

OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION,
IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY & ACHIEVE
MORE MEANINGFUL THINGS

...

DO IT TODAY



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DARIUS FOROUX

Do It Today

Overcome Procrastination, Improve Productivity, and
Achieve More Meaningful Things

Written by

Darius Foroux

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About The Author (That's Me)

I'm an entrepreneur, blogger, and podcaster. Since 2015, I've been sharing my thoughts about life, business, and productivity on my blog. Until now, more than 4 million people have read my articles. I also co-founded Vartex, a laundry technology company, with my dad, while I was finishing my master's degree in Marketing in 2010. For my podcast, The Darius Foroux Show, I've interviewed thought leaders like Ryan Holiday, Robert Sutton, Jimmy Soni, and more.

This is the third book that I've published. My other books are:

- [Win Your Inner Battles: Defeat The Enemy Within and Live With Purpose](#)
- [THINK STRAIGHT: Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Life](#)

About This Book

As I'm writing this, I'm blocked from accessing my email provider that I use to send out my weekly newsletter. This email provider is the most important service I use to run my blog. It's equally important as my blog itself.

The reason I can't access my email provider and send emails to my subscribers (even new subscribers who join my newsletter are not receiving my welcome email) is that I'm being "list-bombed." It happens when spammers bomb your email list signups with emails from people who didn't want to sign up for your list. And now, I'm known as a spammer because I send emails to people who didn't sign up for them. At least, this what a website that lists spammers says.

In their eyes, I'm a spammer. Am I one? Of course not. I have a life. However, publishing weekly articles and staying in touch with my readers is also a part of my life. And that's been taken away from me now.

The irony is that I migrated to this provider ten days ago. I've spent dozens of hours on that process.

Normally, I would get pissed off about this situation and start blaming someone. After all, I invested a lot of time in building a large email list. And for a moment, I did get upset about being blocked from it. But you know what I did next?

I started doing something else that's important. I started this book.

Just like that. I moved on to the next thing. Life doesn't stop. And every single second, we're getting closer to death.

I must say, three years ago, I was far away from the person that I am today. I would complain, feel sorry for myself, blame others, and I would never have acted on anything meaningful. But through reading, journaling, and blogging every week, I have transformed my life.

Like a sculptor, I shaped my philosophy for life during that period. My philosophy can be summarized in three words, and it's the title of this book: *Do it today*.

Look, I don't have to tell you that life is finite, and that time is not replenishable. Every second we invest in something is time that we can never get back. But I want to challenge you to look at the bigger picture.

What you do today determines where you will be in a year, two years, and even ten years from now. Every single day, we keep on doing things that we don't desire. I'm not talking about paying the bills or cleaning your toilet. I'm talking about how you invest the majority of your time. The time that sums up your *life*.

When I was 13 or 14 years old, I watched the movie *Fight Club* for the first time together with one of my friends. One line has been engraved on mind ever since that moment: "You are not your job, you're not how much money you have in the bank." I'm glad I watched that movie back then. I've watched the movie more than a dozen times, and I've read the book more than once. That single thought inspired me to become independent. I'm not my job. And I'm certainly not my bank account."

But who are we, if we are not those things?

For the past 17 or 18 years, I've been meditating on that question. As of now, I believe that we are our *actions*. And our actions reveal our character. That's who we are.

The funny thing is that we *are* our job. After all, we spend the majority of our time earning a living. We trade time for money. Whether you like it or not, you have to spend a part of your life doing that. Most people end up trading time for money during their entire life. But a few of us spend their time in a way *now*, that they have a better life *tomorrow*.

That's why I always do it today—especially the important things like:

- Reading
- Exercising
- Investing
- Saving
- Spending time with people I love
- Laughing
- Booking a holiday
- Enjoying my life

And yes, even paying the bills. No matter what happens, I do the *important* things today—not tomorrow.

Find Out What's Important To You

This book is not about life hacks, productivity tips, or any other tactics. We all know about those things. Sure, now and then I share tactical advice that I've applied to achieve more in less time. However, this book contains a collection of articles that I handpicked to help you get more clarity in life.

The recipe for a good life is simple: Get clear on what you want and eliminate everything else from your life. The process is simple, yet it took me many years to figure those things out.

