

HUMILITY and my own Accountability



ac-count-abil-i-ty *n*: the quality or state of being [accountable](#); especially : an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to [account](#) for one's actions

As a longtime fitness leader, former personal trainer, and current motivational speaker, I know all too well the responsibilities of *walking your talk*, and I do see it as a responsibility. When you're in a position of leadership, people will look to you for direction. I wish I could say I've always lead my stakeholders down the right path, but I am imperfect and my learning experiences are on-going and continual. Read on to see why.

Recently I was lamenting an accountability agreement I had made with a friend. As I was reluctantly working at the task I'd told him I would complete I realized that I don't like being under the gun to get work done. I'm a hard worker for certain, but on my own terms. Ironically, I always feel great when I complete a long procrastinated task, or do something I've always told myself I'd get to, but the slothful person that dwells within me much prefers to get to it in my own time. The problem with that line of thinking for me and I expect a good deal of the population is that without a little well positioned accountability, life goes by with less tasks accomplished and less success achieved. *Believe it!*

Process versus Outcome: Most of the items we have on our 'to do' lists are interesting and important, more for the outcome they will achieve rather than the process of doing them. We don't always love *getting to* our 'to do's', we love striking them off the list. For instance, it's good for my business, and I love how it feels to be up to date on my book keeping and accounting, but on most days I'd rather stick bamboo shoots under my fingernails than sort through receipts and reconcile expense claims. Many of my past personal training clients would tell you they dreaded coming to their exercise sessions but always felt great when they were done. And as my mother said to me so many times as I was growing up, *"I don't care if you don't like your vegetables. They're good for you!"*

Back in August I was forced to take a closer look at my own accountability practices. Maybe I wasn't as committed to them as I should be for my own good, and for someone so wholly connected to motivating others? While meeting with my accountability partner (*I use that term loosely given the outcome of the meeting*) I discovered – through a brainstorming process – that I have been very good at holding myself accountable in all matters connected to my health, be it exercise, nutrition, or even stress management, but in certain of my business practices I have been the queen of procrastination and rationalization: *"I'll get to it later. It's only a small task."* As a speaker, one of the core messages I repeat again and again is the concept of *'small steps toward big changes'* ... anything worth doing is worth getting to *today* even with a small step, rather than waiting for more time and the hope of a bigger step down the road. I believe this to the core of my being and yet when I looked closely at my own efforts as they related to my business I realized I had adopted the *do as I say, not as I do* mentality of a dispassionate, disconnected authoritarian – albeit by accident, but that didn't ease my mind. I wasn't walking my talk! *<humble admission #1>*

My next kick in the proverbial behind came in a meeting with my Mastermind group in September. When our group first met last April, I proudly presented them all with a copy of my **GOT IT IT! Accountability Journal** *honestly* expecting that they would take their copy and put it on a shelf at home, never to be seen or heard from again. I told myself most people are too busy for extra-curricular reading. I didn't think they would *actually* use it. The problem with aligning yourself with 'do-ers', however, is they'll *go for it* in situations small and large, and they did. God Bless my Mastermind group.

My Humble Turning Point

At a future meeting one member of the group sung my praises and told me the journal had *changed her life*. "Wow. I'm good." I thought. At our September meeting another of the group piped up with the same glowing testimonial and I had to ask myself "I wonder what all the fuss is about?" <Brace yourself for humble admission #2> Up until this point – 6 months *after* the publication of my own accountability journal, I had yet to put it to use myself. When the books first came back from the publisher I opened a box, proudly surveyed my flashy new journal, and promptly placed it aside telling myself, "I'll get to it later. No rush. I wrote it. I know what it's all about." When I made this admission to my group they were kind and gentle in their scolding and promptly issued the challenge: **USE YOUR OWN JOURNAL**. So I *got to it* – literally this time – and that's when I humbly learned the brilliance of accountability.

My journal is simple and only takes a few minutes to complete each morning. Each day you're prompted to write down small goals in key areas like physical activity, nutrition, work, and even fun! The idea is that if you can set and *consistently complete* these goals each day imagine your progress over the course of 365 days? It made perfect sense to me *in theory*. In practice I learned exactly why.

