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OWN YOUR LIFE

FREE GUIDE · SELF-LEADERSHIP

From amateur to pro: how to overcome inner and outer resistance.

Most people know the path to greater professionalism. What holds them back along the way is rarely discussed openly. Here are seven hurdles and how to deal with them in practice.

By **Alessandro Vegliante**, entrepreneur and coach · Reading time about 8 minutes

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I believe amateurs and professionals differ less in talent than many people think. Luck, contacts or the right environment only partly explain the difference either. What I have observed again and again in recent years is something else: professionals deal with resistance differently, the inner kind just as much as the outer kind.

If you avoid resistance, you stop exactly where things get uncomfortable. If you learn to deal with it, you move forward. In this guide I describe seven hurdles I encounter most often, in myself and in the people I support, and what you can do about them.

INNER RESISTANCE

01 Waiting for the perfect moment.

Many people wait for the right time, for better conditions or for the moment they finally feel ready. When I started building something of my own alongside my full-time job, there was no moment when everything fitted. Looking back, that wasn't necessary either. Professionals start under real conditions and improve along the way, because they know the perfect moment rarely arrives by itself.

THE QUESTION

What are you waiting for right now, and how long have you been waiting?

02 Understanding self-doubt as a signal.

Everyone who builds something new knows self-doubt, and I don't know anyone who has managed entirely without it. What matters is what you do with it. If you let doubt stop you, you stand still. If you take it as a pointer, you see where you can still learn. What does that mean in practice? Doubts that are not followed by action paralyse you, while doubts you respond to move you forward.

THE PERSPECTIVE

Ask yourself whether your doubt is really telling you to stop, or whether it is showing you where you still need to invest.

03 Identity before behaviour.

Many people try to change their behaviour and wonder why, after a few weeks, everything is back to how it was. In my experience new behaviour only lasts if it fits the image you have of yourself. If you see yourself as a professional, over time you act like one. So the question we should really be asking is less "What do I have to do?" and more "Who do I want to become?".

THE EXERCISE

Write down in one sentence who you want to be in three years. Describe who you are and leave out what you own. From today, make your decisions the way that person would make them.

OUTER RESISTANCE

04 The environment that keeps you small.

Some people around you react sceptically as soon as you change. Usually there is no ill will behind it. Your growth reminds them that they have stood still themselves, and that is uncomfortable. For you, this is one of the hardest kinds of resistance, because it comes from people close to you. But I have learnt that your environment is not fixed. You can influence who you spend your time with.

THE QUESTION

Think of the five people you spend the most time with. Do these conversations move you forward, or do they keep you where you are today?

05 Criticism from people who have never tried it themselves.

People who risk nothing themselves often have a firm opinion about those who do. I see this with many of the people I support. Criticism from outside therefore doesn't prove you are wrong. Still, it is worth looking closely at where it comes from. Honest feedback from someone with experience is valuable. Criticism from someone who has never started anything themselves usually helps you very little.

THE RULE

Get feedback mainly from people who know the risk you are taking right now.

06 Structures that slow you down.

Sometimes the resistance comes neither from you nor from other people, but from your everyday life itself: routines you have never questioned, dependencies, contracts or habits that once fitted. What many people underestimate is how much such structures slow you down, precisely because you hardly notice them any more. Professionals regularly check whether their structures still fit where they stand today, and change them when they no longer do.

THE QUESTION

Which structure in your life or business was built for an earlier version of you and no longer fits today?

07 The moment that counts.

At some point the moment comes when everything adds up: pressure, tiredness, doubt and perhaps criticism too. Then you face the choice of backing off or carrying on. Professionals experience such moments just as often as amateurs. For me, the difference is that they have thought beforehand about how they want to act in that moment.

THE EXERCISE

Decide today how you want to react when things get difficult, and write it down. In the situation itself you usually lack the calm to do so.

NEXT STEP

Ready for the next step?

If you noticed while reading that you are stuck on one of these points, let's talk about it. In the initial call we clarify together whether coaching makes sense for you.

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