

"The Robert Plank Show"



Episode #027

Productivity & Time Management

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Table of Contents

Milestone #1: Proper Motivation	3
Milestone #2: Stability vs. Maintenance Mode	3
Milestone #3: Let Your Neuroses & Unhappiness Work For You	4
Milestone #4: Declutter	5
Milestone #5: Avoid Putting the Horse Before the Cart	6
Milestone #6: Acting vs. Reacting	6
Milestone #7: Fear of Completion & Success	7

I'm Robert Plank, former computer programmer who went through a path of:

- working for others
- freelancing
- making products
- making membership sites
- making courses
- building a list

I now have a more than full-time income coming from a less than part time effort. Most of that comes down to being your own boss and motivating yourself. You can't rely on someone else to look over your shoulder. You can't rely on a "steady" paycheck to keep you just above poor with just enough money to retire the day after you turn 75 years of age. That's no fun.

I want you to be able to build your own successful internet business and do things like:

- build a list on the Internet
- make a sales letter
- sell products
- make money
- cultivate an opt-in email list

I want you to get to that next logical step and figuring out what it is that people want on the Internet, and whatever you niche you're in... it could be WordPress plug-ins, how to play the guitar, organic gardening, what's being sold out there and how you can wedge yourself somewhere in there and be a breath of fresh air. Sell that 10, 20, 100 dollar a month, 1,000 dollar a month course on how to solve some of these problems.

We fall into the same habits... buy this little 10 dollar report, buy this little 5 dollar report. We hear about this new way to make money. At the end of the month, when we have 10 different things we started, 10 different balls in the air, we have no focus, we're just putting out fires and have either no money to show for or we know that our potential is much greater than that.

I want to share with you how to follow through and get everything and it comes down to seven things:

1. Proper motivation
2. Stability versus maintenance mode
3. Let your neuroses and unhappiness work FOR you
4. Declutter
5. Avoid putting the horse before the cart
6. Acting versus reacting
7. Fear of completion & success.

On the Internet, we have all these possibilities, all these choices and it's a lot more fun for sure to have an idea, register the domain name, register the trademark, get some graphics made. You say, "I was able to check 20 things off my to-do list." But you didn't do anything that made money.

Milestone #1: Proper Motivation

I am going to sabotage myself if I'm left to my own devices! I don't trust myself to actually finish things. I lower my expectations, and if I know I'm going to make a course about how to run webinars, I want to use structured things, so that I make the simplest version, 1.0 I can. And I get that finished and finish can just mean up to this milestone and out to the market and then I can add on to it from there. But when you're stuck and you're trying to get out of that rut and try to get things done and make money, finishing needs to be more fun and more important to you than starting.

You need better habits and a better lifestyle, a better support system. Think about that for a second: what if you've actually FINISHED something today, this week, this month, as opposed to starting? It's easy to get carried away. It's easy to start up this project, start up this report, start up this video and have all these unfinished things. And what happens is your subconscious gets overloaded, overwhelmed, dragged down and that's no fun for anybody. You need to clear out things and finish them.

Milestone #2: Stability vs. Maintenance Mode

There are two extremes when it comes to Internet marketing, especially information marketing. I'm talking about making reports, making products, making membership sites.

The two extremes are: one extreme is if I go project, project, project and you get a lot finished. Earlier on my Internet career, I was good at making 2,000 bucks at a time. I have an idea, make a sales letter, make all these things, put them all together and in about 24 hours, it would start making money. It would make about 1,000 bucks during the day and about 1,000 bucks over night until it will dry up. What did I have to do? Start from scratch all over again and start a new project.

That was good at first, until - you can probably guess what happened - I burned myself out, ran out of ideas and the money dried out for a while. But that was a good stepping stone towards bigger and better things. I think there are two minds that you have to go through, two phases if you will. The first phase is for sure putting things out there, seeing what works, seeing what doesn't work and then you can go back and redo them.

My business partner Lance Tamashiro and I have updated our Membership Cube course, updated our Webinar course, updated our Product Creation course and there are a lot of other courses where we put it out the first time and didn't update it because it was not a great seller or re-promoted that old thing without making a new one, because it was an okay seller.

You want to be smart and see what's working and stay relevant and not get left behind. But we see people become complacent. They'll make one book, one video course, and they'll do really, really well. They won't make anything new for five years until they have to, until they run out of money. They'll do a

huge launch, huge launch, maybe go and do a big re-launch, get all of the affiliates, but every time they do it, they'll have diminishing returns and they'll become less and less, until now they really have to change things, because they have no choice.