And this book is my journey. Sure, you can find the articles in this book on my blog, but they are not presented in the right order. A blog is organic. I write about the challenges that I face. But with a book, I can give you a structured body of work that serves a specific purpose.

Do It Today is my path and blueprint for overcoming the endless procrastination, improving my productivity, and getting more meaningful things done. And it can be yours too.

How This Book Is Constructed

There are three parts to this journey. In Part I, we start with changing the way we look at life. No more procrastination. No more feeling sorry. No more regrets.

You know, my grandmother was ill for the last few years of her life. She went on and on about the things she didn't do in life. Sure, she talked about the good things too. But the regret was more powerful. Research even shows that negative emotions have a bigger impact on our psyche than positive ones.

So, before I show you how to use your time effectively, and get more things done, I want to focus on our mindset. That's what Part I is about: Shifting from a passive state to an active state. By the end of Part I, I hope that you decide to grab life by the head and say, "I'm in charge."

When you're in charge of your life, and therefore your time, it's the perfect moment to get the best bang for your buck. Because that's all that productivity is: An optimum use of time. In Part II, I have collected the articles that show you how to do that. You'll find more than just "do this and you'll boost your productivity" type of ideas. I take a different route to productivity. For example, one of the articles is about reading 100

books in a year. It's not necessarily about productivity, but it does show you how I approach something that's important to me. When you decide you want to do something, you also must have a map that takes you there. In life, we have to make that map. So, when you read the article about reading more books, look at my thinking process. Look at *how* I go about my challenge. Only then you can apply the strategies to your own life.

Finally, in Part III, I show you how to *stay* on the path. It's easy to read an article or listen to some advice and apply it for a day. But that's useless. We only make real progress and achieve big things by doing small things every single day. For instance, one of the articles in Part III is about the power of compounding. When you do the little things every day, they add up. And over time, they form big things like a strong body & mind, self-reliance, a large investment portfolio, and so forth. One thing that I've learned about compounding is that you can also compound hurtful things.

When you complain every day, eat junk food, and never work out, those things add up too. That's how we become miserable. You almost never hear about how one single moment destroyed a person's life. Of course, tragedies happen. But for the majority of us, we simply let life slip away from us. We decide *not* to do it today. Because "what's the point?" Well, here's the point: Life is good if you know how to live it.

The 30 articles that I present in this book, form a system that's unshakeable (I've formatted the articles specially for Kindle, to make them more readable. And I've made several improvements to many articles, based on new lessons I learned and the feedback I've received from readers.)

When you adopt the habits that I write about in this book, you can take on any challenge that life throws at you. You no longer have to wish that life was easier, you're stronger now.

As I write this, the sun is shining, there are no clouds, it's 28 degrees Celsius (82 Fahrenheit), and I'm sitting shirtless behind my desk in my home—listening to the Chilled-Out Electronic playlist on Apple Music. And all I can think is, "life is good."

Let's get started, my friend.

-Darius

June 7, 2018

Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

How To Read This Book

Before you start, I want to share a few lessons I learned about reading a book—especially a practical one like this.

1. There are no rules to reading a book so feel free to read it in any way or order you want.
2. Skip the parts that are not relevant to you. No, you don't have to read a book cover to cover.
3. Highlight text and take notes to remember more.
4. Skimming a book before you read it can be beneficial. I often skim a book, so I can get a better understanding of what I should skip or focus on. Sometimes, I find out that I can't skip anything. Sometimes, I skip half of a book.
5. You only need one idea that can change your life. If a book gives you only one good piece of advice, it's already worth your time.

Happy reading.

Part I: Overcoming Procrastination

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”

- Abraham Lincoln

Do It Today, Not Tomorrow

Every time I put off a decision, hit the snooze button, skipped the gym, or didn't complete my tasks because I didn't feel like it, I always had an explanation for my continual procrastination.

I told myself I was tired. Or that it could wait until tomorrow. Who cares if you put off something, right?

Well, *you* should care. Because *you're* the one who's responsible for your life. Too often, we look at productivity tips, apps or tools as the magic answer to our problems. But that also means we allow ourselves to blame external things for our lack of productivity.

- “No, it's not me, it's my old laptop. It sucks, and I can't work this way.”
- “The office is too loud.”
- “People keep calling and emailing me.”
- “I never have time.”

