

FRICTION

INTERNAL

Fall in Love with the Starting Line

The Experiment: Understanding Your “Action Switch”

Duration: 30 days

Time required: 5–10 minutes per day

Goal: To decrease the time between “deciding” and “doing” by automating the transition from negative affect (hesitation) to positive affect (execution).

Phase One: The Diagnostic Week (Days 1–7)

Before you can change your orientation, you need to identify your “Leakage Points.”

1. The Task: Carry a small notebook or digital log. Every time you feel “stuck” (e.g., staring at an email for 20 minutes, scrolling instead of gym-going), record:

- The Trigger: (e.g., “A difficult task,” “A rude comment”)

- The Feeling: (e.g., “Anxiety,” “Boredom,” “Confusion”)

- The Thought: (e.g., “I’m going to mess this up,” “I’ll do it later”)

2. The Goal: Identify if you tend to be more “preoccupied” (stuck on the past/failure) or “hesitant” (stuck on starting).

Phase Two: The Regulation Week (Days 8–14)

Research suggests action-orientation is driven by the ability to “self-relax” to access your internal self-system.

1. The Task: The 3-Breath Circuit. Every time you encounter a “Leakage Point” from Week 1, practice your Cyclic Breathing (see *Train Your Nervous System*).

2. The Goal: Lowering your cortisol levels to intentionally bypass the “threat response” that keeps you in a ruminative loop.

Phase Three: Implementation Intentions (Days 15–21)

Now apply what you've learned to bridge the gap between “knowing” and “doing” using If-Then logic.

1. The Task: Every night this week, pick three specific moments for the next day where you tend to hesitate. Write them down in this format:

- “If [Situation X occurs], then I will immediately [Smallest possible action].”
- Example: “If I feel the urge to check my email while starting my report, then I will open the Word document and type one sentence.”

2. The Research: This has the effect of “delegating” control to your environment, which helps bypass our need to feel motivated in order to get moving.

Phase Four: Affective Priming (Days 22–30)

In the final week, practice “self-priming,” generating the positive mood needed to act.

- 1. The Task:** Before starting a difficult task, spend 60 seconds with your eyes closed visualizing a past time you felt competent and effective. Focus on the *physical* feeling of success.
- 2. The Goal:** To create new neural pathways that associate positive feelings with the experience of starting or picking up challenging tasks.