

Quality #3: Completing Tasks

Living in the Now

- **Download PDF of Unedited Transcription of Audio**
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OG MANDINO FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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While writing the curriculum for the Coaching practicum, I was studying Scroll IX: I will act now. Og writes, *"For now is all I have. Tomorrow is the day reserved for the labor of the lazy. I am not lazy. Tomorrow is the day when the evil become good. I am not evil. Tomorrow is the day when the weak become strong. I am not weak. Tomorrow is the day when the failure will succeed. I am not a failure. I will act now."*

After feeling impressed to write down the four words **lazy**, **evil**, **weak** and **failure**, the first letters from each word created the acronym LEWF. There was something funny about the idea "Don't be a LEWF" and the following words flowed.

Don't Be a LEWF

I am not lazy, the LEWF said with a smile.
It's all figured out, got it filed in my file.
If I spend all today relaxing I'll bet,
I'll be rested and ready tomorrow to sweat.

Me, evil, the LEWF said with a grin.
How could you utter such nonsense, such sin?
Wait 'til the morrow, as idle minds would,
Be out of my system, tomorrow's for good.

So my productivity is down a little this month,
And last month, last year, haven't you had a slump?
Weak? the LEWF questioned, you insult me today!
I can choose to be strong, is tomorrow okay?

Success is the banner that hangs o'er my chair
I see it, I read it, I shout in the air
Can nobody hear me? I mean it this time!
A failure? No! Tomorrow, success will be mine!

And so we hear such repetitive oration,
From LEWFs who love procrastination.
But everyone knows the price they will pay,
For when tomorrow is here, it will still be today.

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There is no such thing as tomorrow. It is always today – the now.

Ten minutes from now it will still be now. Ten years from now it will still be now. The Now is the only time we can touch the time line of eternity. This is where physical creation occurs.

An Intentional Creator brings their vision and passion to the Now and it drives their focus, discipline, effort and action. Driven by passion, they tirelessly and methodically create their dreams in tangible reality. The Now is their home base. They would only leave and go into their minds to get something of value such as an inspired idea, impression or solution to a challenge. They would never waste time in the dark void of fantasy, catastrophe and counterfeit pleasure. They seek only clarity, purpose and passion that will support action.

In the Now, they control their thoughts and free their natural genius. They know what needs to be done, how to do it and can marshal the resources needed to complete tasks. If they don't know how they find out how.

They constantly seek to improve their skills and acquire new abilities so that they will be equal to new opportunities – opportunities that will help bring their dreams into tangible reality. Boring, mundane, repetitious work is foreign to their nature. Every action has a purpose – to move them one step closer to their vision – their dream.

Living in the Now, an Intentional Creator does things in a structured and organized way. They are cautious and prudent and make few mistakes. They take on challenges, details, and complexities as they occur. They protect and maintain what they create.

With a clear vision, an Intentional Creator can enjoy the journey. They know the direction in which they are traveling and why. They know that the journey is a strait (S-T-R-A-I-T) and narrow path.

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By definition, a strait is a narrow channel with rocky shores that often follows a circuitous route. This journey requires constant navigational adjustments to avoid dangerous pitfalls. An Intentional Creator is conscious, living in the Now, and at the helm of their life guided by a power greater than themselves.

If we do not know where we are traveling and remain unconscious along the journey, we will inevitably and unnecessarily crash into the jagged rocks and tear the bottom out of our boat. There are enough challenges in life without creating additional and unnecessary crisis by living unconscious and somewhere other than in the Now.

How does this power that is greater than me, manifest things in the tangible world?

The power that governs abundance actively participates in both the mental and physical creation of our dreams, albeit the power is manifest very differently in each.

1. If we choose to use our minds constructively while in mental creation, this power manifests inspired ideas, impressions and solutions to problems that will ignite passion.
2. If we choose to be fully present in the Now, fully maximizing the gifts already given in passion-driven action, this power freely endows us with more ability.

