

Showing up? That's easy!

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

-Lao Tzu

Showing up sounds like a pretty easy thing to do right? It isn't. It can be one of the hardest things you might have to do when you're faced with a task, a challenge, an assignment, a meeting, a creative brainstorming session or a reunion of old college friends.

Showing Up? That's hard!

There are a number of reasons why people don't show up. Some of them are psychological, while some have to do with the way our brains have evolved over time. Since primitive times, human brain has been wired in such a way that it values survival more than anything else. So naturally, when we are faced with something that makes us anxious or afraid, we tend to stay in our comfort zone. But here's the dilemma, if we never left our comfort zone, we wouldn't have evolved, we wouldn't have learned, we wouldn't have discovered. You and I wouldn't have been able to fly from one continent to another if it wasn't for Wright brothers to risk their lives, leave their comfort zones, and fly their first prototype.

Another reason why people feel afraid of showing up is because of how in recent times we have become addicted to instant gratification. In the fast-paced world today, we want instant results without having to put the effort in. We prefer junk food or fast food over cooking our own food because it gratifies us instantly without having to work for it. We love it when we get lots of likes on our Facebook pictures because it gives our brains a surge of dopamine while our real social life is compromised. We prefer superficial and fake relationships over meaningful and deep bonds because it takes less work and makes us feel good about ourselves. This attitude manifests itself in every sphere of our life. It can be work, it can be our goals, it can be our relationships and family. And it is one of the biggest reasons why people shy away from getting out of their comfort zones or taking the first step necessary to start the process of growth and improvement.

Yet another reason why people don't show up is because of deep seated mental issues like anxiety, fear of large groups and crowds, fear of being observed in public, insecurities because of past experiences and lack of confidence in oneself.

All of these factors come together to create a toxic mix that keeps poisoning us. Consequently, it affects our life in such a negative way that we pass through it without achieving anything really meaningful or long lasting.

Breaking the shackles:

The key to breaking these mental barriers is to understand the value of life and time and how little we have to lose by going out and showing up. Every second that we pass feeling afraid, lazy, insecure and unconfident, is costing us our life. We must develop an attitude and spirit of taking charge of our own lives, we must be the captains of this ship. If we let the pirates of fear, insecurity, and laziness take over it, we are bound to be forgotten in the sands of time. We must understand that life is a gift, and when seen through this lens, every moment becomes valuable. Grippled with this attitude, we can learn to be consistent in our lives and not let them ruled by forces that mock us and laugh in our faces.

The secret ingredient-consistency:

Think of all the people that are successful, from Bill Gates to Warren Buffet, from Elon Musk to Robert Downey Jr., from Nelson Mandela to J.K. Rowling. All these people belonging to different professions, having different experiences, different goals, have one thing in common. They understand the importance of being consistent. They understand the worth of their life and they make it their goal to not be defeated by mental barriers and to show up every single day to do what they believe in.

It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that understanding the importance of showing up might just be the secret ingredient to the success. It is the very first step you must take if you want your life to mean something. And you must take it every day. Because after it comes everything else.

A state of mind.

To sum it up, showing up means to write every day a little bit on that novel you've been working on, those guitar lessons you had signed up for, or how you said you'll visit your parents every weekend. On a deeper philosophical and mental level, it is an attitude and mental frame of work that sets apart the successful from the unsuccessful. It differentiates between the winners and losers. It differentiates between the sheep and the thinkers. It means being consistent and being true to the promises you made to yourself. It means working towards your goal every day, little by little. It means respecting yourself enough to not let yourself be overpowered by factors and forces that have no real power over you. It means being consistent.

One of the greatest stoic philosophers summed it best:

*Begin, to begin is half the work, let half still remain;
Again begin this, and you will have finished*

-Marcus Aurelius
