A Simple System for Getting Amazing Things Done
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“Do whatever you do intensely.”
—Robert Henri

This article outlines a simple system for Getting Amazing Things Done. In fact, it’s three simple steps. It can’t get any easier.

**Step 1: Find Something Amazing to Work On**

Every day, first thing in the morning, figure out Something Amazing that you want to work on today. It can be anything: a big project at work, creating your own business, learning programming or web development skills, writing a song, taking photographs, anything. It should be something that excites you, that will change your life at least in some small way. It should compel you to work on it because you’re inspired, excited, motivated.

Some people are lucky enough to know what that is every day. I’m one of those: I love writing, and I always have some blog post or book to write (often too many to choose from). I just need to choose the particular thing to write about.

Others haven’t found their passion yet, and that’s OK. You don’t need to make a huge life decision today. All you need to do is pick something that sounds fun — it could be a project you have at work, or a potential hobby, or learning a new skill, or learning how to start your own business. It doesn’t matter what you pick — because if you’re wrong, you can pick something different tomorrow.

Some ideas — but not an exhaustive list — of what “Something Amazing” might be:

- An exciting new way of reaching potential customers.
- That great novel you always wanted to write.
- A painting, sketch, comic.
- A screenplay, play, short story, new type of fiction or blog post.
- A new non-profit organization to help others.
- A lesson that will Wow your students.
- A craft activity that your kids will get a thrill out of.
- Crazy new fashion, beautiful clothes, hand-crafted jewelry.
- Something that improves the lives of others.
- Something that changes your own life.

You get the idea. It can be almost anything.
You’re not locking yourself in to this choice for life — just for today, or at least a little bit of today. Try something out. See how it goes. You never know if you’re going to find the thing that changes your life.

**Step 2: Clear away everything else**

Here’s the thing that will help you achieve that something amazing: clearing away distractions.

You’re going to clear your desk — shove everything in a drawer or box if you have to, and leave only the papers necessary to work on your Something Amazing, and a couple of other essential items (phone, pen & pad, etc.).

You’re going to clear your computer — close all programs, including your browser, that you don’t absolutely need for this task. It’s also crucial that you turn off all notifications on your computer that might distract you: email notifications, Instant Messaging, calendar notifications, anything. Make your computer as distraction-free as possible. Also turn off your phone and anything else that might distract you from your Something Amazing.

Finally, clear away meetings and anything on your task list that will interfere with this one task. You can get to those other tasks later, but for now, you’re going to work on nothing but this one amazing task.

**Step 3: Focus on that Something Amazing**

OK, everything is clear. Now you just need to focus on that Something Amazing — that one task you chose that you’re excited about, that’s going to change your life in some small way.

Do this as soon as you can in the day — not after lunch or late in the day, but as close to First Thing as you can. Either before you go into work or as soon as you get into work and can clear your desk. Don’t wait until later, or things will pile up and you’ll never get to it.

This is actually the step that most people have a problem with. They get the urge to check email or make that phone call or... do anything else, really. No! Stop yourself, take a deep breath, and remember why you chose this task. You’re excited about it. Feel that excitement, and focus.

Even if that focus only comes for a few minutes, give it your best shot. You might give in to the urge to do something else, but then bring yourself back and see if you can’t focus for a few more minutes. Repeat until you’ve worked a good chunk (30 minutes, an hour, two hours, half the day if possible) on your Something Amazing.

Do your best to either finish this Something Amazing, or a good chunk of it. If it’s a big project that will take days, months or years, just finish a chunk that’ll take at least an hour or two of your day. When you’re done, bask in the glory of your accomplishment. If you have more time and energy, repeat the process. Work on your next Something Amazing. Keep doing this, working on exciting and amazing things, for the rest of your life.