

## Goal Achievement: Don't Break the Chain



Writing a book is considered one of the most difficult challenges, but books, Web sites, and clever tactics help guide would-be authors in being successful at it. All have one thing in common: writing a little bit every day. This concept is called “not breaking the chain.” It’s a motivational construct that can also help you reach a goal that can easily fall prey to procrastination. Whether it’s finishing knitting a sweater or completing a dissertation for a Ph.D., not breaking the chain is both a visual prompt for and a behavioral key to arriving at

your goal. This metaphor or cue for action can help you bridge the gap between needing something done that you seriously desire and the lack of feeling motivated to do it—which is the definition of procrastination. Whether it’s spending three minutes or a full day working on your goal, don’t break the chain.

## Make a Good First Impression

Everyone wants to make a good first impression, but research shows seven out of 10 people make a judgment call within 27 seconds—often before the other person has even spoken! How can this disadvantage be overcome? Be aware that the “impression time window” is short. Use a sincere smile, give direct eye contact, be a patient listener, and watch the handshakes! With rare exceptions, handshakes are a nearly universal form of greeting. Avoid “vice grip” domination handshakes. They can make a negative impression equal to that of a limp handshake. The lasting memory of your greeting should not be your handshake. It’s better to use a firm handshake that matches the other person’s grip.

## Could You Be Depressed and Not Know It?

Mental health clinics often see patients with life problems who have undiagnosed major depressive disorder. Symptoms of depression can last so long that this state becomes their “normal.” Some of these patients may struggle to recall what not feeling depressed is like. Words like cheerfulness, contentedness, gladness, joy, and hopefulness may feel foreign and out of place. Do these terms feel distant from your life? If so, get a professional assessment for depression. It takes only a few minutes to find out more, spot the diagnosis, and take steps to get treatment for this commonly untreated illness.

## Do Meditation and Exercise Fend Off Flu?

Studies have shown that stress, life crises, and negative emotional styles increase risk of acute respiratory infections like colds, flu, and similar conditions. Could stress reduction using mindfulness techniques like meditation along with exercise have a preventive effect? The U.S. National Institutes of Health decided to find out. Nearly 400 study participants completed a stress management training program, and the results were positive. Participants did experience fewer flu, colds, and respiratory infections. The Centers for Disease Control says the best way to prevent flu is to get a flu shot—it’s reportedly 40 to 60 percent effective. Could managing stress with techniques found in this study give you an extra boost of prevention? See the study and decide. [www.med.wisc.edu](http://www.med.wisc.edu) [search “flu, exercise, meditation”]

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