A close up of text on a black background

Description automatically generated

**The Essential Excuse Handbook**

**77 Ways to Keep From Doing Anything at All**

**Betty Withrow, CLC**

Dedicated

to all the dreams

that really want to come true.

**The Essential Excuse Handbook**

In this book, I will outline the principal excuses, and the ways to use them, as well as what you are really saying when you use them. Many people find that excuses are a way of life! If making excuses sounds all too familiar, this book can either serve as an enabling device, or as a decoding ring, letting you know what excuses really are, what you are really saying when you use them, and how they really (don’t) work.

Do you think things are passing you by? Possibly you have that feeling, sometimes? And if you don’t want to think about that, and once again, who cares, and might as well just eat the damn donut and drink the coffee (or the Kool-Aid), you may be one of these.

If you feel that something is missing in life, you can make excuses fill in the gap and never have to do a thing. The world will take care of making sure that you never get anything done, you remain unfulfilled and insecure, and people sneer at you as somebody who just isn’t worth the effort to get to know.

If this is what you want, The Essential Excuse Handbook will make it all so much easier. Just scroll through the categories and pick the one that seems easiest to use. Then, either use it, or find another excuse in the list that will allow you to not do so. The choice is yours!

Have fun making more excuses, and laughing off your own life.

If, on the other hand, you have for some unknown reason, decided you want to DO something about all the things that are bothering you, all the ways in which you have let excuses dominate your life and keep you away from becoming happy, this book can also serve you by allowing you to identify the excuse you may have been using without even knowing it!

I make suggestions about the causes and effects of these various mechanisms, and there is a lot more to them than may appear at first glance.

Either way, The Essential Excuse Handbook will give you insights into how you are short-circuiting your success, and once again, the choice is yours…would you rather keep making excuses, enjoying the feeling of not taking responsibility for your experience on this planet, or would you rather find ways to STOP doing that and tap into your own creative gifts?

What would that be like….To get going on doing the stuff you have been telling yourself is somehow out of reach, or that you are not good enough to have, or that is “too big” for you! You have a pile of stories, so pick the ones that make your life better, and dump the rest off to be recycled by other excuse makers…there are MILLIONS in need of this! Are you ready to make a contribution, or are you going to hog that excuse all to yourself? There is somebody waiting right now for that very excuse so that they, too, can get out of doing just about anything.

Stories that tell you that excuses work are simply your own “blah” wanting to run the show. What kind of show is it? I truly believe that life is like a carnival, and you get one dime to spend when you go through the door. You already have a ticket…but you go through the gate and you are surrounded by distractions. Barkers are everywhere yelling at you to spend it on what THEY tell you is important. Where will you spend your precious dime?

Stuck eating cotton candy forever, or ready to take on the Big Ride? (Yes, the Ferris Wheel! It’s all there waiting to happen. You DO have a ticket somewhere, buried in that massive bag of excuses, so use it before it expires!)

STOP telling yourself stories that suck, and make the choice to dig into the pile of stuff to find the useful portion, and discard the rest. Excuses are like clutter…they eat your life and leave you with the mess to clean up.

One thing that excuses will do for you…they will lie to you about what they are, where they came from, and what they will do for you. OOPS…how about that…that’s THREE things they will do. So narrowing it down to just one, notice that an excuse is NEVER what it claims to be. It is always something that comes from inside your beliefs about yourself and your world, that is hiding in somebody else or something else. You can choose to explore what excuses are doing to you and discover what they could be doing instead if you recognize them for what they are anch change them into something else. OR, you can stay comfortable in your discomfort and pretend you don’t see how you are making sure that nothing that you really want to happen can actually happen.

I will give a short hint or a question or two about what each excuse is. Additionally, I will suggest how you can use this excuse to postpone making decisions or taking responsibility.

If you find you are laughing about one of them, a kind of uneasy laugh…that means that you are noticing how much you have been using that particular type of excuse. It’s telling you something important.

Please remember that any choice you make is your own and that not to decide is to decide.

Here we go…Pick an excuse and ride it for all it’s worth!

Or, get off the ride and make a choice that takes you somewhere new and a whole lot more interesting. Sort through the pile and make your choice!

If you find that this topic is of greater interest to you, please contact me for a time to have a conversation about pulling the plug on all your excuses and getting on with the show! My mission is to support all creative people in overcoming that plague of our lives, procrastination, otherwise known as the Black Hole of Creativity.

If you would like to know more about how you can create an energy pattern that serves you and your desires more fully, please get in touch with me to schedule a time for a consultation. I will be very happy to share some time with you as we look at what is going on in your life and what you can do about it.

Visit me at [www.thewriterslaunchpad.com](http://www.thewriterslaunchpad.com) to see more of what I do. Or email me at [betty@thewriterslaunchpad.com](mailto:betty@thewriterslaunchpad.com).

Or call me at 831.238.2626.

So here we go! If you find that you are made a bit uncomfortable as you read this, that means you recognize something about what you are doing and what it is doing to you.

Please take a little time to fill in the short exercise at the bottom of each page so you can see a bit more of what the excuse is doing in your life, and take action on it.

Remember that with this many excuses listed, you can always hop to the next one and continue not getting anything done.

But what will that mean for you and for what you want in life? I mean, what you actually want, not what you think you are supposed to want…which is where most of these excuses hide out when they are not tearing you apart.

These desires, the ones that are not truly your own, are the root of all your unhappiness.

Your false fronted desires, created by others, that you adopted and took home, and that stand in the middle of your living room glaring at you. Those guys. Then they go back to their holes, and send you little whispers of how you don’t deserve anything better.