In the New Testament we find a powerful parable. Whether Christian or not, this principle is worthy of our consideration.

The story is told of a master who was leaving for period of time. To one of his servants – and I will take the liberty of calling these servants partners (as one translation states) – he gave five talents. To a second partner he gave two talents. To a third partner he gave one talent. In those days a talent was a measurement of gold, but let us remember parables are meant to be metaphorical.

The master went away and when he returned he asked for an accounting.

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The first partner had invested wisely and doubled his five talents and now had ten. To this partner the master said, “Well done my good and faithful partner. You have been faithful over a few things, now I will make you master over many. Enter into the peace of the Lord.”

The second partner had done likewise and was rewarded likewise.

However, the third partner buried his talent because of fear. The master took the single talent and said, “You slothful and unwise servant.” The master then summarily dismissed the servant by casting him into outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

What can we learn from this parable? Could it be that burying our gifts because of fear can carry a harsh penalty? Perhaps we would find an even more poignant and applicable answer if we ask ourselves, “What has fear already cost me?”

Usually when we are in fear we are not maximizing our natural talents and abilities. That is punishment enough. Could it also cost us the additional endowment of ability?

3. When in passion-driven action, this power also manifests people on our path who can serve us and who we can serve. It is as if miracles are being manifest. Watching this unfold, the unaware call this phenomenon luck.

One of my favorite versus in all of literature speaks to this. In his little book, *As a Man Thinketh*, James Allen writes,

“The thoughtless, the ignorant, and the indolent, seeing only the apparent effects of things and not the things themselves, talk of luck, of fortune, and chance. Seeing a man grow rich, they say, ‘How lucky he is!’ Observing another become intellectual, they exclaim, ‘How highly favored he is!’ And noting the saintly character and wide influence of another, they remark, ‘How chance aids him at every turn!’”

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They do not see the trials and failures and struggles which these men have voluntarily encountered in order to gain their experience; have no knowledge of the sacrifices they have made, of the undaunted efforts they have put forth, of the faith they have exercised, that they might overcome the apparently insurmountable, and realize the Vision of their heart.

They do not know the darkness and the heartaches; they only see the light and joy, and call it 'luck'; do not see the long and arduous journey, but only behold the pleasant goal, and call it 'good fortune'; do not understand the process, but only perceive the result, and call it 'chance'.

In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. Chance is not, 'Gifts,' powers, material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort; they are thoughts completed, objects accomplished, visions realized."

In summary, when we are in action fully using our ability we receive more ability. When in action, people are placed on our path who we can serve and who can serve us. Mental creation never manifests physical reality. Physical reality is intentionally created by passion-driven action.

Consider:

Come with me to the summer of 2007. Several years earlier, Ramona and I explored the possibility of purchasing a family cabin. Anticipating children and grandchildren, the cabin would need to accommodate 30 to 40 people.

We could see it standing on a mountainside constructed of 12" logs, small stream running through the property, and a panoramic view of a large lake. The vision was clear. It ignited our passion!

There was no need to spend valuable time fantasizing about the cabin in an attempt to prematurely experience what it would be like to be there. We did not want a counterfeit version, we wanted the real thing. We wanted a tangible place in tangible

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reality in which we could visit in the Now and create real and lasting memories. We put the dream on our dream shelf where we could clearly see it, stepped back, and began focusing on the action steps between where we were at the time and the physical realization of this dream.

During this journey, we experienced a serious financial setback, one that cost us millions of dollars and nearly everything we owned. We relocated and spent ten years repaying \$1 million dollars in debt and seven more years rebuilding our estate. However, we did not give up the dream, instead we looked to it and other dreams to sustain our passion during dark hours.

