



MIDDLE ATLANTIC
COUNCIL

MAC LEADER

June, 2019

65th Annual MAC Convention and Trade Show



The site of our November 6-8, 2019 MAC Convention and Trade Show, will be the Valley Forge Casino Resort. This property has much to offer our attendees, including the casino, spa, fitness center, pool, and much more. The hotel is very near the King of Prussia Mall, Valley Forge National Park, and all the amenities of Philadelphia, PA. We are excited to be in an area with so many opportunities for activities.

The convention itself is shaping up to be one of our best ever. Our speakers will include: Kevin Nolan, Rick Holtz and Bill Silverman, and Stacey Spear. You can't afford to miss out on all the information that will be offered at our seminars. In addition to all the contractor education, there will be a track of crew training plus a trade show where you will enjoy learning more about the new and improved products and services trending in our industry.

We are putting together the Program Book for the Convention as we have in the past, and have sent invoices to members who have advertised in the book in previous years. We will now open up the opportunity to the rest of the members to support MAC by sponsoring a page in the book. In the near future, you should be receiving an invoice from Cathie Andersen, MAC Staff Assistant. The invoice will be for a full-page ad, but you can choose

to change it to a half-page ad when you pay it. If you have any questions, please give me or Cathie a call. My office number is: 703-378-4455, Cathie's cell is: 856-979-8720.

Mark your calendars now so you can avoid scheduling conflicts!



Newly-Designed MAC Website

Please visit our newly-remodeled MAC PDCA website. There is a list of our members, pictures of recent events, showcased member projects, and the ability to register and pay for your dues and our events online. If you haven't already done so, log on to www.macpdca.org and take a tour of the new site.

NATIONAL PDCA NEWS

National PDCA has a program of webinars, podcasts, and online seminars available every month. Take advantage of the many opportunities for contractor and crew training available to you as a member benefit.

CHAPTER NEWS

If you would like to put your chapter meeting announcements or your company or chapter charity events in this newsletter, please send the information to Anita Dallas (adallas@cox.net) by the 20th of the month before the event.

We have many MAC Members at large who don't have a chapter in their immediate vicinity and who may want to participate in a chapter event. Putting your chapter upcoming meetings/events in this e-newsletter lets them know what is happening around the council. I'm sure your chapter would welcome MAC members from other areas at your events. Making sure to send me your upcoming event information in a timely manner will help keep all our MAC members informed of educational events throughout the region.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

We ask that you keep all of our members, their families, and employees in your prayers. Many in our MAC Family struggle with health issues on a daily basis. Please let me know of anyone needing particular prayers at this time.

Featured Articles:

The Difference Between Professionals and Amateurs

by James Clear

This article is an excerpt from Atomic Habits, my New York Times bestselling book.

I've started to notice (partially because of my own failures), that there is one skill that is so valuable that it will make you a standout in any area of life, no matter what kind of competition you face.

What is this skill and how can you develop it? Let's talk about that now.

Every Day at 8am

Last summer, I was speaking with Todd Henry. Todd is a successful author and does a great job of putting out valuable work on a consistent basis.

I, on the other hand, do a remarkable job of putting out questionable work on an inconsistent basis. I started to explain this to Todd...

"Todd, what do you think about writing only when you feel motivated? I feel like I always do my best work when I get a spark of creativity or inspiration, but that only happens every now and then. I'm pretty much only writing when I feel like it, which means I'm inconsistent. But if I write all the time, then I'm not creating my best work."

"That's cool," Todd replied. "I only write when I'm motivated too. I just happened to be motivated every day at 8am."

The Difference Between Professionals and Amateurs

It doesn't matter what you are trying to become better at, if you only do the work when you're motivated, then you'll never be consistent enough to become a professional.

The ability to show up every day, stick to the schedule, and do the work — especially when you don't feel like it — is so valuable that it is literally all you need to become better 99% of the time.

I've seen this in my own experiences...

When I don't miss workouts, I get in the best shape of my life. When I write every week, I become a better writer. When I travel and take my camera out every day, I take better photos.

It's simple and powerful. But why is it so difficult?

The Pain of Being A Pro

Approaching your goals — whatever they are — with the attitude of a professional isn't easy. In fact, being a pro is painful.

The simple fact of the matter is that most of the time we are inconsistent. We all have goals that we would like to achieve and dreams that we would like to fulfill, but it doesn't matter what you are trying to become better at, if you only do the work when it's convenient or exciting, then you'll never be consistent enough to achieve remarkable results.