Do you believe that? I sure hope not.

1. ***It’s Just Not Fun.***

You can use this when you are faced with something that makes you feel green and queasy whenever you think about it.

Usually this is something that involves making some kind of a statement or being directly answerable to a situation. It means stepping out of your little idea and into something that challenges you and may have consequences in your relationship with who you think you are.

When you say it’s not fun, what does that mean? Are you uncomfortable with the idea of doing something that you may not feel you are good at, and that’s not a fun idea?

What is it that makes it not fun? Is that a real and intrinsic part of what it is? Possibly your definition of fun is in need of revision, since it doesn’t include the fun of the un-fun. Life is full of things that at first glance are anything but fun. Perspective is the key to finding the fun. Fun may be as simple as getting it over with!

What feeling comes up in your body when you think about how not fun this is?

Is the “not-fun” about fear or anger?

What would be the consequences of not doing this thing you are dreading?

How would you feel if you did it anyway even though you hate the idea?

**2*. Nobody will listen to me.***

When you say this to yourself, you can be sure that nobody will listen to you, especially if you never say anything. This is an easy road to being right, if you want to be right about being powerless and not believing in yourself. But then again…

How can you know that for sure? What makes you think that is true?

Is it because one person or group of people doesn’t listen, or hasn’t listened before?

There are over 8 billion people in this world. At least a few of them are ready for what you have to say, and possibly a lot of them. Try listening to yourself to begin with, and notice that you are actually a lot like a lot of other people.

Suppose that what you had to say made a huge difference in the life of one other person out of that 8 billion? Somebody is probably waiting to hear exactly what you have to say, and they may not even know it yet.

What is it that you want to say that you are afraid to say?

Who do you want to tell about it?

How much are you willing to do to make yourself heard and to learn your own value?

**3*. I don’t have (time, money, energy) for this.***

The story of lack is at the root here. Very often there is story going on, that you got from somebody else, about how there is never enough, and there needs to be some sort of conflict about what “little” there is. Many people were told often as children that there wasn’t enough of things, and so it became “the way it is.”

It’s not the way it is.

The Universe has huge resources and possible ways to do things. When you get lined up with that kind of energy, new ideas and ways of doing things become apparent and new doors open. The ”lack” of something is the opportunity to create it, or something better. All art and great thought begins with a state of need.

What area of life is it that gave you the background for telling yourself this story? Is it truly the story you want?

What would it be like to notice what you have, instead of what you don’t have, and transfer that feeling into this topic?

Would some other resource fill the gap?

What do you need right now to make what you want happen?

Who can help you get that?

What stops you from seeking help?

**4. *I’m not worthy of having that.***

One of the most common stories that stops anything from happening is based on the idea of a lack of worth.

In our society, everyone is made to feel unworthy in some way, to settle for less, and to deny their own brilliance. What if that were all false information? What if you were worthy and never even had to prove it?

Who sets the standard for what is and is not worthy? The judgment call is your own to make. Your life is a unique moment in the Universe, and your worth is intrinsic. It doesn’t have to be earned. Nobody else will ever know exactly what you know, or have the same gifts that you have by having lived and learned.

What have you done lately that benefits someone else or a larger good?

How does that affect your idea of your self-worth?

What is your definition of being worthy?

5. *He/she doesn’t deserve to have/be/do that.*

See the excuse above!

In this case, the blame is transferred to another so that you don’t feel the pain of it. Outsourcing your own grief onto somebody else’s personality keeps you from noticing the things that hold you back.

That’s a sign that the hooks are in really deep.

How do you know what the other person deserves, or for that matter, what you deserve? Applying judgment limits your awareness and creates an invisible circle of “Can’t”. This becomes your life.

What role does blame play in your assessment of worth?

If you removed blame from your picture of what is going on, what would that do?

What would happen if you said, “I deserve to have that, too” instead of deciding someone else doesn’t deserve it?

6. *That idea, project, commitment, is too outrageous for me.*

This comes from fear of being rejected or judged.

Everybody hates to be judged, and everybody judges both themselves and others. Judgment and fear of judgment are great ways to keep anything from happening.

It’s a quick trigger to stop the flow of life and energy. What if somebody makes a snide comment about me? This is a great cause of fear and it is in fact a possibility. Is the cost of never expressing yourself the price you want to pay in order to avoid that?

Being outrageous is like opening up a hole in the dam, and the pressure can be intense! What will come gushing out when you show your true colors?

Stepping out takes nerve, it’s true. Being boring is more fun?

What is “outrageous” for one is simply natural for another. Stir things up a little, and you will like yourself, and others, more. Take a deep breath, notice that you are a drop in the ocean, and make a bit of a splash.

If you did something that you consider to be outrageous, what do you think would happen?

Who would judge your actions, and what standards would they use?

Is that a standard that you would hold within yourself when evaluating the behavior of others?

7. *I don’t have the energy.*

By not taking care of yourself, you free yourself from taking responsibility for yourself by being too exhausted. Then become bored…right? Anger without enthusiasm equals boredom.

If you take responsibility for your inner and outer conditions in life, you will immediately gain a bit more power over them.

Instead of saying you are tired or don’t have the energy, ask yourself what it would be like to have the energy. Do one little thing to get more energy into your life, right this minute. Get up out of your chair, breathe deeply and fully, and notice your surroundings. What color is most dominant in your field of vision?

What one little thing made you happy in the last 24 hours?

How can you make that feeling bigger in your awareness?

Is there one thing you can change about the way you arrange your time and energy, a possibility that you have been ignoring or putting off?

