

Help

I'm stuck in a Long Term Project



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Photo on the cover is an adaptation of Courbet's "Self-portrait: The Desperate Man"

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INTRODUCTION

Ok, so you've been working on something for a long time. Maybe even a very long time. Or, you haven't been working so much at all, that's exactly the problem. Probably you have quite a stretch to go. And so far things haven't really been going as planned.

This guide is for those that are stuck in an LTP, a Long Term Project. Be it a medium-long project such as a paper, or something as big as PhD thesis, most of us could use some help with planning sour days, restoring faith in yourself, or even with trying to see light at the end of this seemingly never-ending tunnel.

Whereas this guide mainly addresses the 'hard-core' cases, I think there's useful advice for

pretty much any type of person working on an LTP.

So, who am I and why do I think I can be of help? I'm a philosophy graduate who's done quite some LTP's and who happens to really like them. I guess it's best to admit that right from the beginning. Which is not to say that I haven't had days full of Facebook and youtube, writer's blocks and repetitive snooze-button hitting. Having seen so many friends struggle with the same issues, I became pretty skilled at recognising where the problems lie. Or at least nobody's had the courage to tell me I'm not. But I've always wanted to do more, say more, help more, etc. Hence this guide.

Before we really start this guide, let me give you a small disclaimer. Don't expect something like 'Seven Steps That Will Change Your Life Forever!' The stuff that's in here is very intuitive and in a way nothing majorly new. The innovative part is that I don't think anyone has really written it down yet, or in any case not in a way that's not incredibly dull or patronising. Oh and it's also different from the Seven Steps in that I don't pretend it isn't going to be hard work for you.

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EXPECTANCY

As I told you in the introduction, this guide isn't going to turn you into a brand-new-you. And that's ok. All you really need to do is try your best to get into an upward spiral. I don't mean you shouldn't be strict or a bit tough on yourself, 'cause you do. But don't EVER beat yourself up about anything. This is obviously connected to the whole shame-thing: accept the facts and don't let yourself get dragged down by them.

You're going to come across some days that things just don't run so smoothly: you can't find the words to express your ideas, you're too much in love to focus, or it's raining cats and dogs and you don't want to go to the library. If that happens,

deal with it and try harder tomorrow. Letting yourself off the hook a little bit works two ways: you don't feel so worthless, and it prevents you from thinking that now you've wasted your time and broke your resolutions, you might as well spend tomorrow on facebook/watching series/baking cookies.

Further, as I mentioned before only briefly: set goals that you can actually make. In the long run it's much more profitable to set yourself to a schedule of four hours a day and fulfil that, than to go for six and work for five. So set the bar a bit lower and give yourself some time to turn into a supersonic LTP manager.