

I recently wrote about the challenge of getting what we *want to do* to align with what we *should do*<sup>1</sup>. Let’s continue down that path a little further. How do we move ourselves from “I should” to “I will”? Once we find the motivation for the right behavior, the next step is to find some methods for executing on those motivations.

Here are some methods and more motivations that might facilitate the shift from “I should” to “I will”:

- 1. Break it down.** Large, overwhelming tasks are paralyzing. If I think, “write a book”, I don’t have time for that. But I could find time to draft a table of contents this week. Outline one chapter next week. Write the intro the week after that. Or maybe I commit to two pages a day. Don’t focus on what you can’t do, plan and execute what you can do.
- 2. Clear up ambiguity.** We tend to shy away from anything that isn’t clear or that we don’t know how to do. You could blame it on everyone else for not making it clear and continue to wallow in unproductivity. Or you could own the responsibility to pursue clarity. Pursue it and do it.
- 3. Be accountable.** Your boss isn’t the only one who can hold you accountable, especially if you ask for it. Peers, friends, subordinates, relatives – if you can’t find someone who will hold you accountable you’re not trying very hard. Back to the book example, tell your kids they get ice cream every day that you write two pages and see if they don’t provide some accountability.
- 4. Reward your successes.** Did you do what you “should” instead of what you “wanted” to do every day this week? Get yourself some ice cream – unless eating healthier is your “should”! Put a positive spin on the things you’re most reluctant to do and your willingness will grow. What gets rewarded gets repeated.
- 5. Make it about others.** Assuming you’re not an egomaniac, focusing on how your success or failure impacts others might be the motivational nudge you need.



Whether it’s a lazy streak, risk aversion, lack of clarity, apathy, or something else that keeps you from doing what you should do, you have a choice. Succumb to it and accept the consequences or take action and overcome it. You don’t have to conquer it in one fell swoop. But like repetitions at the gym, a consistent series of small, intentional steps will strengthen your ability to resist “wants” in favor of “shoulds”. You’ll probably experience a few setbacks along the way, but don’t let them derail you. Learn from the misses and your success will continue to grow.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.enLumenLS.com/want-should>