

**S**O WHAT IS IT THAT SEPARATES THOSE WHO ACHIEVE STELLAR SUCCESS FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT? DO THEY WANT IT MORE? DO THEY HAVE INSIDE KNOWLEDGE? ARE THEY NATURALLY MOTIVATED? DO THEY HAVE MORE CONNECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES? OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE?

---

# Act! Not Acted Upon

by Ben Benson

**S**OME PEOPLE THINK that if they just work everything out and make a logical case for action, then action will occur. But it's not what we know -- it's what we feel about what we know that really makes the difference. We think that we need to understand logically before things will work out. But the fact is that we don't act on logic, but on emotion. The English word emotion derives from Latin *emovere*, where *e-* means 'out' and *move* means 'move.' Thus emotion and feelings, not logic, are what make us move out and take action. In fact the word emotion derives from a verb that means "agitate, stir up".

Logic will not change an emotion as an internal motivator but action will. A similar process occurs with external motivation. People sit around waiting to be motivated to action. They think that if only they could get motivated by something or someone, they would spring into action and everything would fall into place. But waiting for external motivation is as hit-and-miss as waiting to feel "in the mood." Sure, taking action is easy when you feel like it. But what happens when you don't feel like it?

In my experience of wealth creation and my research on the super-rich, the one characteristic that stands out is the willingness to adhere to the 4th Law of Wealth. Successful people will execute whether they feel like it or not. They will execute whether it's logical or rational or not. They will

execute whether they are motivated to do so or not. They couldn't care less about how they feel. If they need to, they will force themselves to do what needs to be done. They have gained such personal control that mood, feelings, logic, or motivation are irrelevant to action. They simply adhere to a higher personal standard of operation than the average person, and act based on decision.

Sir Alex Ferguson once said, "David Beckham is Britain's finest striker of a football not because of a God-given talent but because he practices with a relentless application that the vast majority of less gifted players wouldn't contemplate." Daley Thompson, Olympic Gold Medal Winner in Decathlon once said, "I trained every single day, including Christmas Day, in order to achieve what I wanted. I never wanted to leave any stone unturned."

Do you think he wanted to train on Christmas Day in the freezing cold, while everyone else was busy unwrapping presents and eating turkey? Probably not, but he wanted Olympic Gold more, and he took the action necessary to ensure that he did everything in his power to secure it.

You can't sit back and wait for the feeling to arrive. You can't wait for the external motivation to present itself. What if it doesn't show up? Define your target and take action. You must act and not be acted upon.

Did you know that emotion is a two-way system? Science has discovered that we feel emotion as a result of events, but we can also create events or take action that will generate the emotion. Every emotion has a chemical and physical signature in the body. For example, everyone knows what depressed looks like. There are neurological attributes of depression that trigger the physical signals and tell the body to be depressed. If you hunch your shoulders, look down, breathe shallowly and frown, it's actually very hard to feel happy.

## *The great end of life is not knowledge but action*

T H Huxley

But if you change your physiology and look up, smile, and breathe deeply, it's very hard to feel depressed. In fact do we smile because we're happy, or are we happy because we smile?

Your emotion is affected by your physiology. Even if you don't feel like going to the gym but you force yourself to go, your body will soon create the chemical signals required to do your workout. In other words if you "just do it," you will start to feel like doing it. And the internal motivation you crave will arrive in spades.

Most people have heard Francis Bacon's immortal words "knowledge is power," but it's at best an unfinished sentence. Perhaps Bacon was interrupted before he finished -- because knowledge by itself is only potential power. The only way to realize that power is to use knowledge. A more accurate statement would therefore be "applied knowledge is power."

Knowledge on its own is not what we thought it would be. If it were, then university professors would be making the seven-figure salaries that many deserve. Those with the most education would be the wealthiest, and yet if you look at the Rich Lists of the world, much of the world's wealth is held by people who didn't even finish school or who dropped out of college to pursue a business career. Knowledge alone is not the key to wealth.

The new economy and technological advancement has allowed the dissemination of knowledge and information in a way never before possible. The opportunities thus created, however, are as dependent as ever on the implementation of this law, this truth will not change or alter.

Regardless of the available knowledge or your ability to access it, knowledge only offers potential power, and its promises are realized only when you DO something with it.

We have all met people with three academic degrees and entire alphabets after their name – and that are dead broke. You know the sort of people I'm referring to. Don't get me wrong; getting informed is absolutely crucial. When I first ventured into property development, I had to learn what to do and how to make it work. Gathering information and knowledge was a crucial part of that process, but none of it would have been worth anything if I hadn't bought my first property.

Intelligence and logic are no match for courage, boldness and persistence. Gathering excessive information is usually a defense mechanism, a way to remove uncertainty. But in the end, nothing removes uncertainty better than experience. And experience is not the result of adequate knowledge; it is the result of adequate action. You don't have to know everything. Just get enough knowledge – then act, rather than be acted upon.

*FOR ADDITIONAL FREE info and resources on this topic and the 7Laws of Wealth, sign up at [www.7Lawsofwealth.com](http://www.7Lawsofwealth.com). Ben Benson is an entrepreneur, investor and the author of the 7Laws of Wealth – An Individual Stimulus Plan for Surviving in the New Economy, and the New Rules of Wealth, published by Sabel & Stone. He speaks to companies, groups and organizations on the 7Laws of Wealth, Business and Leadership.*