8. *Too pissed off…can’t handle my feelings.*

Your feelings are powerful and they are what makes your life go. Emotional fuel is the biggest force in your creativity. In fact they are the biggest force in your life. Your feelings are real. Your feelings are where you really live. They are what make your life happen, and make you do things…or not do them.

You are afraid of them, and don’t want to consider what they really mean for you. You judge them, and yourself.

So you let them run your life instead, behind the scenes, and don’t give *yourself* credit for being as real as they are.

How productive is this in terms of making what you actually want to appear in your life to be what you observe to happen?

Anger is the number one impediment to growth. Or, it can be the most potent fuel imaginable when handled correctly. Sorrow is the way to compassion. Jealousy is the twin of generosity. The feelings that appear at first glance to be so horrible actually hold great gifts of awareness, and show you who you really are. Your so-called negative traits are what make you the unique part of the great story of life that you are here to show.

What would happen if you simply observed your feelings without talking to yourself about them?

Who would you need to be in order to do that?

Do you think it’s possible to learn from your own negativity?

**9. *It’s not really that bad (Used to avoid your feelings when you are not having a good day)***

Why isn’t it that bad?

Sometimes, it really IS that bad, and not admitting it is like committing emotional suicide.

Bargaining with misery so that you can have more of it DOES keep you from being blamed for making others uncomfortable, by letting them see you making your own life better, and blaming themselves for not doing the same..

The more you put up with, the more things you will get to put up with. It’s like having a sign on your forehead that says, “I just don’t really care about anything, so go ahead and dump on me.”

Is it worth it? Are you willing to support others being miserable by not taking action and becoming a better example? Are you blaming yourself for other peoples’ baloney?

Letting go of the whole concept of blame lets life actually show up for you. Blame is a way to keep life away from you and trap you in diminishing conversations with your energy. It’s a losing proposition. What if nothing was ever really anybody’s fault?

How can you safely express negative feelings without offloading them to others?

Do you feel anxious about doing that?

What do you think would happen if you let go of your anger as a possession and saw it as a passing thing?

**10*. Not worth doing for the results I will get.***

This is a way to completely negate all the possible results by declaring absolute zero as a net sum.

Writing yourself off in advance…a great strategy to keep yourself from starting something. If you never start it, you will never need to finish it, and you won’t possibly fail, and nobody can criticize you for your results. Except that you will have that empty feeling of regret that is the true face of failure…regret that you wrote yourself off.

What result is it that you want? Are you expecting too much of this process, or too little?

Could it be that you are aiming too low?

Does it seem like you are selling yourself and your abilities short by saying this?

What if it was only a part of a strategy that DOES produce the results you want and you could add it on to something that is already working?

How can you change your idea of the results you want?

What would that new result idea look like if it happened?

Who can you bounce this idea off that will give you real feedback?

11*. Why bother? Nobody will notice.*

The fatalistic approach to life…keep it dull and gray, please. We don’t want to be noticed. Fade into the background and tell yourself that life just can’t be good, at least not for you. Being a nobody in your own mind makes it so easy to become a nobody in the rest of the world. Take no action, and watch this happen all around you!

Disappear before you even make a stab at it…now that’s REAL failure! Will people notice? Will they care if you succeed or fail?

They sure won’t if you never do it!

This is a story that has taken over your mind…Another example of how a feeling that takes over your life writes your story for you. Is that the story you want?

What story do you have about how nobody notices you or what you do?

Who was the person who set the stage for that story and how important were they when they did so?

How important is that person in your life today?

12*. If I don’t do it, I can fill up my life with things I don’t really care about, but that keep me safe.*

This is a subtle excuse that most people will not admit to themselves that they are using until they are in crisis mode, having painted themselves into a corner.

It is the way that dysfunctional relationships keep going, and life energy goes down the tubes without being noticed until it is very late in the game.

Dangerous and creepy, this excuse is all about buying into illusions and defending them as though they were sacred truths.

What kind of things? Gossip, busy work, self-pity, all help to keep you secure in a position of being a well loved loser.

Unhappy people love to make and keep others unhappy. Fear of leaving the group of unhappy people is a form of emotional blackmail that is used ruthlessly to keep everybody insecure and “safe”. “Who do you think you are?” is a deadly question.

Let’s face it, being loved for never being happy is a bad deal. There are lots of people who will support you in remaining unhappy, because then they feel justified in doing it too! Misery loves company, that’s true, but is it the kind of company you really want?

What are you doing that isn’t something you really care about?

How can you change your idea of what’s important about this?

13*. If I do that, I’ll have to change my whole way of doing things.*

Fear of change is based in primal drives of safety and of group dynamics. Tradition is a way of keeping change at bay, but real life demands change and traditions that remain alive change with the times.

A change of method implies a change of identity, and of destiny.

The conversation gets very real when you are ready to look this excuse in the eye and tell it to hand over the keys, since from now on *you* will be doing the driving and creating the route. Expect that there will be some discomfort involved here as you redesign your ways and you make your life more of what you want it to be. The changes may be subtle, or they may be radical. Or they may be a combination of the two.

What would happen if you changed one little thing every day so that the change was gradual?

Or, what if it is overdue for you to rethink your process or methods, and you are secretly angry at yourself for not taking action?

What kind of emotion comes up when you look at the idea of making the change you are avoiding?

How can you shift some piece of your energy pattern a little bit each day?

What long standing habit do you need to drop?

14*. It doesn’t fit my idea of who I am.*

Here is the image dominating the desires.

