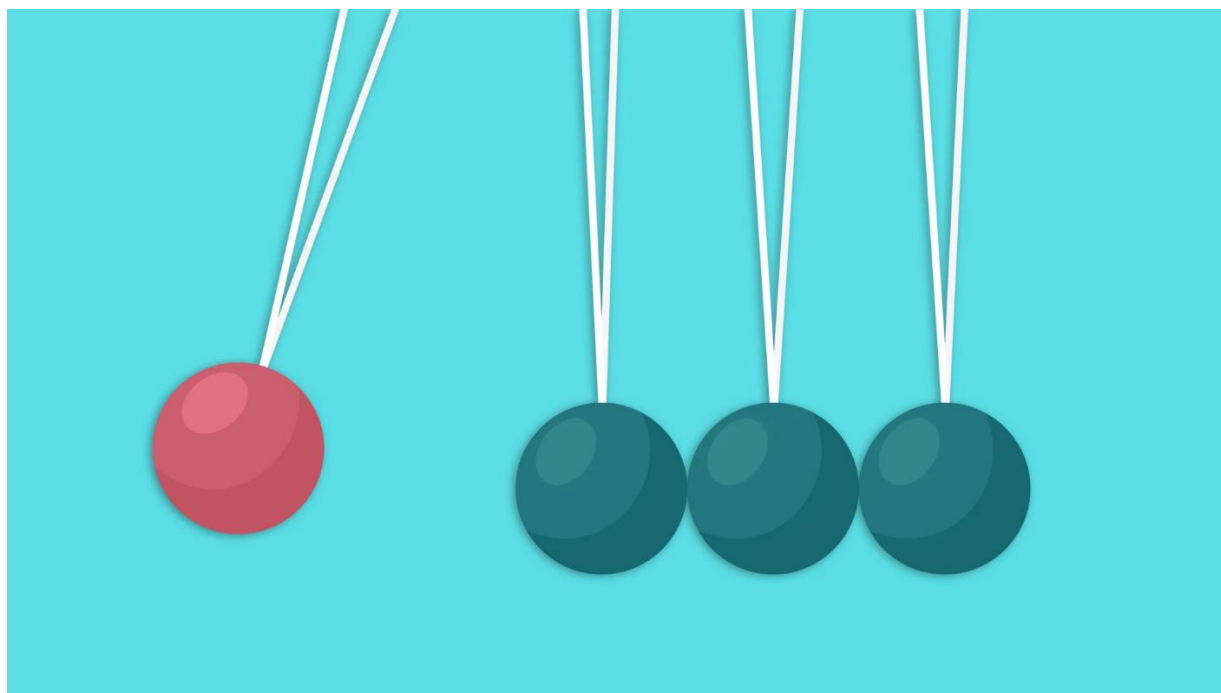


## Want To Bring Momentum into Your Life? Focus On Action and Not Perfection

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[Illustration: dzm1try/Adobe Stock]

Don't wait for the 'perfect' time to start working on your goals.

I've always been a doer. I move fast, I love learning new things, and I don't sit still for long. Productivity has been a faithful companion throughout my career, and I attribute much of my success to one key trait: the courage to take action—even when things seem uncertain or complex.

I trace this mentality back to a moment in my childhood. I was about 11 years old, growing up in the Netherlands, where a bicycle isn't just a toy—it's your main mode of transportation. One day, I had my first flat tire and it was raining (as it always is). I felt defeated and immobile. No bike meant no freedom, no way to get from A to B.

I walked home, and my dad, calm as ever, looked at me and said, "No problem, let's fix it." Fix it? This was 1984. There was no YouTube tutorial. No step-by-step guide. Just a deflated tire, some tools, and a kid who had no idea what he was doing.

We sat together with a bucket of water to find the hole, sandpaper, and glue to patch it, and metal tools to remove and reinsert the tire. Step by step, we repaired it. He didn't do it for me—we did it together.

That day changed my mindset. I realized that if I can fix this, I can fix anything. From that moment on, I've believed that most problems are solvable, most obstacles are temporary, and most fears are exaggerated.

### **How I honed my growth mindset**

That mindset was tested often. I wasn't the strongest student. I worked hard at a demanding public high school, but the grades didn't come easy. Worse, many of my teachers seemed to doubt me—or at least, didn't hide it well.

Except for one: Mr. Bosman, my physical education teacher. He had an infectious energy and a simple motto. Every time he introduced a new exercise, he'd explain, demonstrate, wait for confirmation, and then shout a single word—his command, his mantra: "Do!" (but in Dutch of course)

That word stuck with me. It was the only positive affirmation I got from a teacher in those years, and it became my philosophy. When in doubt? Do. When overwhelmed? Do. When uncertain? Still . . . do. Don't sit still, action over inaction wins always.

Fast-forward to my corporate career at The Baan Corporation (a software company that is now part of Infor Global Solutions), I remember meeting Jan Baan—the company's visionary founder. I was just 25, eager, and still finding my professional rhythm. I asked him how he managed to get so much done—and so well.

He told me, "Michel, I try to make 20 decisions in a day and still leave time to correct two of them. That's better than making two perfect decisions and missing out on the other 18." That's when it clicked for me. Perfection is slow and paralyzing. If I want to move forward, I need to take action while being willing to learn and correct my mistakes in the process.

### **Why action-oriented leaders win**

In my work as an executive coach, I meet many bright, capable, ambitious leaders who still hold onto the opposite mindset. They're carrying around the weight of things people said to them years ago. Whether that's "I'm not ready," "I'm not qualified enough," or "Someone else can do it better."

But most of the messages have little merit, and I encourage people to focus on taking action instead.

A recent study published in *Current Psychology* found that leaders who rely on internal trait-based resources—like resilience, self-discipline, and adaptability—are better equipped to manage stress and perform well in complex, high-stakes environments. It's important to note

that those qualities aren't built by sitting still. Leaders need to sharpen them through movement, iteration, and learning by doing.

Another study in the *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* showed that self-leadership and mindfulness training measurably improve a leader's confidence and decision-making. It's not perfection that builds capability—it's repetition, awareness, and the courage to act even when clarity is incomplete.

This mindset also aligns with modern neuroscience. The brain rewards progress—even small wins—with dopamine, which motivates us to keep going.

### **Final thought: action drives culture**

When leaders adopt a bias for action, they don't just transform themselves—they create a ripple effect. They inspire teams to take initiative. They build cultures where progress trumps perfection, where learning is constant, and where speed is a strategic advantage.

Momentum, after all, is contagious. Decisive leadership removes bottlenecks, boosts morale, and accelerates performance. But hesitation at the top leads to confusion, disengagement, and organizational drag. And once you lose momentum, it's hard to rebuild.

Action creates clarity. Action builds confidence. Action fuels momentum. So don't wait for perfection or permission. Just start doing.