the opportunities

You might never have heard of a man named Ray Kroc, but he invested some money in a little California hamburger stand called McDonald's and created an international franchise. One of his more famous quotes is, "The two most important requirements for major success are: first, being in the right place at the right time, and second, doing something about it."

Too often opportunities pass us by because we're not prepared to take advantage of those opportunities. Either we don't recognize the opportunity when it presents itself, or we're not able to take action due to fear, doubt or disorganization.

Being able to jump on the openings you find and having the tools in place and available to use, can make all the difference between success and failure.

Be ready when you see a chance. Then take action. Jump in. It will be scary. It will be a risk. But when opportunities come around, you need to be able to do something about them.

Let yourself fail

“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.”

- Leonardo Da Vinci.

Most high-finance people will tell you that they lose money, lots of money. They take risks, and some pay off, and some do not. The key is that they continue to take risks. The end result is that they earn more than they lose.

Failure is an option, but it's not a stopping point. Failing will not keep you from succeeding *eventually* or even next time. If you fail, you learn from it, you get up, and you jump on the next opportunity as it comes along.

Without risk, there can be no growth. Without risk, nothing changes. Taking a risk doesn't mean you'll never fail. Of course, you will, that's why it's called a risk. It's also why everyone doesn't go after opportunities that are right in front of them. It's hard, it's scary, and you may end up losing something you already have. But the next risk might be the one that pays off bigger and better than you could ever imagine. Don't let one failure deter you.

Adapt

If you fail, find out why and how. What did you not know that you should have known? What was it that you needed to know to avoid failure? How can you use that to your advantage next time?

Take the next step. Take the next opportunity. Be prepared to fail. But be prepared to succeed too.

Welcome your success!

When you've reached your goal, be ready to identify it. That is where your measurable goals come in. If your goal was to own your own home and you've reached the point where you can get that three-bedroom ranch, be ready to accept that you have met that goal.

If, on the cusp of buying that three-bedroom house, you suddenly decide that you'd rather have the mansion on the mountainside, then make that your next goal. Don't fall into the trap of never letting yourself succeed. It's like dangling a carrot in front of a mule, if you don't let them get it once in a while, they'll stop trying.

Learn to congratulate yourself for your accomplishments. Look at how far you've come, at the risks you've taken, and the person you are now.

Let yourself enjoy the moment of breaking the tape as you cross the finish line. Successes can be a teaching opportunity too. Just like failures, we can take a look at what succeeded and make use of that in the future. Use your successes to start over again or to go to the next level. If you got that three-bedroom home, then maybe the mansion is next. There is nothing wrong with setting a new goal and a new plan.

Conclusion

Taking action is as intuitive as saying “jump” and as complex as changing plans to suit the opportunity. There’s no wrong way to take action—just get started with small steps and adjust along the way as necessary.

Be prepared to not only seize the opportunities but to recognize them. Ray Kroc was a businessman who saw a hamburger stand and was able to use his skills to create a dream. He recognized the opportunity, and he ran with it. And so McDonald’s was born.

Would he have had the same flash if he’d seen Steve Wozniak at a computer club? Maybe. Maybe not. But Steve Jobs did see it, and he partnered with Wozniak to create Apple. It’s in the people you meet, the places you go. Think of everything as an opportunity. If you want to be a better person, the world is full of people who need a hand.

Don’t wait for opportunities to come to you. Go and find opportunities to become great. Explore opportunities that will allow you to excel.

Think of yourself as someone that takes these opportunities. Be proud of how far you’ve already come.

One more thing. Don’t stop. Even if you reach your goal, go out and find another one. Never stop growing, never stagnate, never fall into that hole again.

When you meet your measurable goal, ask yourself what your next one is.

Don’t let fear keep you from starting, and don’t let complacency allow you to quit. Growth is life, and your quality of life will improve by leaps and bounds if you keep trying and keep reaching for that goal.

Trust yourself. You've done ok so far. You're still here! Despite all your struggles, obstacles and doubters, it's time to just put your head down and **take action!**

About the writer



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