Not really very rewarding to your life force, this one is a symptom of being addicted to the most insidious of drugs, approval. Your idea of who you are may very well have been shaped by people who may have meant well on the surface, but in the bigger game, they didn’t have your best interests as their first priority.

They wanted to be able to place you in their frame of reference and keep you “safe”. Well meaning perhaps but not good for your growth, eventually this is a stifling response to life and will lead to physical problems as well as mental and emotional ones, as though you were in a glass container looking out and unable to contact your true life force.

Changing your mind proves that you still have one. Try it out! You may be operating under a false sense of identity that is keeping you from finding out who you really are.

You can always act as though it is someone else that is doing it. This is a wonderful way to cultivate detachment and get over the idea that you have to stick with only one type of life or activities.

What would you say someone you love if they were in your position?

How are you seeing only the inside and not the whole picture?

Who do you admire and what would they do in this situation?

15*. Self-control isn’t my style.*

This is another excuse that is invisible to you, but very obvious to those around you. You shrug your shoulders and say “I just can’t help it.”

Letting yourself be dominated by your personal biases and established habits keeps you going somewhere, that is, exactly the place you are going, but it is not the place you have dreamed of going. It’s the way to the spiral of diminishing returns, the road to nowhere, the path to oblivion.

In order to make the changes in your life that will pull you out of the ditch, you need to value your life. A lack of self control is simply a lack of understanding what you truly want and settling for what you think you should want, not seeing your own life as being valuable enough to take control.

If you don’t control yourself, somebody or something else will. You don’t have to be rigid about this…your “self” is a fluid experience that you are making up as you go along. So control your thoughts and feelings, and steer the boat instead of simply being a passenger.

When you do control yourself, you can summon the energy to do the things you have always dreamed of doing.

What element of your personal style do you not like?

How have you been avoiding this dislike of some part of yourself?

Who is telling you that you have to stay this way?

16*. Somebody else is better at figuring this out.*

This can be used to cop out of any demanding project or situation.

It is way of short circuiting yourself and placing yourself in a position of being powerless in order to avoid answering to a need to become bigger than you are.

You can hand off the power of the situation to somebody who may not even know as much as you do about it, simply because you weren’t ready to step up…So you let that person control your outcome, instead of even trying to figure it out? You might be better at it than you think! Another alternative is to step into knowing that it is bigger than you are, and finding ways to grow into it. You can tell yourself and others that you don’t have the expertise needed, and you don’t have the time or will to learn or to find the person who can do it, or to teach you how to do it.

Who is that person? Nobody can figure everything out, or be good at everything. It’s not even a desirable idea, really. If everybody is an expert, how will anyone learn anything?

Find that person, and learn from him or her. Then you too will be able to figure things out that you didn’t know you could. “I don’t know how to figure it out.”

The world is full of people who can help you with that. Look around and ask questions? That’s how you learn, my dear.

Do you know for sure that you are or are not able to do the job?

What would it take to get the support so you can do the job?

Are you willing to do that?

17*. I don’t want to be the boss.*

At least you are clear about it!

Okay, not everybody is a boss. That’s okay. We need everybody in order to have a team.

But in what sense do you not want to be the boss?

The boss of ***what*** do you not want to be?

If you never take control of anything, you are like a piece of newspaper flying in the wind.

You can be the boss of your own world, no matter what it looks like on the outside. You and you alone have the authority to determine how and where you place your frame of perception as you relate to the events of your life.

Your inner condition is where you really live. Circumstances and events are simply illustrations to guide your mind to its inner truth.

How would your idea of what is going on change if you looked at your life as being something that you create instead of something that happens to you?

What decision can you make at this moment about how much you control in your awareness?

What can you create in your next moment as a next step in making that decision real for you?

**18*. If I do that, I will not be “good”.***

This one is very tricky and can sabotage you in multiple ways as you shift the responsibility for your life and your actions onto others to avoid confronting consequences.

How do you define what is “good”?

Is your definition based on the effects your actions have on others, or is it based on the way that other perceive your actions?

Being “good” is a secret version of being “right”. The hidden payoff for both of them is that you never have to face your true feelings and can blame your problems on others. What a thrill.

Being “good”, and telling yourself that you are superior for doing so, is also a strategy to manage anger and arrange the world in a way that pleases you in the short term, but limits your perceptions and abilities to take action.

I’m not saying that being “bad” is better. They are actually flip sides of the same coin in the game of life. What is good here is bad over there, and so on. What makes something “good” or “bad”?

If your idea of good is dominated by the opinions of others, it is a bargaining chip for approval. If, on the other hand, it is based on whether your actions benefit or harm others, then it is a genuine piece of your identity and you can use this as part of the way you create your interactions in a way that is true and holds value for your inner ability to have value in your own eyes. The difference is, one is a shape-shifter and a copout, and the other is a true feeling of worth.

What does the idea of not being “good” mean for you?

What happens if you are not “good”?

**19*. It’s not really a problem.***

Or is it? Are you in fact creating structures to keep yourself “happy” in a situation that is making you miserable, and don’t want to take responsibility for possibly having someone else judge you as a troublemaker?

Are you, in other words, being happy in your misery because you are frankly too lazy to take the risk of making changes in your life?

What risks are involved in recognizing a real problem and taking action on it? You may find real opposition to your ideas that makes things more difficult as you refuse to hide in a smaller version of your self and of your life. You may find that the thrill and daring of showing up for yourself makes it worth while to go through that as you find new things showing up in your life that are far more interesting than living in a state of greyness and mediocrity!

