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Follow Through

“Good thoughts are no better than good dreams if you don’t follow through.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

"It was character that got us out of bed, commitment that moved us into action, and discipline that enabled us to follow through."
Zig Ziglar

Follow Through

You say you're going to do something, and then you do it. That's the simple definition of follow through. Like so many other things in life, simple is only the start. Sometimes it can take years to complete a follow through and most would describe that as an act of persistence. The never-give-up action that might catapult a dream into a reality. That last 10% of a trek to accomplish a goal. And the concept of what or how a follow through looks like can appear like a coat of many colors. For the lucky ones, motivating follow through action begins long before a person enters the work world.

For instance, I recently took my grandson Ben to Spain. While in the Prado, he waxed long on the Habsburgs and their jaws while looking at the Renaissance art. I asked him where he learned all of that and he said his high school art teacher taught him. I later discovered he sent him photos of the paintings he had just seen in real life. (I can only imagine how wonderful that teacher felt after getting those images.) I know I speak often about caring and gratitude, and clearly Ben's action did fall into those categories, but it was also a form of follow through. In business development, it can be a circuitous route to gain the sought after prize: sometimes building relationships over years. How contacts are kept and nurtured can be mini versions of follow through. Touching base, be it a call, or an occasional email, or a like on LinkedIn, or a handwritten holiday card are all a means to an end. In Ben's case, he could've said to himself, "I'll send that later." We all have good intentions, but the one who takes action -- every step of the way, wins the game of life. For some the importance of staying in touch, gratitude and follow through are learned early in life, for others, leaders must teach those skills inside the workplace. **Forbes wrote a terrific brief on follow-up** which is, again, another way of saying follow through.

Follow through can have negative or positive impacts on employees. Employees depend on reliability from their leaders, and failing to provide that reliability can seriously impact company morale. If the boss does not follow up on directives or breaks promises to team members, employees may feel that it is acceptable to do the same. They may also feel a bit betrayed and begin thinking that they do not mean much to the organization's leaders. All of this is likely to result in dissatisfaction in the work place and a loss of productivity. As a leader, it is important that you establish a good working relationship with associates and consistently maintain the standards you espouse in order to develop cohesion and unity within the organization, which will make for a more effective work environment.

There are numerous articles written about [how to get employees to follow through after meetings](#).

Of course follow through can also be seen from the perspective of trust. In our personal and business relationships we depend on someone's word. That invisible contract keeps the world of commerce rolling. We trust that people will follow through when they agree to do a task. We think the other person is telling us the truth. As a philosophy major, I've seen a zillion debates on what constitutes a lie, or when or if someone should ever lie. It's a great debate with many possible answers, but in the real world we do depend on trust and truth. So if someone commits to a promise, we have a right to expect it completed and within a reasonable time frame.

I think there are three major reasons for a breakdown in many office follow throughs and I'd like to suggest it's because we don't communicate well. If we leave out important information, it's because we believe others already know it. If we fail to be specific about something, we might think others already understand it. If we go soft on clarification, it's more often that we don't want to insult other people. Being sure up front on the objectives and not being afraid to get clarity, will help.

Forgive yourself. We all have long to-do lists and we are all guilty of forgetting something. The best follow through can be the apology. And, of course, the promise to not do it again. Let's hope that this year you enjoy the process of follow through and you build on what you have already learned and pass on your knowledge to others.

Happy New Year. Stay well. And thank you for staying in touch,

PS: The first part of my business name is obvious Win and then *Spin* -- the initials CIC stand for Creative Intelligence Consulting. I've always felt that creative intelligence is a neglected area in testing -- especially in high school where so many geniuses get passed over because of a lack of measurement. I decided when I started my consulting business after my first successful business, that I only wanted to work for creatives. Yes, they can be ego-maniacs at times and somewhat impossible, but the excitement of being around them--especially the ones who really gave me the opportunity to hire a team and to do what I did best--well, it has been a marvelous adventure. I will be eternally grateful to have been able to work for so many incredible visionaries. If you don't have Disney+, I hope you subscribe, if only to be able to watch the amazing documentary by Lawrence Kasdan who created the series [Light & Magic](#) about George Lucas and the creation of his studio along with the birth of Star Wars. Talk about follow through and persistence. WOW! Just a stupendous behind-the-scenes record of the dream team he put together and how his management style allowed for some of the world's most imaginative and inspirational films. Watch and learn! Enjoy!

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Book Reading Thoughts

Time. That's not an answer to a riddle. It's the main thing I hear when I ask people what they've read lately. They say, "I don't have time." I'm going to suggest that podcasts are not a substitute for reading a book. (I'm convinced that having things in our ears all day will hurt our hearing.) There's plenty of proof out there that says cozying up with a paper book before bed and turning off screens will contribute to better sleep. For those of you who sit in traffic please download the LIBBY app and listen to library books for free. [**The top 10 business books from 2022.**](#)

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We can always keep learning more and communication is key to everything we want to accomplish. Remember the average person may only read one book a year.

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