

The Reason Shifting Gears Can Be Hard

Deciding on a plan is virtually painless. Executing the plan is where most people get tripped up. Life happens, and somehow, year after year, we fall short of accomplishing our highest aspirations.

Laziness is not keeping you from accomplishing your goals. Fear is—specifically, your fear of discomfort and avoidance of pain.

Read that again. (.)

Despite the temptation to be idle, you are determined to reach your goals. You may fear results from apprehension over discomfort and a desire to avoid pain.

The human brain is wired for survival. We want our lives to remain the same because we're familiar with the status quo. Even if it's accompanied by unhealthy relationships, frustration, perhaps poor health. You know what I mean.

We are geared to pursue short-term pleasure and avoid pain of any kind. We prefer to clean the kitchen than sit down and write the next chapter of our book. While cleaning the kitchen may seem small *in the moment*, many afternoons of cleaning the kitchen and not writing has a much greater cost.

How do you deal with the fear and discomfort that impedes accomplishing your goals this year?

Nobody likes pain. And finishing your book ranks about a one out of 10 on the pain scale. Humankind has been dealing with pain for thousands of years. It's funny, because we probably live in the least painful era in human history, and yet our pain threshold is insufferably low.

Here's How to Get Into Gear For The Year

Here are three steps you can take to deal with the obstacles to your goals this year:

Step #1. Identify your fears!

Before you stand up and yell “NO DUH!” listen up. I’m not saying you need to identify that you **have** fear. I’m saying you need to identify the specific fears that stand between you and greatness.

Are you not writing because you’re afraid you’re not a good enough writer?

Are you worried about how launching into your manuscript will affect your other relationships?

Are you afraid of what people think of your story or the views you share in your book?

Are you afraid of getting negative reviews on Amazon?

For every fear, come up with a “why.” Name the discomfort you will most likely experience *before* you experience it. That way, you’ll recognize it when it inevitably surfaces as you try to reach your goals.

Don’t just think about it, write it down.

You aspire to be aware of what you’re avoiding so you can engage with it. If an hour of writing per day means one hour less of playing with your kids; maybe you can take them on a longer Saturday outing to make up for it.

If you’re afraid of getting negative reviews, telling yourself to expect them will soften the blow—because you *will* get negative reviews. It’s a rite of passage for every author.

When you address fear, it lessens its hold on you. Remove the claws of fear one claw at a time. Don’t try to do this all at once. After all, to eat an elephant, you would do this one bite at a time.

Now you have a game plan for when those excuses come up and you’re tempted to backslide on your goal.

Step #2. Acknowledge the struggle!

Implementing any change in life is hard.

Eons ago, when you studied physics in high school, your physics teacher introduced you to Isaac Newton, the father of physics—if you were paying attention.

You learned that an object in motion stays in motion, while an object at rest stays at rest. Getting moving when you don't have any momentum is harder than keeping that momentum going. You are not pushing a freight train up hill with a feather, although it may seem that way.

Acknowledge that getting moving toward your goal is a struggle. You can talk to yourself. Talk about it to anyone who'll listen. Say to yourself, "Hitting this goal is so hard." Then say, "I do the hard stuff, because I am called by God and I can, through His grace."

Then make friends with the struggle.

Don't start out with the mindset that it's all over if you fall off the wagon. Instead, acknowledge that you're going to take a fall. After all, we're not perfect, and life has a way of surprising us. You'll have days when you don't follow your plan to achieve your goal, and that's okay.

Just make sure you get back on the wagon.

Step #3. Count the opportunity cost.

Every decision eliminates possibilities and moves you closer toward a certain set of outcomes. We're all familiar with opportunity cost, but we don't consider it on a day-to-day because it's taxing. If we did, we might make different decisions. Rethink the costs of procrastination, today, not tomorrow.

The next time you want to rewatch your favorite TV show instead of making an outline for your book, consciously weigh the choices and the costs. Come up with a script to say to yourself when you want to renege on your commitments.

This could be something like, “In the short term, watching this TV show will bring me joy, but in the long term, finishing my book will bring me greater joy.”

Sometimes the trade-off is worth it. Maybe someone wants to take you on an all-expenses paid vacation, and you will not write that week. That’s okay.

This is all about awakening yourself to your options and their potential outcomes. You know you are making a conscious choice to do something rather than leaving it up to chance or a gut feeling.

Remember that we are prone to taking the simple path to pleasure. Doing the hard stuff is genuine work.

The only way you’re going to find those diamonds is by digging in the ground. No one enjoys digging. But absolutely no one ever found diamonds by watching “You People” on Netflix.

Yes, that’s the #1 show on Netflix right now.

Your Pain Needs a Partner.

You will get stronger by doing the hard things, one step at a time. As you do, take comfort because you’re not avoiding pain or discomfort. You’re not succumbing to fear. Instead, you’re facing challenges head on.