You may even obtain a fierce pleasure in saying ”Yes, in fact, this IS a problem and I am going to do something about it, and devil take the hindmost!”

It’s the troublemakers of the world that make things change for the better eventually. If we all just sit back and behave ourselves, many injustices and tragedies will occur that we will then have the luxury of gathering to our bosoms as a form of blame. We can have guilt! Is it worth it?

Is the trouble going to lead to a positive result? If so, then taking actions and accepting the role of troublemaker confirms your commitment to freedom.

What situation are you tolerating that is not doing you any good?

How can you refuse to keep putting u with that?

Who is going to resist you in making this change?

*20****. It’s boring***.

You can use this whenever you don’t really want to make anything at all happen.

There you are, running yourself in circles of decreasing size, until you are sitting down with a big sign that say, “Whatever. Just kick me, I really don’t care.”

It’s actually the boredom that is boring, not the situation.

Boredom is simply anger without enthusiasm. When you say you are bored, you are admitting that something is annoying, and also that you are feeling too lazy to get very interested in how you are using your time. Time marches on, nothing gets done or said, and the boredom continues…

So what can you do instead? Notice how you really feel. Get enthusiastic about your anger and see what lurks in the moment.

What is it that about the thing you are contemplating that inflames you to a complete rage?

Are you willing to do something about it?

What is the very most boring thing that pops into your head when I ask you this question?

What if you just didn’t care about this issue at all and kicked it out of your life?

If kicking it out is not an option, how could you get emotional enough about it to do what it is you know you actually could do about it and have not been doing for fear of the results?

**21*. It’s not fair.***

This is useful in creating a feeling that it’s not really worth it.

Really you are talking about your self worth and the feeling that you don’t deserve to be treated well. What is the hidden payoff here? You get to remain invisible and cast yourself as a victim.

Fairness is in the mind of the beholder. Life has a way of evening things out. If we waited till things were fair, the world would be frozen in place.

What is truly fair is for you to get up from the slump of judging things and see the opportunity that awaits in the situation at hand. There is always some way to find a bright spot in events, even those that on the first appearance have no appeal whatsoever, or are sad, even tragic. There is a point of reference, that you have the power to create, which will lead to the realization of the lesson you can gain from this moment.

Where is the place of victory?

What would it be like to win even if it’s not fair?

Do you have enough faith to make the experiment?

What is the thing that is unfair?

How can you see the hidden opportunity in the person or situation you are seeing as unfair and change your point of view?

Is there a way to gain strength from taking on this challenge?

**22*. Why me?***

When you really feel that you don’t deserve the situation you are in, you are arguing with the whole Universe. That’s a lot of work. And you are up against a very serious adversary. It might be better to learn to cooperate.

And why not you?

What is it about you that makes this situation a unique opportunity that only you can understand and make into its best?

Whatever is going on is happening as a display of potential epic life and motion. You can be part of that. If there is something that is true and beautiful, and you can make it happen, that’s why you. And there always is that something.

What situation has turned up for you that you didn’t expect that is challenging for you?

What are you being asked to do, either by yourself or by others?

Who would you need to be in order for that to happen?

What would happen if you became that person?

**23*. It’s too soon.***

You are scared!

That’s why you think it’s too soon. It may actually be a little early for something to become visible.

If that is truly the case, then it is still not too soon to begin planning. Even though it is true that as Eisenhower said, “Plans are useless, but planning is indispensible”, you can use the time for observation and making experiments in your mind.

You can even write them down! This gives you a list of the variables that are in play with what you are doing. It makes the picture become more clear, and shows you where you are in relation to what it is you want to accomplish.

When you do this, you draw the “future” into your world today, and make it easier to find your way to the results that you want. And remember to leave some blank spaces to handle all the ways things will change as you move into your ideas.

There is no ideal time for any given thing to happen or to be done, so ask yourself again…

What makes me think it’s too soon?

If I started it today, how would that change my idea of what this is?

What are the things I don’t know about this idea that could change the outcomes?

**24*. It’s too late.***

This is regret talking, telling you that you blew it and there is no way out of that…

Regrets are the greatest burdens of life. Where there is breath, there is hope. Early bloomers or late, the messages of life come through us in due course.

Think of the things you couldn’t see about life when you were younger, and notice that you don’t waste as much energy. Think of how what you have observed about what is important will shape your ideas about possibilities.

That’s an advantage that can be put to great use by letting go of ideas about what is too soon or too late.

It is never too late to start over.

Where did I get the idea that particular things can only happen in a certain time frame?

Knowing what I know now, is this idea really true for me?

How can I use the advantage of experience to create a new idea that serves my happiness?

**25*. I’m too old.***

If you can read this, you are not too old.

Somebody has said that as you get older, you either become bolder or moldier. Which one sounds better to you?

Yes, putting things into perspective and being realistic about your abilities will serve you well. Don’t sell yourself short, though.

What were you thinking when you said this? You were thinking of being old, too old, in fact...too old for what?

Maybe the time is just right, and you only need to change your mind a little bit, get some help, or share your dreams with somebody who will support you in the idea that you still have it in you.

What idea came to you and you answered it with this phrase?

Are you comparing your abilities with someone else’s when you say this?

Are you comparing yourself as you are now with your younger self?

**26*. I’m too young.***

Really?

When you are procrastinating, you will be older than you think before you know it! If, instead, you seize the advantage of this very moment, you give yourself permission to listen to your spirit.

What about the idea you had before you came to this earth, before you had the idea of being born?

How old were you then? What is young, or old, other than your idea of what it is?

