

1

Being Stuck Sucks

Stuck Projects, Stuck Life

Is there something important you want to do? Maybe it's a career change you want to make, or a personal project you want to start. But for some reason, whatever it is, you haven't started yet. You're reading this book because you're stuck.

Consider us your coaches. For more than 20 years, we have traveled the world, working with people who are overwhelmed by the feeling of being stuck. We teach them how to get momentum. This book gives you the knowledge we've organized in a way that you can practice. These tactics work. We're not here to motivate you. There's more to it than that. We know you've heard inspiring clichés such as Nike's "Just do it" or "Leap and the net will appear" or "Think outside the box." Enough already!

Read this book, and you'll learn strategies that people around the world use to start important projects and achieve big goals, such as:

- Making a career change.
- Changing how their family interacts to create less stress and more joy.
- Training for a competitive athletic event.
- Starting a business to get out of a job they hate and into the work they love.
- Creating art.
- Planning an adventure on their bucket list.
- Losing weight and staying active for a healthier life.
- Transforming their retirement into the next vibrant chapter in their life.

We want to help you move from feeling stuck to getting started. Be bold and courageous as you complete all the Get Momentum Activities in this book. Each activity is designed to help you move forward.

This Thing Called Momentum

Think about the word *momentum*. What does it mean to you? If you had more of it, what would your life be like?

Momentum means you're moving, and things are happening. It means you're making progress, and it feels good! We will teach you a self-reflective process, a method for making the changes you want and starting the projects that are important to you.

For a moment, focus on what you'd like to start. Maybe you know what you need to do, but it's too big to even start. Perhaps you have so many things you need to do that you feel overwhelmed. Or, it could be a change you want to make, or a project you want to complete.

Next, we'll share with you what being stuck sounds, looks, and feels like.

What Does Being Stuck Sound Like?

We asked people around the world why they haven't gotten started. They want to start a project or make a change, but ... There's always a "but."

Here are the top five things they say.

1. *"I Don't Know"*

"I don't know where to begin. I don't even know if it's possible to do what I want. I don't know what the result would look like. I don't know anyone who will guide me or hold me accountable."

2. *"What I Have is Fine"*

"Things aren't terrible. They always say, 'Don't fix what isn't broken.' I'll just do what I've always done. It (the job, relationship, or living situation) isn't *that* bad. I'll just keep on keeping on. If things change, they change."

3. *"I've Failed Before"*

"I tried to do something like this before, and it didn't work out. What's going to be different if I try again? Why should I keep working at it?"

4. *"I'm Confused"*

"I want something new, but that will undo some of the other things in my life. I'm not aligned with (my boss, partner, spouse, kids, etc.) on the changes yet. What if I make all these changes, and it's not better than what I've got now?"

5. *"I'm Overwhelmed"*

"This change I want to make is just too big and overwhelming. I'll never have the time it's going to take. I don't have the money to start it. I already have too much to do."

What Does Being Stuck *Look Like*?

On one typical coaching day, Jason looked across the client's desk in his office on the 37th floor. A long-time client, Stephen (not his real name) was a senior manager in a professional advisory firm in New York City. Looking out the window, Jason took in the view of blue skies over Lower Manhattan.

Stephen had been silent for about three minutes now, lunch untouched, his brow furrowed, his shoulders taut. The stress in the room was thick; Jason felt it, and waited. Why the silence? Jason had asked Stephen a question he had never answered out loud.

One look around the office and you'd assume Stephen had everything together: the Hermès tie around his neck, the dual 27-inch computer monitors side-by-side on his standing desk, the framed family vacation photos on the desk, and a painting of a fogged-in Pebble Beach golf course hanging on the wall. Stephen scheduled this one-on-one coaching session because he knew that Jason helped people manage the complexity of work-life issues.

To put it bluntly, Stephen was overwhelmed, stressed out, and stuck.

