

“The purpose of man is in action, not thought” Thomas Carlyle

One of the main things I've learned over the past 6 years since I handed my notice in, stopped being an employed manager and first thought seriously about developing my own business, is that *taking action* is even more important than having a fully formed plan.

Now as someone who is fairly reflective by nature, and a perfectionist who has spent a lot of her life planning, this was a difficult lesson to learn!

In fact, the act of resigning with no job to go to was a *huge* leap of faith and my first really big action not to be fully thought through – but I felt wonderful having taken it, and it allowed me to get a much clearer idea of what I wanted to do next and where I wanted to go.

If I'd waited until I felt fully prepared and had a plan of what I would do next, then I might never have had the guts to leave. But for the first time in a long while, I trusted myself to take the action and then figure out the next steps afterwards.

How many of us have read books, gleaned massive amounts of information and dreamt of a different life, new relationships, more money, a fantastic job, great holidays etc?

And how many of us have actually done anything about it? The world is full of educated, knowledgeable people, so why is it that many of them don't seem as outwardly successful as some less well educated people (in an academic sense)?

Think of some of the big names in the world of business – Richard Branson, Alan Sugar, or Bill Gates – it's what they **do** that makes the difference, not necessarily what they know; it's the fact that they take action - they consistently take steps that move them forward in business and life. They've learned their lessons through trying and making mistakes, from taking action in the school of life!

I've learned that the key is not necessarily having everything figured out before I get started – because the perfectionist in me (the part of me that's afraid of making mistakes) would invariably stop me from starting at all!

In that sense, success can be more like rock climbing than planning a trip, because you may not even know 98% of the path you'll take, so what you do is find a hand hold that's good enough to get started, and a foot hold that's also good enough to get started with, then take it from there.

Now I'm not trying to suggest that you stop planning, but that I've discovered that for me it's actually more important to just **get going!** Because you can have the best plan in the world, but if you don't take any of the steps, it won't take you anywhere!

So for me it's more about reminding myself on a regular basis that I need to do whatever I can with what I already have and what I already know, rather than trying to find out more and waiting till I feel fully prepared. **It's about making a decision to take action!**

This doesn't stop me from having a vision and dreaming about the kind of life I want or the type of person I want to become; it doesn't stop me making definite plans to achieve my goals; but what it *does* is remind me that the journey is as important as the destination. That **taking action** that doesn't take you where you planned, is still better than not taking any action, because it moves you forward; it gives you a new perspective and can open up new opportunities. It can even be fun!

So what's stopping you? Get moving, take action, do something that'll move you forward. It doesn't matter that you don't know what will happen – it'll make the journey interesting; and think how you'll feel when you actually succeed!

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About The Author:

Julie Johnson, formerly a manager and development specialist, created The Leadership Coaching Company to help managers solve one of their biggest business problems: how to get the most from themselves and their staff. She is now a leadership success specialist and has attracted a loyal following who praise her down to earth yet inspiring approach.

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