Look at a tree that has lived for 200 years, and you will know that you are always going to be too young to know what that tree knows. And how did it learn all of that? By starting in, right away, and sticking with it. Trees don’t waste energy arguing with their situations. They simply grow into them. The seed lands in a location, and adapts to it, and continues to grow as well as it can.

Right now you are the seed of what you will become. When the seed bursts open you will change. That’s called being alive. Might as well get started!

What idea is in you that you are holding back from yourself?

How would you nurture that idea into becoming visible if you took action?

What would stop that from happening?

**27*. Putting up with this will make \_\_\_\_happy and that’s more important than changing it so that I can be happy.***

When you do this, you create for the other person a burden that they will never be able to outgrow, a debt they can never repay.

How could they ever give back to you what you are forcing them to accept…the life force that is your own sacred being, put aside for some idea that you are not worthy of having it. You are making that other person guilty, and giving them your pain, instead of facing your own life.

What makes that other person’s happiness more important than your own?

What would happen if you put yourself first instead of last? Maybe then the other person wouldn’t have to feel guilty about you. You would have more to give and you would be complete and open in that giving, not waiting for someone to repay.

Whose needs or feelings are you putting before your own?

What is the hidden payoff for you in doing this?

What burden are you putting on the relationship in this pattern?

**28*. It’s a stupid idea that will never work.***

Stupid ideas are only good ideas that haven’t grown up yet. What would this idea be like if you let it grow up and say its own message? What if you listened to it and gave it some respect and gave yourself permission to change it so it wasn’t as stupid as all that?

Stupid can be a great place to start, since there is so much room for improvement. Also, stupid is only a way of describing something that you don’t understand.

Nothing is actually truly stupid, or truly ordinary. There’s a lot more to it than that. It takes work to be stupid enough that others will recognize it. And they could be wrong. For that matter, so could you.

What does the word “stupid” mean to you?

How does the calling something stupid serve to create understanding, or the lack of it?

What is the opposite of that idea?

**29*. People will laugh at me.***

Most people could use a good laugh. Be generous with them.

You are giving them permission to not take themselves so seriously when you do it. The person who makes others laugh is always welcome. Don’t take it all so personally. Laugh them off, while you are at it.

They might simply be letting off some steam. They might be laughing with a sense of unease about how you just might be right about something...Remember that she who laughs last laughs the best.

And what a great feeling of satisfaction will come when your “crazy” idea turns out to be a good idea. Or if it doesn’t quite pan out, you will have that much more gumption stored up for the next one….Remember that living well is the best revenge!

What do you feel if and when people laugh at you or your ideas?

How much do you really care about what other people think? On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all” and 10 is “I must have approval” where are you at this moment?

Some body has something critical to say about your idea. Does this actually ruin your day?

What would having the last laugh feel like?

**30*. I am afraid to fail.***

Nobody ever said that failing is fun. But if you never fail, it will be because you never did anything. That is real failure. Every time you don’t quite get it right, and things “fail”, it is a message from life about what really works for you.

When you fail, you can ask yourself what that message is, and use the important information you have gained, at whatever cost, to create the success that is more in keeping with your true nature. Failure simply means that you didn’t quite accurately understand what success is for YOU.

Who defines what your success is?

How can you tell if your success is appearing?

If you fail at something, what is your next move?

**31*. There are too many details.***

Any project has details, and the way to tame them is by creating a system to organize them. They will fall into line and become manageable as your mind sees a pattern.

Is it a really big idea or project, or goal?

You can break it up into modules with set boundaries and begin to tame this by setting goals to fill up each module.

Set groups of goals that are small and achievable individually, and that include ones that are personally rewarding to feed your motivation.

Have realistic expectations, and create a schedule so that your mind becomes used to the idea that at certain times, certain things are going to happen.

How are the details going to create the whole picture?

What details are the ones that will hang up your idea?

What makes them challenging?

What kinds of details can wait until you understand exactly what it is you want to do?

**32*. It’s too big for me***

This is you saying that you feel you will really need to take some big and uncomfortable steps in order to accomplish something. You don’t want to do it, so you make yourself too small.

Emotional response such as overwhelm, to a project that takes more than you have, is a reasonable response.

It is not an excuse, as such, but if you stay in the state of feeling too small it *becomes* an excuse that stops you from taking effective action.

Big ideas are big jobs. What makes it too big?

Do you need some help with it? Are you looking too much at the big picture at the expense of getting focused on what is most important?

Think of what the overall purpose of the project is, and frame your response to it in terms of that.

What moves you the most about it?

How can you make this the most important part of the picture?

What parts of it are not interesting to you?

Can someone else take care of those?

***33. Why add to the noise?***

When you have a story going on about how you are not valuable, this is a handy way to say you are contributing to the world by not contributing.

Yes! WE DO have too much information flooding our nervous systems in this modern life, and it IS toxic.

What are you going to do, say that all of that has drowned you out and you have no value but everybody else does?

Step back for a second, here. What would it be like if there was actually room in your life for you?

What do you think would happen if you turned off all the noise, and sat in your own quiet place of feeling, and listened to yourself for a while? What if that still small voice within you really has something important to say to you and to others?

Your voice and your message have a value in life. What makes you think you have the right to keep your wisdom hidden from people who need to hear what you have to say?

For example, this is a trick that writers use to keep themselves from writing things...”There’s too much noise and the world is a mess.” Every day, thousands of books enter the market, and a small percentage of them will be of interest to you. For someone else, the things you care about are not interesting, just as you could care less about their priorities. No two lives or processes are alike. We need everybody. Do your share!

What are you really wanting to say and you stop yourself from saying it?