Stephen confided in Jason that he was about to accept a promotion, and he would fly to London every other Sunday and return home Wednesday. He would manage a group of 200 people, and his increase in compensation would be around 15 percent. This was the role he'd focused on for the past 18 months. But, Jason could tell something was off.

Before lunch, Stephen told Jason he had been diagnosed with hypertension earlier that month and still hadn't picked up his meds. His wife was worried, he said. He was spending more time

in the office than last year. What's more, his kids had started visiting colleges; all three would graduate high school in the next five years.

After a brief chat about the local baseball team, Jason asked, "Stephen, is the work you'd be doing what you want to be known for?"

The question hung in the air through an uncomfortable pause. After a long silence, he replied, "Jason, it's what I've been working toward for more than a year. My boss knew it. My wife knew it. But, as I map it out, I realize how stressful it will be. How much of my kids' lives I'd miss. How much pressure I'd be under to, how can I say it, be in two places at once." Jason listened. Stephen went on.

"When I called you last month to set up our meeting, I thought I just needed to get more organized. The question you're asking me now, well, I just don't know."

And so began a year-long coaching program focused on just one Momentum Question that got the ball rolling. As Stephen's executive coach, Jason was not going to motivate his New York City client to make a snap decision or set up an ultimatum. Instead, he was going to help Stephen take the very same actions that you will practice as you read *Get Momentum: How to Start When You're Stuck*.

What Does Being Stuck *Feel Like*?

A trait among people we coach—entrepreneurs, founders, managers, senior executives—is that they continue doing WUTW (what used to work). During a phone call with Jerry (not his real name), a two-year member of our Get Momentum Leadership Academy, he said, "Last year, I started going in to the office Saturday mornings once a month just to catch up."

He continued, "Even though I know times have changed, and my role is different, it's necessary to work on the weekends. Honestly, I don't see any other way. Here's the problem: For the past three months, I've been going in every Saturday."

It had been 21 months since Jerry accepted this position at a new company. He and his wife, had moved from Northern California to Washington, D.C. He was leading a new team of developers, the work was exciting, and the problems he was solving were challenging in a good way. While in D.C., they had their first baby at the same time that his client coverage increased. And, with the work he was doing and his incredible production, he had just earned a much higher bonus.

Naturally, that eased some of the financial pressure Jerry and his wife were feeling. But, he felt stuck. His only response to getting more work done was working longer hours and seeing his wife and baby girl even less.

Our mentor, best-selling author and internationally known leadership coach Marshall Goldsmith—who wrote the book *What Got You Here, Won't Get You There*—wrote an e-mail to Jason and said, “Most people, especially those who are already successful, believe that because they do a certain behavior that has led to success in the past, the same behavior will lead to success in the future. I call this the *Success Delusion*.”

We’ve all done that. You *used to be* able to pull an all-nighter. You *used to stay* out late with clients. You *used to work* through the weekend. You *used to catch* up on all your work sitting on a plane, or staying up late, or getting to the office early in the morning, or working into the night after your family went sleep.

That was then. This is now. You can’t run your life based on what used to work.

Life Changes. Do You?

By now, you’re getting a clearer picture of how you’re stuck. You wish you could do more, do better, and get more done. But wishing things were different isn’t enough to make things change.

It’s human nature to wish...hoping that things will be different later, that you’ll have more time, and you’ll be able to do what you want to do. You have to be careful. All that hoping might turn into resentment, or even regret, later on.

If you agree, it's time to do things differently. It's time to change. To get something different, you have to *do* something different.

Consider us your coaches. Naturally, we have our own personalities, and often, clients find the dual-perspective useful—kind of a “he said/she said.” When you have a question about momentum, we're right here with you. Keep reading this book, and of course, you're free to join us online at www.GetMomentum.com/book so that we can provide you with the support you need to get unstuck.

As you get momentum, you will improve your leadership skills, learn to prioritize effectively, think creatively, and focus on the actions and tactics you can use to get more of what you want in life and at work.