Car companies, like Honda, Hyundai, Ford. Do they have to come up with a new car? Does Ford have to come up with a new Mustang every single year? No, they don't have to. But they do, because they want to stay relevant. Does Apple have to come out with a new iPhone, iPad every single year? No but they always find some way to be new and exciting, because otherwise someone else is going to swoop in there and take their place because of capitalism, free market and all that stuff.

Let's say you had a project to complete. And let's say it took you one month to complete it. And you have three of these. So you have a project that is going to take a month, another one that is going to take a month and another one that is going to take another month. There are basically two different extremes you can go through: either you could knock out one and make money from that and make money a month from now, then make more money in two months, then make more money in three months, or you could do what people always fall into and doing things in parallel, which is really bad - multitasking is really bad.

They start on one project, then start project number 2, start up project number 3 and next thing you know it takes three months to even get anywhere - that is if things even get finished, because you have to keep switching back and forth, back and forth. And it might even take longer than three months. But we don't want that. We want to do small stepping stones, don't necessarily trust ourselves and assume that something is going to distract us the next 2 seconds, so we need to get that done and completed and at least somewhat sellable, somewhat finished by the end of the week, the end of the month, whenever you think you're going to lose focus.

Milestone #3: Let Your Neuroses & Unhappiness Work For You

Here is a weird, controversial one, but I'm happy to share it with you, is to let your neuroses or your unhappiness work for you. Here is what I mean: something drove you to start and run and grow your own online business. Something gave you that drive, whether that is, you know, you've got frustrated with the way your career was going, you got unhappy with some job or you ended up in a lifestyle where you had to come up with that money or something happened.

When we get unhappy, it forces us to take action. And I'm not saying you should live a life of always being grumpy. But what I am saying is that so many people have a cushy life and it hurts them. They have a cushy life of say 1,000 bucks a month, 2,000 that comes in from military pay, retirement or a spouse or something else that happens and they don't really have any reason, any motivation to survive. They live in this sad area of having some money, but not really being driven or motivated to come up with more money.

We want something at the end of the rainbow, some reward and we need to figure out, you know, if I have 2,000 bucks coming in, that's only going to afford me a certain lifestyle. But if I'm more - not necessarily greedy, but hungry - and I want more of a life for myself - now if that means pay off my

house earlier, retire, travel, pay off someone else's house, pay off someone else's college education - you need to have some goal (we call this a reason why) that once you have X amount of dollars, you'll get X result. Not necessarily a bigger and bigger bank account, but if you had a certain amount of money, what could you do with that, especially if it's emotionally tied to change your life or someone else's life, you're the one to get to that certain milestone, knowing that that's not the endgame. That's just one more milestone: you want to get X dollars in Y amount of weeks and that's the next milestone you can get to in your life.

Milestone #4: Declutter

Once again, going counter-intuitive to what's fun or what you hear from a lot of so-called "productivity coaches" and "mindset people". The sad thing is that most time-management productivity systems are centered around studying about different things about productivity and adding to the problem and creating a complicated system of quadrants, columns, to-do lists and priorities. And at the end of the day you have to realize that in a typical 24 hour period, you really only do 15 minutes, maybe an hour worth of stuff. We all think, "Oh, no, but I put in 10 hour days, or I put in 12 hour days". Well do you really? You check email, you check Twitter, you check Facebook, you get distracted, you switched back and forth through all these things. And if you think about of all the task you do, and you subtract all the distractions, subtract all the maintenance, all the putting out fires, you look at what actually made you money today, it's probably only a few minutes or maybe an hour or two if you're lucky of actual stuff.

We have a book called "[Four Daily Tasks](#)" which tells you to do just four things every day. If you have to do more than 4 things, you have 2 choices: either those activities can all be bunched together, because I know people who say "I'm going to do 30 things. I'm going to post to Twitter, post to Facebook, update my blog." And I'm thinking, if you can lump that all into let's say a 40 minutes or a 20 minutes session and that could be just one simple task, and it's a tangible task where I can literally see, was that done? Not "make 10% of my book", no, it's "finish chapter 1 of your book". Or it's not "work on sales letter", it's "ease the paying button on the sales letter", "ease that headline on the sales letter". Just 4 daily tasks.

Don't add to these, please, don't complicate it. Because I've presented this at enough seminars where I say, "Just do 4 things". The people say, "Well, you know, for me, 3 things is better", "You know, for me, 5 things is better", or "You know, I like to combine this and that, I like to eat a frog a day, I like to add to the 4 things." Just do the 4 things, in the morning don't make it so damn complicated!