If you want a partner in the pain and discomfort, you can schedule coffee time, with an encourager, someone who “gets it.”. Even after working on 70+ books, I still struggle with these issues. If you’re new to this process, I know how daunting it can be, and I want you to know you’re not alone.

If you feel as if God is instructing you to do something that doesn’t make sense, remember that God moves when we take risks and trust Him.

Tim Tebow

You can do this. This year can be your year. It’s not too late. Make a conscious choice to start the change.

Find Your Rhythm: How to Work at Your Best

Have you ever had one of those days when you just couldn't "get with it"? Do you ever feel like no matter how hard you try to focus on literally anything on your to do list? You feel you're falling short or worse, delivering crap work?

If so, then you may be missing one key ingredient to staying organized, being productive, and being focused when you need it most. The ingredient is your internal rhythm.

Surely you have days when you can jam out a ton of work (the critical work we talked about yesterday). Maybe you even have certain times of the day where work seems to flow off your fingers. Where all the appointments for your family, preparing dinner, getting your workout done... it all just happens without struggle. You are a superwoman!

Well, I know I have experienced both this feeling of effortlessness and the struggle to get things done. Some days I'm super focused, others not so much. Some days I literally get two days' worth of work and living done and the next I just can't seem to function. I'm exaggerating a little, of course, but this was a frustrating situation for me. Then I realized that I just hadn't been honoring and respecting my personal rhythms.

How I Lost Mine

I moved into a new condo with my wife in a new area last fall. It challenged me with new roads to new stores and other destinations. I felt like I was continually walking backwards.

The grocery store was different. The surrounding services were unique. A drive to a coffee shop was different.

It threw off EVERYTHING!

In order to get it under control, finally I had to do a lot of work. Piece by piece by piece, I created a new rhythm. I worked at specific times and places. I got used to the stores & services nearby. Even though living in a new place was an adventure, my daily rhythm was off, and I needed to walk to a different beat of the drum, so to speak.

What Are Rhythms and Why Are They Important?

Your personal rhythms are the up and down patterns of how you act/behave/function in every area of your life.

You might be a morning person, but not want to talk to anyone until 10am. Working and creating until late in the night might suit you if you're a night person. To improve your workout results, try exercising in the morning or evening. Better sleep might be achieved by going to bed early. You express yourself better after you have lunch. You need a nap in the middle of the day.

Do you like bombing through two days of work in one day and then being completely off the next?

Whatever the case is... your rhythm is kind of like your natural tendency to do and relate to the world around you.

We all have them.

But we don't always pay attention to them.

After years and years of pushing myself to work at prescribed times, I've learned to stand back, prep for my day and then move forward based on how I'm feeling. Sure, I always need to get certain things done—regardless of my rhythm. But—I take the time to acknowledge what's going on—and do my best to plan accordingly.

When I'm aware of my personal rhythm:

- I schedule my time better.
- I feel more rested.
- I stick to my goals.
- I laugh more.
- I ask for help when I need it.
- I rarely feel overwhelmed.
- I feel at peace.
- Everything feels right!

When I ignore my personal rhythm:

- I am cranky.
- I feel anxious.
- I snap at everyone around me.
- I don't pay attention to the details.
- I don't admit when my strengths aren't being used.
- I feel overwhelmed.
- I feel turmoil.
- Everything feels wrong!

Here are a few simple steps you can take today to discover your personal rhythms:

Step 1: Starting today, as you move through your day, write or notice when you feel off. You might procrastinate some activity or project. And then get annoyed every time you start again or complain to your friends/family about it. Frankly, this is your challenge, not your friends or family.

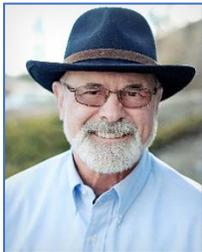
Step 2: List 3 activities that brought up those "off" feelings. You can experiment with doing the recurring activities at different times/places during your day or week.

Step 3: At the end of a week trying to reconfigure these recurring activities, evaluate how they make you feel now. If it's not working yet, you may need to look a little deeper at them, test another time/place ... or you might have someone else handle it.

Request help from a friend you communicate with daily. Ask them to tell you when/if you seem to drag your feet on something, so you can quickly identify what might need a minor change!

Take a moment now to share **what your off activities** or projects or regular tasks you might need to reconfigure.

About the presenter:



Robert N. Ruesch is a multi-published author and former columnist for a seasonal newspaper in Texas. He is a certified chaplain, and instructor at writers' conferences. He lives with his wife and high school sweetheart in Littleton, Colorado. They have five children and 11 grandchildren plus 11 great-grandchildren. You can reach Robert at robertnruesch@gmail.com or at www.robertnruesch.com