We know that getting momentum is simple, but it isn't easy. You're the one who has to do the work. What we ask you to do will take time, energy, and focus. We'd like to forewarn you: There is a high likelihood that you'll need to stop doing some things that you've always done in order to get new results.

You're going to have to slow down to a crawl so you can stand back up and sprint.

The Power of Momentum

Now you know what being stuck looks, sounds, and feels like. So, what is *momentum*? Momentum is power. When you get momentum, you:

- Know that what you're doing is what you're meant to do.
- Know you have people you can trust.
- Feel accomplished at the end of almost every day.
- Have time to do what you have to do, so you can do what you want to do.
- Make significant progress on meaningful goals.

Prevent Regret

“I wish I had worked more,” isn't what people say on their deathbed. Instead, people's dying wish is for more meaningful

time with loved ones. Author Bronnie Ware wrote *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying—A Life Transformed by the Dearly Departing* after spending time caring for dying people in their homes. Review her list because you don't want to look back on your life and have any of these regrets.

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I didn't work so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

People tell us they're stuck on projects that are personal in nature. They want to do something creative like write a book or pursue photography. These projects get put on the "nonessential" list. Yet, these projects are essential to people's happiness and well-being. They tap into the core of the regrets listed above, because they are an expression of people's true selves. However, since these projects do not have an external deadline or immediate financial reward, they don't get prioritized. They linger in the limbo of "someday."

What Is Really Stopping You?

What is really in your way? Regularly, we return phone calls and reply to e-mails from people from around the world as they ask us to help them with ideas they can use to get momentum on projects that are stuck. Often, they tell us they want to get momentum, but everything they've tried hasn't worked.

Whether the goal is to be more engaged at work, be more present with your family, or start a side project that has stalled, the Five Stages of Momentum will help you get started, get momentum, and achieve more than you ever thought possible. When you approach that project using our step-by-step methodology, you'll create the conditions necessary to experience more success, easier

and more efficiently. We're both fans of "process." And, even though sometimes it means that things take a little longer than planned, the changes we make are sustained over time.

Let the Get Momentum Activities we provide guide you to eliminate the reasons (excuses) you have had for not getting going. Among the circumstances we help our clients handle, here are three of the more common things we hear them say. As you read through each, ask yourself, "Does this apply to me?"

1. The People Who Offered Support Aren't Showing Up for You

Do you ever look around at how other people seem to have all the support they need? The support you don't have? Maybe a colleague promised he would help. Maybe your friends and family are telling you that your project sounds like a million-dollar idea. Maybe you've even had people promise they would order your product as soon as you're ready. Whatever the scenario, you've lost momentum because a part of you is worried that those who have promised to show up for you might not actually do it.

2. You're Getting Information—Just Too Much at the Wrong Time

How many business magazine subscriptions do you have? How many local business networking meetings do you attend each month? How many websites, news feeds, and e-books have you collected in your digital ecosystem—all with good ideas and promises that if you'll just do such and such, then you'll succeed?

3. You're Striving for Perfect Work-Life Balance

We've seen parents not ready to parent, students not ready to study, and managers not ready to manage. To get momentum, you need to understand what we mean by that. We know that it's a multifront

effort. As you're working to improve things in business, you're also working to improve them at home.

Like many people reading this book, you're going to realize that simultaneously you want to:

- Empower your team so you can rise to your next level.
- Heal a broken relationship.
- Stay engaged with your life and work.
- Be a positive influence to your children.
- Nourish your body and your mind.
- Take your business to a whole new level.

You get it, right? Your mindset can be telling you that you *can* have it all, that you *should* achieve work-life balance.

But that's not how it really works. You may make a mess of what's been normal around your house or office for a while. You may really upset the people around you who have gotten used to you putting their priorities above your own.

