How to Make Meaningful Progress, Even When You Feel Totally Stuck

Less Stress

I guarantee you, my friend, you are not the only person that has ever felt stuck.

At one point in my life, I felt very stuck.

I had just graduated university.

All my peers were going off into the corporate world. I, on the other hand, was not.

That was not the path that I wanted to go down. Although there's nothing wrong with it, the corporate world just didn't feel right for me.

I felt like a square peg in a round hole and I didn't know what to do. I felt stuck.

What I did, and this is the advice I'm going to share with you, is very straightforward and simple.

Focus on your next step.

You've got to get moving.

Most of us, when we feel stuck, we don't do anything.

We start thinking about the absolute perfect step that we can take but, the reality is, there is no perfect step.

What ends up happening is you waste a bunch of time thinking about it... and you don't do anything!

Instead of planning your perfect next step, you just have to take a step.

Once you take a step, momentum will bring all kinds of opportunities your way.

So there I was, I'd just graduated university and I knew I didn't want to go down the corporate path. What was I going to do?

I started speaking to other students because that was something that I DID know how to do, and I realized I was really passionate about the subject of creativity.

Creativity took me from failing out of university to graduating top of my class. I was passionate about it and I wanted to share it with other students, so I started my entrepreneurial career as a speaker, speaking to students about creativity.



It's okay if you don't know exactly where you're heading. But you have to keep pushing forward in a direction. And when you do, the clarity will come your way.
What step will you take today to bring you closer to your dream?

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Speaking led to me learning about online marketing, which led me to creating a piece of software called WishList Member, a platform for membership sites.

WishList led me to developing a whole bunch of expertise around recurring revenue and membership sites, which led me to where I am now – serving tens of thousands of people, helping them transform their knowledge and influence into recurring revenue.

If you had told me back then that I would do all these things, I would have laughed. I would have said, "What are you talking about? I know nothing about that. There's no way I'd be able to do that. There's no way I'd be able to build software."

I couldn't have connected the dots to plan that "perfect" next step. Instead, I took a small step that put me in motion.

So how do we stop ourselves from falling in the "perfect" next step trap?

Start with the things that interest you most.

My wife absolutely loves to travel. She's been trying to think of different business ideas involving travel.

I told her, "Look, start with what you're passionate about. Pretend like you're an investigator. Go to the different places that you love and start exploring. When you learn about people doing interesting things, go and check them out. Find out what they're doing. And then start volunteering. Start helping. Start serving."

Helping others is one of the best ways to get unstuck.

One of the best things that you and I can do when we're stuck is to go out and help others, specifically in an area that we're passionate about.

Chances are, as soon as you start doing that, you are going to start finding opportunities.

I'll never forget a quote I heard from the great Mike Litman back in the day. *"You don't have to get it right. You just have to get it going."*

When you're stuck, you don't have to get it right, you just have to get it going.

Take your first step. As soon as you do, it's going to lead to your next step and the step after that.

Before you know it, momentum will be on your side and all kinds of opportunities will come your way.

Posted in Less StressTagged progress

- *Pamela Montgomery*

  Hi Stu,
  Your advice is right on point, just start!

  Sometimes I get stuck analyzing a situation so long that talk myself out of a very good idea. Now I have a new approach. First, I quickly decide on a project. Second, I break it down into easy tasks. Third, I take action and use the momentum to propel me to completion.

  Thanks for sharing your advice.

  Pamela Montgomery

  - *Sahaj Dumm*

    Imagine if we looked up at the mountain of food we might eat in a lifetime, that would be overwhelming! Just start eating, one bite at a time. ☺ Thank you Stu for your simple yet sound advice, once again.

- *Bryan S Arnold*

  Love the advice and I totally agree with this concept. There will never be any so-called perfect step.

  - *Stu McLaren*

    Exactly. Unfortunately this myth of perfection holds so many people back from taking just some action.

- *Chris Sankey*

  "ACTIONS – the rest is just noise" – the Founding Principle of my business is in perfect alignment with your insights. When I see others feeling stuck, it is very real (overwhelmed into an inability to make a decision) and people need more ACTIONABLE steps, not inspirational anecdotes they often gravitate toward for 'answers'. That is exactly why I love your post. To start creating more Fulfillment in your days, determine what are your interests, passions and expertise. Where those paths meet is your place to start. Thank you Stu and I will be sharing with my members! Cheers!
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- *Fj VanLaan*

  "You don't have to see the whole staircase ... just the first step."

- *Jenn Aubert*

  Beautiful and so true. We get stuck thinking and focusing on all the steps and the desired outcome which is often a bit away. The very next step, followed by the next... that will get us where we want to be. Thanks Stu!

- *Sahaj Dumm*

  Imagine if we looked at the mountain of food we might eat in our lifetime! That one rings true, as does your article. Thanks Stu, yet again for simple but powerful wisdom. ☺

  - *Stu McLaren*

    I've never thought about it like that but the visual of all that food makes it very real 😳

- *Steve Smith*

  As a wrestling coach, I used to tell my wrestlers this all the time, when faced with the many tasks they faced on the way to becoming a successful athlete: "How do you eat a pizza? One slice at a time! Now it's time to take a bite of that first slice"

- *Sandy Archer*

  I know this, sometimes I don't always do this< I think I needed to hear it today though - thanks!

- *fleur knowles*

  That is great Stu. it works for me – just take the emotion out of it, get going through the list of things to do and celebrate every little win and be grateful I have work to do.

- *Roger Goucher*

  Years ago when I was in my early twenties someone told me when you feel stuck go begin cleaning & organizing your sock drawer. That is simple, easy to do, quick and the momentum from that carries over into cleaning your room or office, to organizing your business to making sales and it goes onward from there just as you said. You cannot direct a sailboat that is tied to the pier. But when it is adrift with sails set the wind can then carry it where ever you desire it to go.

  - *Stu McLaren*

    Love this Roger. And I agree... you've got to get in motion.

- *Karen Ray*

  Fantastic advice! I've been sharing this idea with memoir clients to loosen up the "stuck." Going to take this advice myself too as my in person group coaching class flopped from lack of sign ups this week. Hard to get folks to meet in person. Good push for a personal paradigm shift. Love Roger's advice too–pick a small project you can make progress on and tackle it with gusto.

- *patriciamayfield*

  Thank you, Stu. It's good to be reminded of this wisdom. Sometimes all you can do is that 'next step.' But over time it builds a journey.

  - *Stu McLaren*

    Exactly. There is always a cost of standing still and not doing anything.

- *Rosemary O'Connor*

  When I'm stuck it usually means I'm trying to hard or I need a break.

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