As I began the process of writing my small daily goals in a nice journal versus random pieces of scrap paper I immediately placed more value on getting them completed. Interestingly, in those first couple of weeks of use, I was surprised at how few of my goals I actually accomplished. I've always been a list maker, but until I started using my own journal I didn't realize how often I would transfer small tasks from one day to the next, telling myself "They're just small tasks. I'll get to them tomorrow." Philosopher Lao Tzu once stated that the journey of a million miles begins with a single step. As I looked back on my own micro procrastinations I couldn't help but think of the miles and miles I might have journeyed through years and years of daily single steps if I'd only placed more importance on the simple act of completion.

After this revelation I switched my thinking to "They're just small tasks. I'll get to them **RIGHT NOW**." I know this will sound amusing and even self-congratulatory, but my own journal changed my life! It truly did, and it's not because it holds a brilliant secret tool that will unlock your greatest potentials – *or maybe it does?* Through the process of marking and tracking my daily efforts I started doing more and was manufacturing fewer excuses. I began embracing small steps as big accomplishments. I came to understand the brilliance of '**Just Do It!**'

Get to It Yourself!

I'm not suggesting for an instant that personal accountability can only be found in the pages of my journal. It's a good tool for adding value to the process (as it turns out) but the message I really want to get across here is the humble awareness I gained by simply paying attention to my habits around accountability – and the simple realization I gained that I was capable of doing more, even in small steps. How well do you walk your talk in the different aspects of your life where people are dependent on you, or you're expecting better things from yourself? No matter

the circumstance, it's worth taking a closer look at strengthening your own accountability practices as you navigate your day. Here are 4 tips to consider in creating an environment of accountability in your life:

- 1. Prioritize your growth.** Take a close look at all the areas you wish to improve in your life, and then decide which are most important. My journal includes 7 areas for growth, including physical activity, nutrition, work, fun, and relaxation. You may choose to include a daily financial goal or do one small thing everyday to nurture your relationship. Remember the steps will be small, so 5 to 7 goals shouldn't be unmanageable.
- 2. Everyday, plan your day.** Check in with each category every morning, and choose a goal for each of your chosen areas of growth. Write them down and then set out to complete them by days end.
- 3. Keep track.** Don't toss away your daily lists like I used to. By having all of my lists in one location in my **GOT TO IT journal** I started to identify my procrastination habits and work to correct them. Purchase my journal or an empty notebook and carry it with you through the day. It's a truly eye-opening experience.
- 4. Adopt a 'Just DID IT' mindset.** It feels so great to check off completed 'to do' tasks, so make that endorphin release part of your daily reward. Stay focused on growth in small steps.

If there was a fifth tip to add I'd say find an accountability partner or two to help keep you on track. I meet with a colleague regularly (if not reluctantly) to talk business and we hold each other accountable for getting to necessary tasks that will grow our respective businesses. Perhaps you'll benefit from a Mastermind group or mentor. The simple act of sharing your plans and asking for follow-up will ensure you'll step up your game.

It might be easier to wander spontaneously through life and hope for health, wealth, and happiness at the highest levels, but the truth is, change – *and the success connected to it* – requires structure, discipline, and consistency. It took me awhile, but I finally, humbly **GOT TO IT!** Don't be like me. Begin your own accountability plan **today**, experience growth without delay.

If you want to experience FIRST HAND the eye-opening process I went through I *really* encourage you to check out my new **GOT TO IT! 365 Day Journal for Getting to the Good Things**. Now that I have *actually* used it I know it works, and I'm convinced it can make a difference for you!

It's every day accountability to help you switch "*I'll get to it*" to "GOT TO IT!" Have better work-life balance, finally fit in fitness, increase your energy, and love your life - one day at a time. Go to www.gottoit.ca to purchase your copy.

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Michelle Cederberg – “Your ‘Getting to It’ Guru”

Michelle Cederberg leads the industry for life balance, health, and stress management programs, resources, and tools that *actually* conquer procrastination, fatigue, and loss of motivation. Her expansive education and experience combined with her unique products, platform skills and messaging will ensure individuals and corporations understand that “It’s not the *doing* that’s tough, it’s **GETTING TO IT!**” and she helps you figure out how. With a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, and a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, Michelle combines mind, body, and practicality to inspire change! She has built her career since 1990, as a college educator, personal trainer, fitness coordinator, author, and business owner. As a professional speaker, she shares her experiences in a humorous and realistic way with delighted audiences across North America. Michelle knows her energy has fueled her business success! Today, through her products and presentations she motivates you to take small steps toward BIG changes, so you can *actually* GET TO the good things – even with a busy schedule!

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