

DO THE WORK



STEVEN PRESSFIELD
Recurring Author of *The War of Art* and *Turning Pro*
Foreword by Seth Godin

Do the Work

Overcome Resistance and Get Out of Your Own Way by Steven Pressfield ·

You've heard me talk about the "Monster" over and over and over again. You know, the Monster, that relentless voice in your head that drives you bonkers and attempts to derail any plans you have for personal greatness.

The best explanation and interpretation of this Monster is by author Steven Pressfield. He calls it the Resistance. Napoleon Hill calls it the Devil (in the amazing book: *Outwitting the Devil*.)

Steven has a book trilogy that you must read. The first of the series is: *The War of Art* - followed by *Turning Prop* - with the third and final being this book: *Do the Work*.

I picked *Do the Work* for you because the book begins with a great summary of the first two books and then crescendos into what we must all face if we are to gain success and realize personal greatness... and that is - we must *Do the Work!*

"This book is designed to coach you through a project (a book, a ballet, a new business venture, a philanthropic enterprise) from conception to finished product, seeing it from the point of view of Resistance.

We'll hit every predictable Resistance Point along the way—those junctures where fear, self-sabotage, procrastination, self-doubt, and all those other demons we're all so familiar with can be counted on to strike.

Where butts need to be kicked, we shall kick them. Where kinder, gentler methods are called for, we'll get out the kid gloves.”

~ Steven Pressfield from *Do the Work*

What is Resistance?

The following is Steven's list in no particular order of activities that trigger the disruption of the Resistance (Monster).

1. The pursuit of any “calling”
2. The launching of any entrepreneurial venture.
3. Any diet or health regimen
4. Any program of spiritual advancement.
5. Any activity whose aim is the acquisition of chiseled abdominals.
6. Any course or program designed to overcome a bad habit or addiction.
7. Education of any kind.
8. Any act of moral or ethical courage.
9. The undertaking of any enterprise whose aim is to help others.
10. Any act that entails commitment of the heart (ie: marriage, have children)
11. The taking of any principled stand in the face of adversity.

In other words, any act that rejects immediate gratification in favor of long-term growth, health, or integrity (Hard Now Easy Later).

EVERYBODY WHO HAS A BODY EXPERIENCES RESISTANCE

“We're wrong to think we're the only ones struggling with Resistance. Everyone who has a body experiences Resistance.

Henry Fonda was still throwing up before each stage performance, even when he was seventy-five.

In other words, fear doesn't go away. The warrior and the artist live by the same code of necessity, which dictates that the battle must be fought anew every day."

When we're able to finally grasp the reality that our shortcomings, anxieties, excuses, and problems are really no different than any others... we can make a stand and face down resistance.

"On the field of the Self stand a knight and a dragon. You are the knight. Resistance is the dragon."

-Steven Pressfield

LOVE THAT QUOTE!

This is exactly what we face on our journey to personal greatness. Standing between us and our destiny is Resistance (the Monster).

START BEFORE YOU'RE READY

"Don't prepare. Begin.

Remember, our enemy is not lack of preparation; it's not the difficulty of the project or the state of the marketplace or the emptiness of our bank account.

The enemy is Resistance.

The enemy is our chattering brain, which, if we give it so much as a nanosecond, will start producing excuses, alibis, transparent self-justifications, and a million reasons why we can't/shouldn't/won't do what we know we need to do.

Start before you're ready.”

The enemy is our chattering brain. Always and forever.

How many times have I sat down to write a newsletter article or even a short email for Inner Circle Members... and then nothing. Or more typical - “Hey, better check my email real fast. Now Facebook. Oh I got a text from Sparkle.” So on and so forth.

That's the Resistance distracting me from my important work.

Get started. In fact, start before your ready.

Or as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe told us back in the late 1700's: ***“Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”***
Begin it now.”

KEEP WORKING

“Stephen King has confessed that he works every day. Fourth of July, his birthday, Christmas.

I love that. Particularly at this stage—what Seth Godin calls ‘thrashing’ (a very evocative term)—momentum is everything. Keep it going.

How much time can you spare today?

For that interval, close the door and—short of a family emergency or outbreak of World War III—don't let anybody in.

Keep working. Keep working. Keep working.”

Or as Dory told us, “Keep swimming. Just keep swimming.”

THOUGHTS VS. CHATTER

“Have you meditated? Then you know what it feels like to shift your consciousness to a witnessing mode and to watch thoughts arise, float across your awareness, and then drift away, to be replaced by the next thought and the thought after that.

These are not thoughts. They are chatter.

I was thirty years old before I had an actual thought. Everything up until then was either what Buddhists call ‘monkey mind’ chatter or the reflexive regurgitation of whatever my parents or teachers said, or whatever I saw on the news or read in a book, or heard somebody rap about, hanging around the street corner.

In this book, when I say ‘Don’t think,’ what I mean is: don’t listen to the chatter. Pay no attention to those rambling, disjointed images and notions that drift across the movie screen of your mind.

Those are not your thoughts. They are chatter. They are Resistance.”

Wow! This is so good. Reminds me of the predicament most find themselves in as life wanders by... fatness, brokenness, and dumbness =>> The Three Deadly Diseases of Despair for which nearly all real estate agents (and all adult Americans) suffer.

The sad but true reality is that Most all agents suffer lives of quiet desperation.

Why?

First, people spend the majority of their time without an original thought. Therefore their thoughts are funneled into their brains by the media, advertisers, parents, a broken system of education, friends, and worst of all the Monster.

When you follow the herd and scratch with the turkeys you cannot possibly expect any other life than that of a turkey.