I can guarantee that if you manage to start a habit and keep sticking to it, there will be days when you feel like quitting. When you start a business, there will be days when you don't feel like showing up. When you're at the gym, there will be sets that you don't feel like finishing. When it's time to write, there will be days that you don't feel like typing. But stepping up when it's annoying or painful or draining to do so, that's what makes the difference between a professional and an amateur.

Professionals stick to the schedule, amateurs let life get in the way. Professionals know what is important to them and work towards it with purpose, amateurs get pulled off course by the urgencies of life.

You'll Never Regret Starting Important Work

Some people might think I'm promoting the benefits of being a workaholic. "Professionals work harder than everyone else and that's why they're great." Actually, that's not it at all.

Being a pro is about having the discipline to commit to what is important to you instead of merely saying something is important to you. It's about starting when you feel like stopping, not because you want to work more, but because your goal is important enough to you that you don't simply work on it when it's convenient. Becoming a pro is about making your priorities a reality.

There have been a lot of sets that I haven't felt like finishing, but I've never regretted doing the workout. There have been a lot of articles I haven't felt like writing, but I've never regretted publishing on schedule. There have been a lot of days I've felt like relaxing, but I've never regretted showing up and working on something that is important to me.

Becoming a pro doesn't mean you're a workaholic. It means that you're good at making time for what matters to you — especially when you don't feel like it — instead of playing the role of the victim and letting life happen to you.

How to Become a Pro

Going about your work like a pro isn't easy, but it's also not as complicated or difficult as you might think. There are three steps.

1. Decide what you want to be good at.

Purpose is everything. If you know what you want, then getting it is much easier. This sounds simple, but in my experience even people who are smart, creative, and talented rarely know exactly what they are working for and why.

2. Set a schedule for your actions.

Once you know what you want, set a schedule for actually doing it.

Note: Don't make the same mistake I have made, which is setting a schedule based on results. Don't map out how much weight you want to lose each week or how much money you want to make. "Lose 5 pounds" is not an action you can perform. "Do three sets of squats" is an action you can perform.

You want to set a schedule based on actions you can do, not results that you want.

3. Stick to your schedule for one week.

Stop thinking about how hard it will be to follow a schedule for a month or a year. Just follow it for this week. For the next 7 days, don't let distractions get in the way.

Setting a schedule doesn't make you a professional, following it does. Don't be a writer, be writing. Don't be a lifter, be lifting. For one week, do the things you want to do without letting life get in the way. Next week, start again.

What This Looks Like in the Real World

Here are two examples of how I'm trying to go about my day as a professional right now. Feel free to try either of these strategies if you're looking to become better at working like a pro.

Pushups — I'm currently working towards doing 100 strict pushups in a row. When I started in August, I could only do 36 in a row.

My schedule is to do pushups every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And, except for a short span while I was traveling in Russia and Turkey, I haven't missed a workout in five months.

Writing — As I mentioned at the beginning of this post, I have struggled with keeping a consistent writing schedule in the past. But now I've got one that is working and I plan on sticking to it.

The schedule is simple: publish one new article every Monday and Thursday on this site. I have followed that schedule for 8 weeks now. It's just a start, but I'm working on becoming a pro.

What areas of life do you want to be a professional in? What's important to you?

The Diderot Effect: Why We Want Things We Don't Need — And What to Do About It

by James Clear

The famous French philosopher Denis Diderot lived nearly his entire life in poverty, but that all changed in 1765.

Diderot was 52 years old and his daughter was about to be married, but he could not afford to provide a dowry. Despite his lack of wealth, Diderot's name was well-known because he was the co-founder and writer of Encyclopédie, one of the most comprehensive encyclopedias of the time.

When Catherine the Great, the emperor of Russia, heard of Diderot's financial troubles she offered to buy his library from him for £1000 GBP, which is approximately \$50,000 USD in 2015 dollars. Suddenly, Diderot had money to spare.

Shortly after this lucky sale, Diderot acquired a new scarlet robe. That's when everything went wrong.

The Diderot Effect

Diderot's scarlet robe was beautiful. So beautiful, in fact, that he immediately noticed how out of place it seemed when surrounded by the rest of his common possessions. In his words, there

was “no more coordination, no more unity, no more beauty” between his robe and the rest of his items. The philosopher soon felt the urge to buy some new things to match the beauty of his robe.

