



Why am I not doing

the thing

I say **I want**
to do?

by Sheridan Stewart



G'day,

This is a 6- to 7-minute read or 10 minutes if you choose to do the exercise; however, I invite you to consider setting aside a little more time to contemplate.



Why are you not doing the thing you say you want to do?

Oh, this is a fun one! Most of us have experienced this at some point, and the reasons might surprise you.

It's a question that has plagued me for years, even decades:
"Why am I not doing the things I say I want to do?"

I desperately wanted to lose weight and get fit but it was like I had amnesia. Once I was hungry (or bored, restless, tired, emotional, etc), I'd forget my Very Important Goal and make a beeline for the kitchen or café.

I felt I was born to write, yet when it came to sitting down and actually writing, everything else suddenly seemed more important. The housework I'd happily neglected took on a sense of urgency. I'd be compelled to call a friend, even though we'd only spoken recently. I'd convince myself I needed the perfect writing space before I began.

Sound familiar?



Let's acknowledge some of the common beliefs that hold us back, including:

- fear of failure
- fear of success
- not being good enough
- not knowing enough
- procrastination
- perfectionism
- comparison
- not ready yet
- too fat
- too old
- don't have the money
- don't have the time
- Imposter Syndrome
- I'm not confident
- *et cetera et cetera*

Whilst there may be elements in the above list that are at play, if berating ourselves about our insecurities were effective, many of us would hold a PhD in "Reasons Why I Can't Get on With It!"

The thing about beliefs is that we'll fight for them and pile up the evidence that proves our case.

What if you could flip the narrative?





EXERCISE: Gathering Evidence

What key belief is blocking you from taking action on what you say you want?

Is there any evidence that flies in the face of that belief?

It might feel easier to provide all the evidence that proves your negative belief. However, even if there's only a single point of evidence (and there will be if you dig deep enough), you can begin to make a dent in the firmly-held belief that's blocking you from doing what you say you want to do.

Flipping the belief in a **believable*** way.

For example, *I don't have enough skills, experience or confidence to apply for the job I really want. Becomes: I have some of the skills and/or expertise to begin looking for a job that could be a stepping stone to the job I really want.*

* I wrote extensively about why it's essential to make your affirmation believable on page 13 of *I Am Enough* under the heading **Affirmations: What? Why? How?**



EXERCISE:

Gathering Evidence

Take your answer about the key belief that's blocking you and create a believable statement.

Next, write the title "Evidence that I can..." (adding your desired outcome).

Now, start gathering evidence that promotes your new belief. This could include:

- transferable skills
- experience in related industries
- personal strengths
- participating or volunteering
- compliments you've received
- courses or seminars you could take to build your knowledge

If you really can't think of a single thing, then ask a friend why they believe you can and/or ask them to name some of your strengths and attributes.



Let's explore some of the more nuanced reasons why we struggle to do the things we say we really want to do.

Do you think you want something that's not quite right for you?

Don't panic; you're probably closer than you think!

Sometimes we're really close to where we're meant to be but our dreams may not quite align with our true purpose. Dreams are essential; they hold clues to your future but when you take them literally, it's easy to believe you've failed. Instead, **I invite you to consider that your dreams and desires indicate the direction to take.**

My Story

There was a phase in my late teens and early 20s when I wanted to be a rock star. I thought I'd be a female Eddie Van Halen.

I was very visionary about it, the costumes, stage sets, music videos and of course, massive audiences. I bought the most incredible guitar, a fire-red Ibanez Destroyer and a 100-watt Marshall Head (amp) and quad box (huge speakers). I convinced friends to form a band with me.

The only problem was that I didn't do any guitar practice. So, I became the lead vocalist. I'm talking the 80s; picture David Lee Roth crossed with Cyndi Lauper: big voices, big personalities and even bigger hair.

I thought I'd open my mouth and sing as well as Ann Wilson of Heart. I wasn't willing to work with a singing coach;

I wanted it to just happen.

It didn't.