Battling procrastination is an inner battle. I have many examples of that in my personal life. In 2013, I felt my career was stuck. Two years before that, I started a company with my dad. But after two years, I became restless because I wanted to do more and learn more.

So I did some freelancing. I built websites, did copywriting, content marketing, and some design work. But it didn't take off. Why? I never did the uncomfortable work. Instead, I found a job to escape those hard tasks.

We all escape at times.

Building a business or career is hard. It requires you to do difficult, tedious, and unsatisfying tasks. If you want more clients or work, no one is going to hand it to you. You have to hustle. Do content marketing, one-on-one sales, network, or whatever method you use to grow your business.

And if you want to climb the corporate ladder, you have to form alliances, be strategic, outperform your targets, and be great at what you do.

That's what you SHOULD do, right? Most of us already know these things. Or, you will find out about it. There's no such thing as a secret to succeeding at work. However, we

prefer to escape work. And that's at the core of procrastination to me. You know what you have to do, but you don't do it. Instead, you open a news site and start reading useless news items. Or you browse your Instagram feed without liking one picture because you hate your life. Maybe you browse Zara, H&M, Net-A-Porter, Mr. Porter, or whatever online shop you like.

That was, and to a degree still is, the story of my life. For example, I'm now working on a new book. I know what it's about and I also have a title. But writing is also very difficult work to me.

So I look for relief. I answer emails, read articles, go for coffee, do some online shopping, and work on recurring tasks to run my business. It's not that I'm disorganized. It's because I'm battling myself. Steven Pressfield calls this inner enemy Resistance in his classic, *The War Of Art*. And this is what he says about it:

"Resistance is always lying and always full of shit."

Do It Today, Not Tomorrow

I always have to keep reminding myself of that. When you procrastinate, you always want to do it tomorrow. I'm still like that. I think that's hardwired into us. The difference between me now, and three years ago is small but simple: I rely on a system to live a productive, happy, and purposeful life.

Back then I had no idea how to get things done. I always gave up quickly, felt stuck, unhappy, and frustrated. But now, I've found a way to overcome my challenges. Here's how I did it:

- **I exercise my mental toughness every day.** I used to neglect my brain. I was mentally weak, thought too much, and didn't rely on myself. It wasn't because I lacked skills. It was because I didn't trust in my ability to figure things out. So I started reading about Stoicism, Pragmatism and Mindfulness; anything that helps you to control your thoughts and improve your mental toughness. I don't want to be a slave to my thoughts. I want the opposite.
- **I exercise my body every day.** When I don't exercise, I'm restless, lack focus, energy, and confidence. By exercising my brain and body every day, I'm always war-ready. I learned that overcoming procrastination starts before you fight the war. Soldiers don't go to war untrained either, right? Be in great shape, mentally and physically. Always.

- **I have a set of daily habits that help me to be in control of my life.** I journal, read, set daily priorities, and don't consume useless information. I also make sure I interact with my friends and family every day. Human contact is important. This keeps me grounded. I don't have high expectations of life. And I enjoy my days. I never look beyond that.
- **I always have a list of small (but important) tasks that I have to complete.** Let's take my new book for example. I often want to escape difficult things like actually sitting down and writing. So I tell myself today is not a good day. But every time I think that, I open my list of small tasks and work on one of those things TODAY.
- **I study and practice the science of persuasion to get my message across.** My mentor taught me: "You can be the best writer and teacher in the world, but if no one knows about it, you can't make an impact." The science of persuasion helps you to write better pitches, cover letters, website copy, emails, etc.

Of course, it takes time to develop the foundation of this strategy. And there's a lot more to it. But it's not magic.

However, it's also not easy to live a productive life. And it's definitely not about technology or hacks. It's about developing a sustainable system to build your life, career, and business on. What's your system for living a productive life?

Whatever it is: **Work on it today.** Not tomorrow.

What I Do When I Can't Focus

Do you struggle to finish your tasks? Are you always distracted by notifications, gossiping, or anything that's random? In that case, you and I are alike. Because focusing on a single thing is one of the hardest things at work. There's always something that interrupts you, right?

- Another person
- A call
- A meeting
- A false emergency
- Your cat
- A stranger's cat
- News about last night's NBA game

Sure, you can blame those things — but that's weak. You and I both know that those things can't interrupt you without your permission. That means every time you're not focused; you're giving someone or something permission to enter your mind. Scary, isn't it?

