

10 Daily Habits Holding You Back from Success

By [Caren Merrick](#)



There's no such thing as an overnight success. All the successful people you admire achieved their success by making daily choices. Some of those choices are extraordinary, but most of them are simple habits that add up, one step, one day at a time.

Highly successful people are self-aware and take their [personal development](#) seriously. They regularly assess their habits and strive for continuous improvement.

How often are you assessing *your* habits? How often are you looking not only for ways to improve, but also to celebrate and build on your wins to generate additional motivation, inspiration, energy and success?

If you want more success in your work and life, start by changing your day.

Take a look at one or all of the habits that might be holding you back from success. Losing a bad habit and creating a new one is the first step to propel you forward to greater success, impact and fulfillment.

1. Your morning routine is nonexistent.

When you have so much on your plate and everything is urgent, your precious morning moments are spent in a rush just doing whatever it takes to get out the door and on your way.

But you're missing one of the most important opportunities within your control to ensure success. You can [design a morning routine](#) unique to your life that will prime you physically and mentally for better performance. If you allowed even 10 to 15 more minutes to develop a routine that energized you and brought greater focus, you would have more confidence and be more effective through the day—instead of beginning it with a sense of overwhelm.

[My routine](#) involves a gratitude walk and a bit of reading and writing. I love getting up before everyone else when the house is quiet.

2. You forget your strengths when hard things emerge.

Often, when we encounter unexpected setbacks, we flounder or are paralyzed like a deer in the headlights. But if you remind yourself every day of your strengths, it will jumpstart your path to a solution better and faster than jumping into the spin cycle of [self-doubt](#).

One of my favorite assessments is [StrengthsFinder](#) and I look at it every week (sometimes even daily) to remind myself to tap into my strengths.

3. You major in the minors...

... instead of prioritizing the most important things that need to be accomplished each day. This is another way of saying that you will be more productive and happier if you make incremental changes in how you [manage your time](#). It could be as simple as deciding each morning the top three things that must be done each day, or setting a timer to focus on just one thing for 60 minutes without interruptions.

4. You let energy vampires consume your time.

These “vampires” can be time-wasting tasks like checking your email too often, or they can be people who are not key to achieving your projects and have

latched onto you in conversation because they are avoiding their own work. With a few small steps, you can take action to manage your schedule, such as putting your phone on “Do Not Disturb” and setting alarms to achieve your tasks.

The next three are habits born of [perfectionism](#). As a recovering perfectionist, I am quite familiar with these! The good news is that anyone can continue to make progress in overcoming these bad habits:

5. You work on tasks that could be delegated to someone else.

You think that you can do a better job, so you just do it yourself. Or, you constantly correct or micromanage your team, which drains their motivation and distracts you from doing what you do best.

6. You spend too much time recovering from a stumble or setback.

Instead of quickly assessing a situation and determining a plan, you get sucked into a spin cycle that drains your energy and focus. You may have forgotten that every person you admire has had many [failures](#) and setbacks—some of them are [legendary](#).

My most successful business was down to the last \$33 in our bank account before we finally got a yes on funding. Within a few years, we grew it to \$200 million in annual revenue! You can develop habits and a mindset to find the many benefits of a setback.

7. You procrastinate.

A lot of what our perfectionism is tied back to [procrastination](#). Procrastination can mask a lack of confidence, or a fear of being wrong or being criticized. Perfectionism makes us slow to start on a new initiative, or to begin the next stage of an existing one because we want to be sure that the strategy or plan will be flawless.

Just recognizing when perfectionism is creeping into your thinking and time management is a big step forward.

8. You avoid difficult conversations.

Over time, I've realized that [difficult conversations](#) can be pivotal opportunities to gain clarity, to listen and learn, and to end the [conversation](#) having enriched the relationship. And I've learned that avoiding a difficult conversation means that we're not identifying, facing or solving problems that, if unaddressed, will fester and get worse.

9. You don't say thank you.

You won't succeed alone. Every day, there are many people on your team who deserve to be thanked—from colleagues up and down the career ladder, to the Uber driver and even the barista at your coffeehouse. And while we're at it, [smile more](#), too! Research shows that it positively benefits you and those around you.

10. You forget that your inner life determines your outer success.

This is an idea I embraced long ago, and [Dr. Henry Cloud says it well](#):

"The good life sometimes has little to do with outside circumstances. We are happy and fulfilled mostly by who we are on the inside.... And our internal lives largely contribute to producing many of our external circumstances."

For me, an inner life begins with [gratitude](#). Sometimes I simply write down three things I'm thankful for in the moment (especially in the hardest of times) and it immediately changes my perspective. Our inner life grows by taking time to reflect on what *is* positive and working—and it energizes us to repeat the process.

It forms the basis, too, for learned optimism. Anyone can learn to [be more optimistic](#). Winston Churchill said, *"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."*

You will be well on your way to success in work and life if you take the time to recognize and overcome the daily bad habits that are holding you back. Good luck!