He replaced his old rug with a new one from Damascus. He decorated his home with beautiful sculptures and a better kitchen table. He bought a new mirror to place above the mantle and his “straw chair was relegated to the antechamber by a leather chair.”

These reactionary purchases have become known as the Diderot Effect.

The Diderot Effect states that obtaining a new possession often creates a spiral of consumption which leads you to acquire more new things. As a result, we end up buying things that our previous selves never needed to feel happy or fulfilled.

Why We Want Things We Don’t Need

Like many others, I have fallen victim to the Diderot Effect. I recently bought a new car and I ended up purchasing all sorts of additional things to go inside it. I bought a tire pressure gauge, a car charger for my cell phone, an extra umbrella, a first aid kit, a pocket knife, a flashlight, emergency blankets, and even a seatbelt cutting tool.

Allow me to point out that I owned my previous car for nearly 10 years and at no point did I feel that any of the previously mentioned items were worth purchasing. And yet, after getting my shiny new car, I found myself falling into the same consumption spiral as Diderot.

You can spot similar behaviors in many other areas of life:

- You buy a new dress and now you have to get shoes and earrings to match.
- You buy a CrossFit membership and soon you’re paying for foam rollers, knee sleeves, wrist wraps, and paleo meal plans.
- You buy your kid an American Girl doll and find yourself purchasing more accessories than you ever knew existed for dolls.
- You buy a new couch and suddenly you’re questioning the layout of your entire living room. Those chairs? That coffee table? That rug? They all gotta go.

Life has a natural tendency to become filled with more. We are rarely looking to downgrade, to simplify, to eliminate, to reduce. Our natural inclination is always to accumulate, to add, to upgrade, and to build upon.

In the words of sociology professor Juliet Schor, “the pressure to upgrade our stock of stuff is relentlessly unidirectional, always ascending.”

Mastering the Diderot Effect

The Diderot Effect tells us that your life is only going to have more things fighting to get in it, so you need to understand how to curate, eliminate, and focus on the things that matter.

Reduce exposure. Nearly every habit is initiated by a trigger or cue. One of the quickest ways to reduce the power of the Diderot Effect is to avoid the habit triggers that cause it in the first place. Unsubscribe from commercial emails. Call the magazines that send you catalogs and opt out of their mailings. Meet friends at the park rather than the mall. Block your favorite shopping websites using tools like [Freedom](#).

Buy items that fit your current system. You don't have to start from scratch each time you buy something new. When you purchase new clothes, look for items that work well with your current wardrobe. When you upgrade to new electronics, get things that play nicely with your current pieces so you can avoid buying new chargers, adapters, or cables.

Set self-imposed limits. Live a carefully constrained life by creating limitations for you to operate within. Juliet Schor provides a great example with this quote...

“Imagine the following. A community group in your town organizes parents to sign a pledge agreeing to spend no more than \$50 on athletic shoes for their children. The staff at your child’s day-care center requests a \$75 limit on spending for birthday parties. The local school board rallies community support behind a switch to school uniforms. The PTA gets 80 percent of parents to agree to limit their children’s television watching to no more than one hour per day.

Do you wish someone in your community or at your children’s school would take the lead in these or similar efforts? I think millions of American parents do. Television, shoes, clothes, birthday parties, athletic uniforms-these are areas where many parents feel pressured into allowing their children to consume at a level beyond what they think is best, want to spend, or can comfortably afford.”

—Juliet Schor, [The Overspent American](#)

Buy One, Give One. Each time you make a new purchase, give an old item away. Get a new TV? Give your old one away rather than moving it to another room. The idea is to prevent your number of items from growing. Always be curating your life to include only the things that bring you joy and happiness.

Go one month without buying something new. Don’t allow yourself to buy any new items for one month. Instead of buying a new lawn mower, rent one from a neighbor. Get your new shirt from the thrift store rather than the department store. The more we restrict ourselves, the more resourceful we become.

Let go of wanting things. There will never be a level where you will be done wanting things. There is always something to upgrade to. Get a new Honda? You can upgrade to a Mercedes. Get a new Mercedes? You can upgrade to a Bentley. Get a new Bentley? You can upgrade to a

Ferrari. Get a new Ferrari? Have you thought about buying a private plane? Realize that wanting is just an option your mind provides, not an order you have to follow.