You need to understand:

- There isn't some magical state called "work-life balance."
- Things won't be perfect with your partner every day.
- The friends you hang out with may not support the "new you."
- Your kids won't like you some days.

GET MOMENTUM ACTIVITY #1: What Does Being Stuck Mean to You?

Throughout this book, we'll invite you to participate in your own Get Momentum process by completing activities we've come up with for each stage of the process. In every chapter of *Get Momentum: How to Start When You're Stuck*, we'll ask you specific questions and suggest you answer those questions in a Momentum Journal.

Of course, you can hand-write your notes in a paper notebook, or use an app to type or audio/video record your responses, to each prompt. Please use whatever tool is most convenient for you. You can also download, print and share these activities: www.GetMomentum.com/book

Each activity is designed to help you understand your current situation, get started, and track your progress as you get unstuck. We recommend you (and everyone on your team reading this book) start writing in your very own Momentum Journal today. Keep this notebook or digital note-taking system nearby.

Are you ready for Momentum Activity #1? Here it is: Please open your Momentum Journal to a new page/note and record your answers to each of the questions below. This self-assessment will help you get in touch with your true goals, start getting organized, and begin working on that project that's stuck.

Plan to spend about 15 minutes on this activity, and be as honest with yourself as you're willing to be.

- What is the change you want to make or the project you want to start?
- How long has this been on your mind?
- Why start now? Really? Specifically? Why now?
- On a scale of 1–5 (1 being “most important”), how important is it that you get started? (That is, could it wait?)
- Describe what life will look like five years from now if you do *not* start now. Be specific and detailed.
- Why haven't you started this project yet? Make a list of all the excuses you can. (We suggest coming up with at least 10!)
- What are the old tactics (staying up late at night, working through weekends, etc.) you've been using to try to get started?

(continued)

- Are you willing to spend a minimum of 30 minutes a day using methods you'll learn in this book to get momentum on the project that is stuck? If so, how can we help hold you accountable?

Ready? Visit www.GetMomentum.com/book to share what you're getting momentum on, and see what your fellow readers around the world are starting.

Nobody Does This Alone. Nobody.

The top performers in the world—athletes, musicians, actors, and yes, business professionals—all have coaches. When you add a coach to your professional development plan, you are more likely to do the work, make changes, and achieve the results you want.

Here's a quote to consider by Helen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." Think about who you want on your team as you finally make the commitment to do the work to start that project that is stuck. Reach out to them today!

Keep reading and do the Get Momentum Activities. There's no theory, no fluff, and no "this-is-what-we-heard-works" in this book. We have done every activity we ask you to do. We've facilitated workshops and online webinars for more than 15 years using these very activities. We also facilitate these activities with members in the Get Momentum Leadership Academy. You are not alone. People around the world are using this information to get momentum.

You Have Our Support

Our intention is to help you be more productive and to make it easier for you to achieve your most important goals. We measure our success by reading your stories. Let us know how it goes!

Visit www.GetMomentum.com/book to gain immediate and free access to more than 50 resources, such as video lessons, expert interviews, research reports, and downloadable worksheets you can use as you're reading this book. Of course, you're free to sign up for Get Momentum Insights, our e-mail newsletter with ideas you can use to manage your time better, be more productive, and improve your work and your life.

For even more personal support as you're reading this book, e-mail us: Jodi@GetMomentum.com or Jason@GetMomentum.com.

To Do and Share

1. Decide that “now” is the time to get momentum on that change you want to make or project you want to start. Name it. Focus on it.
2. Get (buy, make, or set up) a Momentum Journal. Use it to document your ideas and progress as you read this book and complete the Momentum Activities.
3. Invite a group of colleagues at work or your partner at home to work through the five Momentum Questions together over the next five weeks.

Coming Up Next

Prepare to get momentum! In the next chapter we'll introduce you to the five Momentum Questions that you can use to get any project started. Go from hoping things will work out to following a reliable, step-by-step process to achieve your biggest goals.