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# Start Now! ...Just Do It

By Jack Canfield



There is no perfect time to start. If you are into astrology and you want to contact your astrologer about an auspicious date to get married, open your store, launch a new product line, or begin a concert tour, okay, that's fine. I can understand that. But for everything else, the best strategy is

just to jump in and get started. Don't keep putting things off waiting for twelve doves to fly over your house in the sign of a cross before you begin. Just start.

You want to be a public speaker? Fine. Schedule a free talk for a local service club, school, or church group. Just having a date will put the pressure on you to start researching and writing your speech. If that's too big of a stretch, then join Toastmasters or take a speech class.

You want to be in the restaurant business? Go get a job in a restaurant and start learning the business. You want to be a chef, great!

Enroll in a cooking school. Take action and get started—today! You do not have to know everything to get going. Just get into the game. You will learn by doing.

Don't get me wrong here. I am a big proponent of education, training and skill building. If you need more training, then go and get it. Sign up for that class or that seminar now. You may need a coach or a mentor to get where you want to go. If so, then go get one. If you're afraid, so what? Feel the fear and do it anyway. The key is to just get started. Quit waiting until you are *perfectly* ready. You never will be.

When Mark Victor Hansen and I first released *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, I thought it would be a good idea to sell the book in bulk quantity to some of the larger network marketing companies, thinking they could give them or resell them to their sales force to motivate them to believe in their dreams, take more risks, and therefore achieve greater success in selling. I was able to get a list of all the companies that belonged to the Direct Marketing Association, and I started cold-calling the sales directors of the larger companies. Sometimes I couldn't get the sales director to take my call. Other times I was told, "We're not interested."

Several times I was actually hung up on! But eventually, after getting better at getting through to the right decision-maker and properly discussing the book's potential benefits, I made several significant sales. A few of the companies liked the book so much they later hired me to speak at their national conventions.

Was I a little scared making cold calls? Yes. Did I know what I was doing when I started? No. I had never tried to sell mass quantities of books before. I had to learn as I went. But the most important point is that I just got started. I got into communication with the people I wanted to serve, found out what their dreams, aspirations and goals were, and explored how our book might help them to achieve their objectives. Everything unfolded because I was willing to take a risk and jump into the ring.

You, too, have to begin—from wherever you are—to start taking the actions that will get you to where you want to be.

*Jack Canfield is widely regarded as America's leading "success coach".*  
*jcanfield@chickensoupforthesoul.com*  
*Phone: 805-563-2935*

## Making Your List and Checking it Twice

By Denise Lamothe



As speakers, most of us realize the importance of making and checking lists. We may make packing lists, lists of presentation items we need to take along, and lists of things to mention during our presentation. Some more organized speakers even have lists of lists!

But many of us neglect to consult the most vital list of all: our self-care list. We are complex beings and must attend to ourselves physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and environmentally.

Speaking is stressful. We are always on the go and trying to meet the needs of meeting planners, sponsors and audiences while balancing the often-difficult demands of our personal lives. We find ourselves away from our homes and loved ones, eating airport snacks, sleeping in unfamiliar surroundings, lacking opportunities to exercise and dealing with delays, plan changes and setbacks.

Before heading out the door we need to pack a self-care checklist to review on the plane or in the hotel. Attending to needs on all levels will insure consistent health and balance. We will look better, feel better and radiate higher energy on and off the platform. The following is my personal checklist:

**Physically:** Have I been eating well, avoiding caffeine, alcohol, saturated fats, sugar and

simple carbohydrates as often as possible and eating good amounts of protein every few hours? Have I packed healthy snacks to take along, like cheese, nuts and fruit? Do I have my I-pod and earphones for music and my neck pillow for my comfort? Am I well hydrated, drinking at least 64 ounces of pure water each day? Have I been keeping regular bedtime hours, getting a sufficient amount of quality sleep? Am I keeping moderate exercise a priority in my life?

**Emotionally:** Have I been attending to my feelings and expressing myself appropriately; not holding in feelings or stuffing them down with unhealthy foods? Have I really been taking time to nurture myself? When was the last time I truly relaxed? I bring a journal along with me. This provides a place to vent or explore my feelings. Writing down how I feel can be very helpful. Clearing myself emotionally means I can better attend to the tasks at hand. I am less distracted or preoccupied.

**Socially:** Have I been spending time with positive people that I enjoy being with? Am I having fun? Am I paying enough attention to my relationships? Do I stay well connected so I don't find myself isolated and lonely? Do I apportion my time with others with the alone time I need to stay balanced? Do I make my mastermind group a priority so I'm not functioning in professional isolation? (If you don't already have a mastermind group, I would strongly suggest you start one and meet regu-

larly.)

**Spiritually:** Have I been taking quiet time for myself? Do I spend time every day praying, meditating or just sitting and quietly breathing? Do I remind myself often to stay in the present rather than worry about the future or hang on to difficulties from the past?

**Environmentally:** Have I brought what I need to set up a comfortable environment in my hotel room (perhaps a favorite photo, bath oil, small scented candle or incense)? I bring along my down pillow that I put into a compression sack. This fits easily into my suitcase and ensures that I will get a good night's sleep.

Whether on or off the road, it is essential to take gentle care of ourselves. The busier we are, the more we need to do this. Only by paying attention to our own needs, can we best serve the needs of others. I wish you happy travels and radiant health!

*Dr. Denise Lamothe of Exeter, NH works with organizations that encourage wellness so they have happier, healthier and more productive people. She is an expert on emotional eating and author of The Taming of the Chew: A Holistic Guide to Stopping Compulsive Eating reviewed in this issue of Sharing Ideas. Dr. Denise a clinical psychologist and Doctor of Holistic Health. Ph: 603-679-2432*  
*www.DeniseLamothe.com*  
*Denise@DeniseLamothe.com*