Just do 4 things, that's it, and the way it works out for me and Lance it's about three tasks that take about 40 minutes, and one that takes about 10 minutes, every single day. And that might consist of putting together a webinar presentation, recording a podcast, blog post, sales letter, whatever it is, 4 daily tasks, please don't make it more complicated that it has to be. And try it. And don't do to-do lists, just have the 4 most important things. If you think of more than 4 things, maybe some tasks can be bunched together or they just aren't as important as the 4 things that need to be done today.

And in this book there's also a lot of stuff we don't have time to get into, such as using a Google calendar to schedule appointments with yourself, to make sure things get done, having an accountability partner, to make sure that your actions are tied to emotional - either congratulations or remorse - , adding a countdown timer to give your brain that false sense of urgency, using a program called Camtasia, to record yourself doing things and make sure it simulates someone looking over your shoulder - all these things. But you'll get more clarity and focus and action and drive and motivation, you'll feel better in general if you declutter, if you get rid of those loose ends that are always dragging you down and get things closed and out of the way and finished.

Milestone #5: Avoid Putting the Horse Before the Cart

Speaking of that, of clearing up a noise, people do this thing called putting the horse before the cart which means you say, "you know what you should do? You should make a print book on how to play the guitar." And they say, "Fantastic! I'm going to make three books, I'm going to do a pitch webinar, I'm going to make a CD, I'm going to make a DVD, I'm going to make a 10 dollar a month course. And then what happens? It's good to get excited, don't get me wrong. But they mind-map and over-plan and they do all these things and they get to the point where they start weeding out people who don't go in line with their view.

Here is what I mean. I say, "Just do this one simple thing", and they say, "I'm going to do all this crazy stuff." And I say, "Well, don't get too crazy." And they say, "I'm no more going to listen to you, now I'm going to go to this message board of people who don't make money and I'm going to say this is a good idea. And everyone says of course it's a good idea. You know what you should do? You should make 10 books and you should make 5 DVDs." And everyone gets so excited about air, about nothing. After a while, it gets burned out.

Even worse: your imagination plays tricks on you. You take that journey, and you feel almost as if you've done these things. You think, "Imagine, having all these DVDs done, imagine having this book done, making all these sales." And it's great in your dream world, but in the real world you didn't make money and it feels like you've put in all this work and you're tired and you end up falling in this pattern of resenting taking any action, because it's more fun to play around in the dream world.

Milestone #6: Acting vs. Reacting

Have you heard of the phrase, "If your ship hasn't come in, don't wait for it, swim out to it"? We want to be careful and strategic and think a few moves ahead. If you know you're going to have a huge expense coming up - kid going to college, huge medical bill or whatever it is - don't wait till the last minute.

Squash these things before they become real problems. If you're having trouble dealing with a competitor or some technical issue, how to record a video, then figure out a way through it or around it, hire someone else to handle your videos, or if you feel like you're going to need postcard marketing, then deal with that before you have to start putting out those fires.

If you have a huge tax bill coming soon, for example, how about a few months ahead of time, when you won a big promotion and set that money aside to pay for your taxes or whatever big expense is coming up. But so many problems and so many people could avoid everything slamming to a squeegee hole just by reacting instead of acting.

Milestone #7: Fear of Completion & Success

People always think that the end is closer than it actually is. Here is what I mean. We're going along these lines of making a product and so many times I'll say, here is what your niche is, here is what people want to know, and, based on your skills, here is what you can create. And they think that as soon as I hit the Save button after typing on my 20 page report, I'm done. And that's it, that's all I have to do, and all the money will roll in. Then it becomes harder and harder to reach that finish line, because they don't want things to be over and it's scary to go over into that next phase of marketing. So we want to think in terms of milestones and consistent progress, because you're going to make that book on how to flip real estate, how to play the guitar, and you know what?

First you get at that stage of making a product, that's the quick stage, that would be a day or two, maybe three days, and that's it. And then you go out and market it, which is scary, because people might not like it, people might refund, people might not buy. And it's up to you to have that thick skin to put yourself out there and adjust and see what it is you can do that works and what it is that didn't work, that you don't repeat. But you have to be a marketer.

People get so afraid and so stressed out, but the rewards are huge - to be able to generate money out of thin air, that you didn't have to work for, that you didn't have to wait for a paycheck for, it's awesome. And I want you to go right now to makeaproduct.com and see how easy it can be to dictate out a book, dictate out your whole marketing message, create info-products, generate all your emails, all that good stuff at makeaproduct.com.

A great place to get your head on straight and to get focused and to get that stick-to-it-ness and get it done is over at timemanagementoncrack.com. And finally, go to robertplankshow.com to like this page, let us know what you've thought of today's episode in this new compressed format.

That has been [The Robert Plank Show, Episode 27: Productivity and Time Management - The Secrets to Following Through and Getting Everything Done](#).