Due to our relocation, we were re-introduced to Bear Lake, the backdrop to many of our fondest childhood memories. Eventually we were able to purchase a condo at that lake - a stop gap. The market was good to us this time and that property soared in value. With hard work, the financial drama from the past was finally behind us and we had saved sufficient reserves to move forward on our dream.

It was time to execute – to take the dream off the shelf and create the cabin in tangible reality. Ramona and I took off a week and went to Bear Lake in search of a cabin.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we searched and to no avail. We knew what we wanted and we did not need to compromise. Thursday we spent the day reading and relaxing.

That evening on the way to dinner we passed a little road. We felt impressed to stop, back up, and take a look. Only a hundred feet down the road there it was, everything we had pictured years earlier. We surveyed the inspiring site - cabin and surroundings. It was clear that it was still under construction but nearing completion. We didn't want to leave.

When we were seated at the Bear Trapper for dinner, I asked the waitress for some paper and a pen. She obliged. While we ate, I drew the familiar floor plan of our dream cabin. Ramona and I shared tender thoughts, laughter, and a keen sense of destiny.

Dinner complete, we decided to stop by the cabin on the way back to the condo. Turning on to the dirt road we noticed a pickup truck was now parked out front. We

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worked our way down the steep bank and climbed up on the porch and poked our heads in the open door.

“Anyone here?”

“We’re downstairs,” came a muffled voice.

“May we come in and take a look at your beautiful cabin?”

“Sure!”

We were met at the stairs by the owner and her good friend. She looked so familiar and I stated such.

“Oh, you must know my twin sister she works with...,” and she mentioned one of my clients by name.

“Really. I’m Dave Blanchard. I speak often for that company.”

“I have heard you speak,” she excitedly responded.

This exchange set into motion an amazing series of events. We asked for permission to look around, which was granted. Much to our amazement, we walked through “our” floor plan – sufficient bedroom suites complete with bathrooms, master suite, kitchen with a long bar built to feed and entertain tons of grandkids, dining area, living room, family room with a rock fireplace, and a loft. The log construction made it warm and inviting. The cathedral windows in the living room provided a panoramic view of the lake. In the back of the property there was even a stream. This was the place of our dreams.

Tour completed, the owner shared that she was looking for a partner and asked if we would be interested. We graciously declined but stated that we would be interested in buying the property if they were ever interested in selling. We had a pleasant conversation around that possibility and then parted for the condo.

The hint of a possibility left me sleepless. I spent much of the night vividly mentally rehearsing and exploring possibilities “trying on” a myriad of scenarios. By morning and only in my mind, we had purchased the cabin, decorated every room, moved in, and had already held several family gatherings.

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I awoke Ramona at sunrise and asked if she would like to take a little hike down to the cabin and she excitedly agreed. We were in the basement when my cell phone rang.

“Hello. Dave speaking.”

“Have you been thinking about it?” came the question from a friendly and familiar voice.

“I’m standing in the basement,” I said with a hopeful smile.

“We need to talk,” she said.

These were the very words we wanted to hear. We invited our new-found friends up for breakfast.

During our visit we learned that due to the dramatic changes in lending policies nationwide, they were unable to get the take-out loan desired. They shared that this problem had reached a critical stage. She then shared that if not solved by Saturday they would lose the property.

She felt impressed to drive 2 ½ hours to the cabin believing she could find a solution. She also shared that just ten minutes before we arrived the previous evening, she had been down by the stream crying and praying to her God seeking an answer to a seemingly unsolvable and insurmountable challenge.

By noon we had purchased the cabin, made them financially whole including the one thing they wanted most – to be able to spend one week a year each summer at the cabin.

The power that governs abundance knew their dilemma and knew our heart’s desire. We were ready and able to execute having taken each sequential step leading up to this moment. We were in passion driven action and the power that governs abundance facilitated a miracle. To the unaware this may have appeared to be dumb luck. It was not mistake that we saw the cabin and no mistake that we stopped.