How do you feel when you stop yourself and silence your voice?

**34*. It will cost too much***

Cost is relative to benefits received. It is true that you get what you pay for, if you actually use it.

How much is it worth to you to get your life moving?

What is the hidden cost of making sure you don’t get to have things because you tell yourself that you don’t have what it takes to get them?

The cost of something is all relative to how much you are going to benefit from it. Whatever something costs, if the lessons learned are of value to you, it is worth it.

What is it that you truly desire that you have not been willing to let yourself have?

Are you ready to do whatever it takes to make that happen?

What are you willing to give up in order to have it?

What is the cost to you of not having it?

**35*. The idea is a fraud and I am one, too***

You say this when you are playing too small for your own good, and so you make yourself bad. You are afraid of what it will feel like to expose your inner truth, and of being judged by others for doing so.

There’s a great cop-out. “We are all fakes, and the whole world is a fake, and nobody is for real, ever, and I am one of those. And nobody will believe in me, because I am a fraud, and on down the tubes with the whole idea.”

Never mind? Really? Hide behind being bad, and you won’t ever have to do anything. If that’s your goal, it’s easily achieved. Is it worth having that goal accomplished, though? Possibly there is another and more valuable goal in your future.

Hey, in this life everything is done with mirrors. Simple laws of physics tell us that our perceptions shape our realities. Are you going to argue with the whole universe by arguing with your own perceptions? Or will you do so by arguing with this very moment?

Who can you remember who told you that you or the things that think, or believe, or see, are not real?

How important is that person to you in your life today?

What is the big idea that you have that you believe is a fraud?

How are you hiding from yourself and from others by not believing in yourself?

**36*. I am not “that kind” of person***

You say this when you are really worried about being judged, and use it to keep yourself safe from being judged by yourself and/or by others.

This is a method of keeping yourself in a box that is defined by negative thoughts you adopted from others and now believe are your own, and you are really invested in being right about this, even to the destruction of your own happiness.

What kind of person says that about herself?

How do you really know what kind of person you are until you give it a try?

Maybe you should look at the possibility that you are not the person that you believe yourself to be, and give yourself a chance instead of hiding in a box for the rest of your life.

What identity is it that you are afraid you will lose by changing something?

What are you not wanting to release that, if you released it, would give you freedom?

How can you negotiate a path to allowing yourself to change a little bit more into the person you are afraid of becoming?

**EXCUSES MADE FOR OTHER PEOPLE**

**If you are really a good and conscientious excuse maker, you will also make excuses for others so that they won’t have to bother doing so. This will keep you comfortable in your unhappiness and let the other person off the hook.**

**This type of excuse making carries a double whammy by harming both you and the other person, in an interlocking pattern of non-functioning behaviors.**

**It will also give you a chance to become extremely resentful and to turn yourself and your relationships into time bombs.**

**The excuse pattern will firmly keep at bay the needed honesty that makes for healthy interactions, and over time will build an invisible wall between you and others. You are there in your glass fortress, telling yourself that you are a kind and understanding person who is not really worthwhile. You keep yourself on the “right” side of things while subtly devaluing yourself and others.**

**You dance with the excuse, enabling and defending the very things that are making you and others unhappy. The wall keeps you from getting close enough to get into the uncomfortable part of being close to other people, that is...telling yourself and others the things that they may not want to hear, but really need to hear.**

**If this is what you want, the excuses below will give you plenty of ways to keep from facing the truth about the people you care about.**

**In fact, each of these excuses is actually a declaration of NOT caring about the person for whom you are making the excuse. Let’s see how that doesn’t work.**

*37. He’s just so busy*

**This is what you say when you are feeling hurt that someone is ignoring you. He is so busy that he doesn’t have time for me, or for what is important to me. You decide that you are not important in the conversation, or more likely, the lack of one. You are making what is going on all about the other person, or so it would seem.**

**Actually, you are playing a hidden game of creating a victim state for yourself and blaming those feelings on the other person. Admitting this can be a real drag. Do you want it to keep happening? If not, then admit that you have played a part here by not making firm decisions about the interactions you want to have with this person. So, we may be looking at interlocking excuse patterns, and it’s not all that simple. He’s not ready to reveal his truth to you...Or he has some kind of idea about you or what you are doing that he doesn’t want to tell you, for reasons of his own.**

**He’s too busy...**

**Or is he? If he was interested, would he make time for it? Maybe he just doesn’t really care. Or maybe he does care, but he is also having trouble facing the truth, and so he is making his own excuses. Helping this happen by answering with your own excuses can keep the ball in the air indefinitely.**

**What does it feel like to not feel heard?**

**How are you making yourself too busy?**

**Is there someone making excuses for you?**

**38*. She probably didn’t really mean that.***

**When you are feeling truly powerless, you can always say this. It shields you from the hurt of not having kind of interaction that you would like to have, and creates a bubble of “okay-ness” around communication with someone who has freedom to say things that are hurtful, without suffering any direct consequences for doing do. This person is able to do this because of some position of authority in your life.**

**They are exerting that power to be mean over you, and you are hurt by that, and don’t want to face how much you are affected by it.**

**Maybe you didn’t want her to mean it, but chances are that she did. Facing what that means to you is the hard part, but it’s not as hard as it would be to keep telling yourself that what you are observing with your own two eyes isn’t real.**

**How are you hiding your feelings from yourself by apologizing for the other person’s behavior that is hurting you?**

**When you remember the things that were said, what is your immediate reaction? (No thinking, please)**

**How can you reimagine the situation as a cartoon where you said what you really felt and there was not bad consequence?**