When I discovered radio, I found my natural fit. I still used my voice, personality and a microphone. I communicated with a vast audience and I became willing to do whatever it took to succeed in that industry.

My desire to be a rockstar was close to where I was meant to be.

The reverse could also be true; you might be earning a good income working in an industry or role that's closely related to what you really want.

It's too good to leave but is that a reason to stay? Yes, but... depending on your circumstances, you may need to transition into the role you really want.

Throwing the baby out with the bathwater (especially if it's a literal baby) is not always an option.

If you have a lot of responsibilities, give yourself the grace to transition slowly. Take steps, no matter how small, in the direction of your dreams.

“Baby steps, when taken consistently, can add up to quantum leaps.”



Are you focused on an outdated dream?

We attach a lot to dreams and when they don't manifest the way we'd imagined, it can be hard to let them go and move on. There can be a lot of shame associated with "giving up" on a dream, especially the ones we've been loud about!

Is it time to retire a dream that belongs to an outdated version of yourself?

Letting go is not the same as giving up.

Sometimes we need to surrender, to sacrifice an outdated dream to make way for another. **FYI, one definition of the word "surrender" is "letting go of something lower to make way for something higher."**

**"There are far better things
ahead than any we leave behind."**

— C.S. Lewis



Torn between wanting more than one thing?

Are you torn between more than one talent or idea and can't decide which one to focus on because they all seem really important — so you end up doing nothing?

Oprah Winfrey is a multifaceted creative, possessing talents that span from acting to television hosting, entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

When Oprah was starting out, what the world needed was the Oprah Winfrey we've come to know and love, the Oprah who broke the glass ceiling in the media and took her vision worldwide.

Think back to "Change Your Life Television," when Oprah used her savvy to persuade the network to create a program featuring a host of experts who made a difference in the lives of thousands of people. Many had never engaged with psychology, spirituality or self-help before.

Oprah is also a wonderful actress and filmmaker, as evidenced in her work in **The Colour Purple**, **Beloved**, **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**, and more. Now, imagine a world where Oprah became frozen with indecision just because she was too damn talented...

When you choose to focus on one thing, it doesn't mean you'll never do anything else. In fact, taking action on one thing is likely to bring about the momentum that will propel you towards achieving your goals.

“You can have it all. Just not all at once.”

— Oprah Winfrey





Worried you'll make the wrong choice?

There's no such thing as making a wrong choice. The absolute worst that will happen is that you'll learn something, let it go, take with you whatever you learned and apply it to the next choice.

The only way to fail is to fail to act.

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too.”

— Goethe



No time spent pursuing a goal is ever wasted.

My Friends' Stories

My friend **Candyss** is a wonderful singer-songwriter, gifted painter and talented writer. Even though she's been an exhibiting artist for decades and even owned a gallery, Candyss constantly questioned whether she'd chosen the right path and never felt like she was earning enough to feel successful.

Another friend, Jen, spent several years working with me on screenplays, studying the craft and making short films. Jen's husband was always dismissive, treating her filmmaking as a hobby. When life took us in different directions, dissolving our partnership, he declared it a failure, seemingly because we hadn't monetised our efforts.

Immediate financial success is not the only measure of success. During our collaboration, Jen and I developed our writing skills and honed our craft. Jen went on to become an editor and director of television, retiring after over 20 years and is now a full-time writer.

My point is, we did not fail; we were developing and evolving the skills we needed for our next steps.

Meanwhile, Candyss recently published her first children's picture book and is close to completing a novel that includes a soundtrack. Music, art and writing have all come together.

Jen is no longer married.



Final word (for now!).

So, whatever the reason you've been held back, are holding yourself back or feel worried that you're not doing what you should be doing, it's not too late. There are no mistakes and now is the time to take action.

Thank you for spending this time with me. If you enjoyed "Why Am I Not Doing the Thing I Say I Want To Do," head over to my website, [SheridanStewart.com](https://www.SheridanStewart.com) and stand by for my next newsletter with fresh stories, insights and recommendations. And remember...

You
Are
Enough

Sheridan