Every time we go the cabin or pause and reflect on this gift, we experience a deep sense of gratitude, wonder, awe, and joy. This is a sacred place. We have had over 50 couples

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come to heal their marriages. We have trained coaches. We have had friends and clients come to heal wounds from life. We have rejoiced with our children and grandchildren.

There is no comparison between these very real experiences and the euphoric yet artificial and counterfeit feelings created by large doses of norepinephrine which are released when we choose to engage in escape and avoid fantasies. The latter is being experienced by far too many who are actively seeking financial abundance and the consequences are deadly to dreams. It is time to become an Intentional Creator.

What lessons can we learn from this experience?

Consider:

It was October 1991. We were drowning in discouragement,, buried in a million dollars in debt. Ramona was about to provide the fire that would ignite the courage needed for us to finally move up and out of a very deep and dark pit.

Determined to become a scriptwriter, I had been pounding on the keyboard of my computer eight to ten hours a day, six days a week for the past twenty-one months - three feature film scripts completed and a fourth nearing completion. Ramona asked me to take a break and accompany her and her running partner, KaeLoy Hanna, a neighbor and good friend, to St. George, Utah. They were going to run the St. George Marathon.

For several months Ramona and KaeLoy had faithfully followed a strict daily running schedule that culminated in a twenty-one mile run the previous Saturday.

As we drove to St. George, I heard training story after training story from the last several months including how they would strategically hide water bottles along their path for the longer runs and of course restroom challenges. We laughed so hard that if we were drinking milk it would have come out our noses. Where had I been all of these months? Apparently focused on my stuff but unconscious to Ramona's needs.

There was a little nip in the early morning air as I dropped the runners off close to starting line. The race would begin in about thirty minutes and travel the requisite 26.2 miles along the red rocks that lined this beautiful Southern Utah community. Ramona was focused and prepared. She confidently nodded as she exited the vehicle. I said something inane like, "Wish you the best, sweetheart."

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My awareness became heightened as Ramona and Kaeloy disappeared in the pre-dawn throng and I began to think of so many things that should have been said. I parked the car and waited. Although spectators could not get near the starting line, the words soon rippled through the crowd, “they’re off!”

The minutes ticked by slowly. I became increasingly conscious of what was transpiring on the mountain road above us. As the sun rose and began to heat the October sky, I was getting thirsty. Then I began to feel Ramona’s thirst. As one hour turned into two, I became increasingly anxious and concerned.

By the time the first failed or injured runners were brought to the First Aid stations close to the finish line my heart was pounding. “What was she attempting to do? What had driven her to take on something so monumental? Why had I been so blind, pre-occupied, and insensitive during all of the weeks and months of preparation? I am sure she could have used more support.”

Despite my pre-occupation with writing and digging us out of a financial pit, Ramona always remained calm, trusting, and supportive. She also ran six days a week while maintaining the multitudinous tasks of being the consummate mother to seven young children. There was never a complaint...never. There is a lesson in this.

I reflected on a painful moment twenty-one months earlier when all of our possessions were loaded in two Ryder trucks and we drove away from our dream home in California. I led out, my father followed in the second truck, and Ramona and our children followed in our twelve-passenger Ford van the kids affectionately tagged the “poo log” (I was a scout master and the van often smelled like aftermath of too many Doritos).

Tears were streaming down my cheeks and dripping on my shirt as I rounded the corner of the driveway and turned to look one last time at our failed dream. It was then that I saw Ramona pulling out of driveway while leading the children in a rousing chorus from one of her favorite camp songs. She smiled and waved. I was devastated. Ramona was in the Now spreading peace. There is a lesson in this.

My mind shifted to a week later when we arrived in Utah and were looking for a new home. One night she sat me down and took off her ring, a diamond ring I gave her for our tenth wedding anniversary, and said, “I don’t need this anymore. I can wear the

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one you gave me when we were first married. Please sell it and use the money to buy our new house.” There is a lesson in this.