Stop listening to the news, stop taking advice from buttocks, stop scratching around with the turkeys, and stop being influenced by anyone other than your best self.

How?

Listen to the “whisper” voice inside of your heart and your soul. That is your true self. That is your greater self. Follow that voice to the promised land.

Follow the 7 Sacred Secrets of Success inside the Good Life Inner Circle and the rest will take care of itself. (followed immediately after consistent HARD WORK).

SHIP!!!

“Why does Seth Godin place so much emphasis on ‘shipping’?”

Because finishing is the critical part of any project. If we can’t finish, all our work is for nothing.

When we ship, we declare our stuff ready for prime time. We pack it in a FedEx box and send it out into the world. Our movie hits the screens, our smart phone arrives in stores, our musical opens on Broadway.

It takes balls of steel to ship.”

You know how I feel about Seth Godin - so I love any reference to him and his words. I’ve used the phrase “ship it” many times around my office.

My favorite mentor, Dan Kennedy, has a phrase he uses which is perfect for this conversation: “Good, is good enough.”

We have the BEGINNING where we conceive and initiate the project. The MIDDLE where we do the work. And the END where it’s all about one thing: SHIPPING!

After fighting through all the initial Resistance, we meet the final and perhaps the most difficult challenge. It’s time to share our work with the world. It’s time to ship.

This is the moment when a Good Lifer writes their **newsletter** using personal stories, from the heart sentiment, allowing for themselves to be vulnerable... and now it’s time to hit send or seal the envelope. The Resistance will for sure show up AGAIN. Don’t back down. Send it. Mail it. Good is good enough.

Ship. Ship. Ship.

THE DREAM

“Sometimes when Resistance is kicking my butt (which it does, all the time), I flash on Charles Lindbergh. What symphony of Resistance must have been playing in his head when he was struggling to raise the funding for his attempt to fly across the Atlantic solo?

‘You’re too young, you’re too inexperienced; you’ve got no credentials, no credibility. Everyone who’s tried this has failed and you will, too. It can’t be done. Your plane will crash, you’re going to drown, you’re a madman who is attempting the impossible and you deserve whatever dire fate befalls you!’

What saw Lindy through?

It can only be the dream.

Love of the idea.

How cool would it be, in 1927, to land at Le Bourget field outside Paris, having flown from New York, solo and non-stop, before anyone else had ever done it?"

That would be soooo cool!

It's 1927.

No one had ever flown solo and non-stop across the Atlantic. A big prize was established for the first one to do it. Some of the best aviators of the day had died trying.

You're an unknown kid who thinks he can do it.

Imagine the Resistance you'd get (internal + external) trying to make that happen!!!

What would sustain you? The DREAM.

Simple question: What's YOUR dream?

To end this session of book notes I wanted to recap by using the middle of the book that Steven called, "The Belly of the Beast."

The Seven Principles and **Two Tests** of the Resistance.

Principle #1: There is an enemy. This recognition alone is enormously powerful.

Principle #2: This enemy is Implacable (unable to be placated; relentless << I had to look this up, lol). Steven says, "Its aim is not to obstruct you or hamper or to impede. Its aim is to kill." << HOLY SHIT!

Principle #3: This Enemy is Inside You. Resistance is not a peripheral opponent. It comes from us. The enemy is inside you.

Principle #4: The Enemy is Inside You, But it is Not You. You are to blame for the voices of Resistance you hear in your head.

Principle #5: The “Real You” Must Duel the “Resistance You.” On the field of the Self stand a knight and a dragon. You are the knight and resistance is the dragon.

Principle #6: Resistance Arises Second. What comes first is the idea, the passion, the dream of the work we are so excited to create that it scares the hell out of us. Resistance is the shadow cast by the innovative self’s sun.

(Again, holy shit!!!)

Principle #7: The Opposite of Resistance is Assistance. In myths and legends, the knight is always aided in his quest to slay the dragon. Same theme with the Hero’s Journey (read *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell, watch the Netflix documentary - *The Power of Myth*, and watch [Finding Joe](#) on Youtube.)

Inside the Good Life I am your aid. **I will assist you as best I can on your hero’s journey to personal greatness.**

Now the Two Tests. (*Each question has only one correct answer)

Test #1: How bad do you want it?

Multiple Choice: Dabbling - Interested - Intrigued but Uncertain - Passionate - Totally Committed.

If your answer is NOT the last choice, Steven says to put the book down and throw it away.

Test #2: Why do you want it?

Again, multiple choice:

- For attracting the opposite sex
- The money
- For fame
- Because I deserve it
- For power
- To prove my parents (teacher, ex-spouse, etc) wrong
- To serve my vision of how life/mankind ought to be
- For fun or beauty
- Because I have no choice

Again, the last answer is the ONLY acceptable answer. Powerful stuff isn't it?

START AGAIN!

“I was living in a little town in northern California when I finally, after seventeen years of trying, finished my first novel. I drove over to my friend and mentor Paul Rink’s house and told him what I had done. ‘Good for you,’ he said. ‘Now start the next one.’

That’s what I say to you now.

Take the rest of the day off. Take your wife or husband out to dinner. Pop some champagne. Give yourself a standing ovation.

Then get back to work. Begin the next one tomorrow.

Stay stupid.

Trust the soup.

Start before you're ready."

That's the last passage in the book. Pressfield's endings to each of his books are simply genius.

As Joseph Campbell tells us, the great life is one hero's journey after another. Finish one Mission, complete one goal? Great. Take the rest of the day off. And start again tomorrow!

Have a great day my friend!

Bart "Mr. Book Notes" Vickrey

P.S. Please email me with your feedback bart@bartshouses.com I always wonder if anyone actually reads these amazing book notes or not.