That's how I look at interruptions. But I have to admit that I can't maintain my focus all the time. Sometimes, I give in. It's not good. Your life doesn't benefit from gossiping, looking at Instagram 439 times a day, watching 49 YouTube videos, and reading negative news articles. So, what can you do to improve your focus? Here are 2 things that I always do when I find myself not being able to focus on what matters.

1. Eliminate. Eliminate. Eliminate

Every day, we accumulate stuff. I'm not only talking about the stuff you're buying like clothes, kitchen equipment, house decorations, toys, gadgets, or whatever. We accumulate ideas. Have you ever thought about that? We're exposed to so many ideas that we adopt some of them, and make them our own. For example, many people have told me to create more YouTube videos. My family, friends, team members, readers, students — everybody has ideas. And they want to help.

Likewise, I also share my ideas with others. Ideas about how you can improve your life, career, business, or relationships. We all do it. And there's nothing wrong with that. It only becomes a problem if you don't filter the input you get from people. So after I heard

from people that I should make YouTube videos, I thought to myself “Hey! I should make YouTube videos!”

I’ve been thinking a lot about that for the past six months. And I also invested a lot of time in creating a strategy. “What should my videos be about? Where should I record them? How should I edit them? What music should I use?” I’ve been working on it a lot. And I recently published a video as well. The response was positive. There’s only one problem: It consumes too much of my time and attention. As a consequence, I can spend less time on writing, podcasting, and creating new courses.

And those are exactly the things that I *want* to do. I started a blog for a reason: I love to write, and I’m good at it. Therefore, the work is easier, compared to creating YouTube videos, which I’m not that good at. Plus, I thoroughly enjoy writing articles, books, and material for my online courses. When the work gets hard, I don’t mind. But when I was working on YouTube videos, I got frustrated a lot. And again, my focus and work suffered from it. What did I do when I lacked focus? I asked myself this question:

“What thing(s) should I eliminate to make my life so simple that it’s easy to focus?”

In this case, I stopped focusing on YouTube. Elimination is a key strategy that I use for many aspects of my life. We accumulate so much unnecessary baggage throughout the years that we consistently need to eliminate:

- Ideas
- Projects
- Work
- Objects
- And so forth

If you find yourself struggling to focus, try this strategy. Make your life so simple that it’s a breeze to live. And let’s be honest here. Who wants to live a life that’s impossible? Life is already hard enough. Don’t make it harder.

2. Think About Past Success

Thinking about past success and happiness stimulates the production of serotonin, a chemical nerve our cells produce.

Serotonin is the key chemical that affects every part of your body. Serotonin plays a huge role in our bodily functions. But it also helps to reduce depression, increase libido, stabilize mood, control sleep, and regulate anxiety.

Serotonin also plays a massive role in our general *well-being*. But here's why serotonin matters to your focus. Serotonin also regulates delayed gratification. When your serotonin activity goes down, it can lead to a lack of focus on the long-term. You are less likely to act on your plans.

When you lose focus, there's a big chance that your serotonin activity is low. That's why you are giving into short-term pleasures like going out, drinking, shopping, having sex, watching TV, or anything else that gives you short-term pleasure.

To improve your focus, boost your serotonin activity. Research shows that exercise can do that. But something else, that's equally effective, and a lot easier is a simple mind-exercise.

All you need to do is remember positive events that happened in the past.

Alex Korb, a neuroscientist at UCLA, and the author of *The Upward Spiral*, explains why remembering positive events helps you to focus on what matters:

"All you need to do [to increase serotonin levels] is remember positive events that have happened in your life. This simple act increases serotonin production in the anterior cingulate cortex, which is a region just behind the prefrontal cortex that controls attention."

When serotonin goes up, your focus goes up. Ultimately, that's what you should do. I know that it sounds cheesy, but when something is wrong, you must fix it.

When I can't focus, the first thing I do is to acknowledge that I have a problem that needs a solution. Some people go through life without even acknowledging that they have problems.

- No, it's not normal to check your phone every 2 minutes.
- No, it's not normal to gossip all the time.
- No, it's not normal to be bored.

Focus on your life. Think about what matters to you. Then, do those things and don't get distracted — stay on the path.

Good luck.