How to Overcome the Consumption Tendency

Our natural tendency is to consume more, not less. Given this tendency, I believe that taking active steps to reduce the flow of unquestioned consumption makes our lives better.

Personally, my goal is not to reduce life to the fewest amount of things, but to fill it with the optimal amount of things. I hope this article will help you consider how to do the same.

In Diderot's words, "Let my example teach you a lesson. Poverty has its freedoms; opulence has its obstacles."

Work-Life Balance Is a Myth. Do This Instead

By Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall

If you think about it, work-life balance is a strange aspiration for a fulfilling life. Balance is about stasis: if our lives were ever in balance — parents happy, kids taken care of, work working — then our overriding thought would be to shout “Nobody move!” and pray all would stay perfect forever. This false hope is made worse by the categories themselves. They imply that work is bad, and life is good; we lose ourselves in work but find ourselves in life; we survive work, but live life. And so the challenge, we are told, is to balance the heaviness of work with the lightness of life.

Yet work is not the opposite of life. It is instead a part of life — just as family is, as are friends and community and hobbies. All of these aspects of living have their share of wonderful, uplifting moments and their share of moments that drag us down. The same is true of work, yet when we think of it as an inherent bad in need of a counterweight, we lose sight of the possibility for better.

It seems more useful, then, to not try to balance the unbalanceable, but to treat work the same way you do life: By maximizing what you love. Here's what we mean.

Consider why two people doing exactly the same work seem to gain strength and joy from very different moments. When we interviewed several anesthesiologists, we found that while their title and job function are identical, the thrills and chills they feel in their job are not. One said he loved the thrill of holding each patient hovering at that one precise point between life and death, while he shuddered at the “pressure” of helping each patient get healthy once the operation was complete. Another said she loved the bedside conversations

before the operation, and the calm sensitivity required to bring a sedated patient gently back to consciousness without the panic that afflicts many patients. Another was drawn mostly to the intricacies of the anesthetic mechanism itself and has dedicated herself to defining precisely how each drug does what it does. Each one of us, for no good reason other than the clash of our chromosomes, draws strength from different activities, situations, moments and interactions.

Think of your life's many different activities as threads. Some are black, some are grey and some are white. But some of these activities appear to be made of a different substance. These activities contain all the tell-tale signs of love: before you do them, you find yourself looking forward to them; while you're doing them, time speeds up and you find yourself in flow; and after you've done them, you feel invigorated. These are your red threads, and research by the Mayo Clinic suggests that doctors who weave the fabric of their life with at least 20% red threads are significantly less likely to experience burnout.

The simplest way for you to do this is to spend a week in love with your job. This sounds odd, but all it really means is to select a regular week at work and take a pad around with you for the entire week. Down the middle of this pad, draw a vertical line to make two columns, and write "Loved It" at the top of one column and "Loathed It" at the top of the other. During the week, any time you find yourself feeling one of the signs of love scribble down exactly what you were doing in the Loved It column. And any time you find yourself feeling the inverse — before you do something, you procrastinate; while you do it, time drags; and when you're done with it, you hope you never have to do it again — scribble down exactly what you were doing in the Loathed It column.

Obviously, there'll be plenty of activities in your week that don't make either list, but if you spend a week in love with your work, by the end of the week you will see a list of activities in your Loved It column that feel different to you than the rest of your work. They'll have a different emotional valence, creating in you a distinct and distinctly positive feeling, one that draws you in and lifts you up.

Our research (a stratified random sample of the working populations of nineteen countries) reveals that 73% of us claim that we have the freedom to modify our job to fit our strengths better, but that only 18% of us do so. Your challenge, then, is to use your red threads to intelligently change, over time, the content of your job, so that it contains more things that you love doing and fewer that you're aching to escape.

The most helpful categories for us are not "work" and "life." We should not struggle to balance the two. Instead, the best categories are "love" and "loathe." Our goal should be to, little by little, week by week, intentionally *imbalance* all aspects of our work toward the

former and away from the latter. Not simply to make us feel better, but so that our colleagues, our friends and our family can all benefit from us at our very best.

We can't always do only what we love. But we can always find the love in what we do.

Buckingham and Goodall are the coauthors of *Nine Lies About Work. A Freethinking Leader's Guide to the Real World.*

Quote: "It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them."

--Mark Twain

Have a blessed Independence Day!

Anita Dallas, EVP