Two hours turned into three. I was beginning to ache for her. “Keep pushing, sweetheart,” I spoke in silence yet screamed in my soul. “You can do this. If anyone can, you can!” I threw a fist in the air as if to send Ramona all the energy I could muster.

As it neared the fourth hour, I left the finish line and began working my way through the crowd and up the path about a quarter mile hoping to get a glimpse of my champion. Tears began to spontaneously flow in anticipation as exhausted runner after runner passed and we all cheered them on. Then suddenly there she was. “Yes!”

I cheered as I attempted to run alongside. It was clear that Ramona was thoroughly spent. I could feel her reaching deep into her soul way beyond physical capacity which had been exhausted a few miles prior. The finish line was now in sight. “I love you,” I shouted. “You are almost there!” Ramona mustered a smile and a confident nod. There is a lesson in this.

The finish line finally came. I rushed to the fence that separated the runners from the cheering crowd. Ramona saw me and approached the fence. Draped around her neck was the prized St. George Marathon medallion. She proudly held it up for me to see. We reached through the fence, interlocked fingers, looked deep into each other’s eyes, and cried. Little needed to be said.

I imagined that this must be much like the reunion we will have with our God when we return home after having successfully finished the marathon called life. One of us will go first and will be waiting. That day I saw my God differently. He is our greatest cheerleader encouraging us in moments of weakness and doubt, buoying us up when we fall. Inspiring us to reach deep and discover newfound ability. I could hear his voice in my heart as he spoke the words to Ramona, “Well done my good and faithful daughter.” “Yes,” I exclaimed, “Well done, Ramona. Well done!”

What a sweet reunion. Ramona had given all she had. She always does. She had conquered her fears and doubts. She was victorious. It was inspiring, encouraging and humbling to witness. It breathed new life into our partnership and new blood into my tired heart. There is a lesson in this.

We stayed for the awards ceremony not wanting to leave. As they gave out

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the awards for the top three finishers in specific age and weight categories, we suddenly and unexpectedly heard a familiar name, “Second place, Ramona Blanchard.” What a sweet ending to a simply amazing experience.

Ramona is not the first person to run a marathon nor did she beat the world record. Here is the secret. It was her private dream. She got a clear vision of all the steps between where she was the first day she did a practice run and the finish line of the marathon. She got up every morning and asked, “Why am I here?” The question ignited her passion and drove the action needed to bring the dream into tangible reality. Those decisions were made in the Now. The work was done in the Now. Each step of the marathon was accomplished in the Now. The victory was in the Now. The joy was real, because the dream became reality.

This joyful moment was replayed again in April of 2008 when Ramona, our four grown and married daughters, and one daughter-in-law completed the Las Vegas Iron Girl sprint triathlon. In preparation and for several weeks in advance of the race, Ramona faithfully arose at 5:30 AM on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to swim and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday to run and bike.

All of the hard work and discipline brought Ramona to the final quarter mile of the race where she was met by her daughters who had already finished. They supported her by running alongside while singing the chorus to *We Are the Champions*. Close to the finish line they peeled off and let Ramona cross, arms raised, triumphant.

There would be no formal awards that day, but there was a conscious and grateful husband, carrying a grandchild on his shoulders, absolutely living in the Now. Ramona has that affect on people. Thank you, sweetheart for these moments and so many others in which you have modeled the message - stay focused on the dream above your head, ignore obstacles at your feet, take passion driven action and bring your dream to fruition.

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Consider ways in which you could be more present in the Now.

The Quality of Completing Tasks requires that we live in the Now. The Now becomes our primary residence. We will visit the sacred space of the mind on occasion but only as a reminder or reference point or to create additional clarity regarding our vision. This will assist in creating or sustaining our passion. When we embrace becoming an Intentional Creator, we do not want to escape from life but instead want to engage in life. Driven by our vision and resultant passion we will work tirelessly without counting the costs.