

**Getting Unstuck:
11 Powerful Tips to Mobilize and Get Your Life Back on Track
By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.**

What are your demons of immobility? Depression, self-doubt, self-pity, fear, inability to choose - are all descriptors of being stuck. Maybe you don't know what you want, much less how to get it. How can you get yourself unstuck when all your best efforts have brought you to this place of being stuck? It might lie in your thinking. You say that you want to do something else, be somewhere else, or start something new. But you don't what the "something" is. Or you might know what it is that you do want to do, but lack what it takes to even get started. Or perhaps you have started toward your goals before and have not been able to stay the course. Maybe you make a good first start, only to lose momentum, get discouraged, and give up. Where does it break down for you?

You may have resistance to change, saying to yourself or to others, "I need to make a change, but....." You might even ask others for help in making a change, then discount their suggestions with "Yes, but....". Perhaps you have "logical" or reasonable explanations for why their solutions or suggestions won't work for you. Perhaps your logical explanations for your limitations have to do with others. You might even blame others for being stuck. You may tell yourself that you could do something different if only your circumstances were better or your family members were different or more supportive, or less selfish.

You may have analyzed your situation and discovered the reasons and the factors involved in your uncomfortable immobility. You might know exactly why you are stuck. You may even know what it would take to get unstuck. But, how can you change when you lack the courage, the self-discipline or motivation to do so? Whatever the cause or contributing factors in being stuck, you can begin to get unstuck today, right now, by making small changes. You can start by looking at how you think. Look at your own rationale for continuing to do what you have been doing. What are the "shoulds" in your thinking that help perpetuate continuing to do what is not working? On one hand, you know that what you are doing is not working, and on the other hand, you still believe that those same efforts "should" be working. Perhaps your level of immobility is proportional to your emotional investment in "being right" about the expectation that what you are continuing to do should be working. Challenge those "shoulds" and any other distortions or unrealistic thinking that keeps getting in the way of your dreams and goals.

You cannot get unstuck and not change. Although change may be a scary thing, you have to embrace change to get unstuck. Small ongoing changes can make a big impact. Try some or all of these things and see what happens.

1. If you tend to analyze and not do anything, stop the analysis paralysis and do something-anything.
2. If you tend to act impulsively, going by whatever you are thinking or feeling at the moment, stop. Assess. Decide. Plan. Act.

3. Look at your assumptions and beliefs. If they are not helpful in making the needed changes, challenge them. Ask yourself, "Are they realistic, or just reinforced and justifying your fears and inactivity.
4. Stop engaging in self-sabotaging behavior such as second-guessing yourself, procrastination, negative self-talk. Replace these with positive, and self-encouraging thoughts and behavior.
5. Give yourself credit for your efforts. Don't discount the amount of progress you are making.
6. Stay engaged in the process. If you are focused on immediate gratification on outcome, you will give up. Learning to enjoy the process, will empower you to keep moving toward your goals.
7. Ask for help. It is not true that you "should" be able to do everything by yourself. Don't throw away the help offered, by saying, "yes, but" then arguing for your limitations. If you argue for your limitations you will be keeping them.
8. If feeling overwhelmed, break the tasks down into small, manageable pieces.
9. Make a list of everything on your plate that you are worried about, that you have hanging over your head, that are contributing to being stressed out or overwhelmed. Make a list of things that you can do to feel better, to get moving, or to de-stress. Pick items from each list to tackle daily.
10. Take action-daily.
11. Believe in yourself. Invest your own time, energy, and resources in your own development. The rate of return will be worth it.

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