*39****. I probably said something I shouldn’t have.***

**Ahh, guilty of telling the truth as you see it! For some people, that is just not acceptable. If you are not supporting the story they want to go with, you are just flat wrong. How important is it to you to keep that story going? What makes it so important?**

**Some kind of idea that you “should” be saying things that you think others want to hear is never going to get you into a place of truth, which is where all the freedom and prosperity happen. If you never offended anyone, did you ever actually say anything?**

**Saying what you think is going to please the other person is a short road to becoming despised. People will see through you little game of deception, and brand you as someone who can only be trusted to second-guess. The will stop listening to you altogether, so it really won’t matter what you say! They will cut you off and sneer at your lack of honesty. Is that better or worse than having someone become angry about what you said?**

**Without a spine and the ability to speak your truth, you devalue your life, and invite more abuse on yourself.**

**What power does your opinion have in the situation that you are guarding against?**

**When you say something that others may not want to hear, how do you defend yourself?**

**40*. She’s been going through so much.***

**This is used when a person is being actively rude or inconsiderate, acting as if their issues and problems are the only ones that are real. It’s a way of distancing yourself from feeling short changed and cut off from being listened to, with the resulting feelings of resentment.**

**You are actually protecting yourself from your own anger. The trouble with doing this is that it doesn’t work.**

**The anger lives on and creeps into the next moment, creating expectations of bad behavior which then come true! The other person feeds off your self-neglect and helps you keep it going!**

**Like the hidden monster in the fairy tale, the reality of your feelings hides in the dark and jumps at you in the hallway, keeping you from connecting with the real place of communication.**

**Here you are, borrowing trouble again. You are taking on the burden of someone else’s inability to cope, and making it the mechanism by which it is okay for that person to not behave in a way that would be responsible.**

**Life is a series of going through things. What kind of stuff have YOU been going through that needs to be ignored so that someone else can get away with being inconsiderate?**

**What needs of your own have you not been giving yourself permission to meet?**

**What story do you have about this?**

**How does the feeling of overwhelm serve the story?**

**41*. Maybe he just forgot.***

This is what you say when you don’t want to deal with the feeling of being in the dark about what the other person is doing, or thinking.

Is this a matter of being ignored? Or is it that the other person is uncomfortable or negligent in some way towards the issue?

Rather than look at how they might be avoiding you, or making some excuses of their own, you step in and make the excuse for them in order not to face the interface, or lack thereof. By making the gap appear, you postpone the issue and hope that somehow you will be proved right, or wrong, and not take responsibility for looking after the matter at hand.

Yes, people forget things.

In fact, some people forget almost everything, even things that are important to themselves and to others. Would it be wrong to remind him? What would be the consequences of doing that?

What do you do if you find that you have forgotten something important?

Who do you know that is a good specimen of forgetfulness?

How do you react when this person forgets something that is important to you or to your interaction?

**42*. It’s too much to expect that he/she would notice my point of view.***

Expectations are tricky. You can set yourself up for disappointment by expecting others to adhere to the standards you have for yourself, for example. In the case of this excuse, however, you are hiding behind a wall of self-blame and self-diminishment. You are hungry for acknowledgment, and yet not willing to ask for that.

You don’t have to expect it, but you are free to make yourself known, so that you will then be able to tell whether or not someone is listening or cares about your point of view. How will they know if you never tell them?

Is you point of view worth anything at all to you? Keeping yourself invisible is a sure way to reinforce whatever ideas you have about not being worthwhile. What is the hidden reward for this?

What is the story you have about your point of view being unworthy?

Does the approval of others motivate you more than you want it to?

If you make yourself more visible, how does that increase your anxiety?

If you had less anxiety, would you think differently about being visible?

**43*. After all, he/she is in charge, and I don’t know very much. My idea is not important.***

This is really a way of ignoring any form of responsibility for the situation. Just let things go by, and say you couldn’t do anything! It’s one way to make sure you never make decisions...by deciding not to decide!

Small things in the course of the day make all the difference. We live in the moment, this very moment.

How do you know whether it is important if you know so little about it?

What if it turned out to be really important and was the one thing that made the difference in someone else’s life?

God ahead and make that suggestion...Sometimes people don’t see what is right in front of them, unless you point it out to them.

What great idea have you had that you were afraid to share?

Who could help you make that idea more alive?

How would you feel if that idea became a reality?

**44*. I am too busy taking care of other people.***

When you say this, you are putting yourself last, and it’s going to catch up to you. You are at the end of the line, while everybody else is getting a full bowl of porridge, and you are waiting for yours, and then, just as it’s getting to be your turn, the supply runs out! Do you have this as a recurring dream, or are you living it in your waking life?

You will end by being burnt out and resentful of all those who never appreciated your sacrifices, and they will also be angry at you for never making sure you were included in your own world.

You are putting the burden of your condition on somebody else, to fill in the gap of self-lack.

How will you take care of others if you never take care of yourself?

How do you justify putting yourself last?

What is the hidden reward for doing this?

Who else, besides you, is getting the short end of the stick because you are too burned out to be happy?

***45. I need to make money, not write/make art/do the things I care about.***

Here you go, blaming money for all the things you don’t like about where you are. How do you think money feels about that? Will it reward you for making it a source of your unhappiness? Maybe it will, but probably not.

Money tends to run away from this excuse. You are putting it on the spot, rather than in the flow. And you are doing the same thing to yourself. Money is a visible sign of life energy in motion.

So make money. Nobody is stopping you from doing that.

What keeps you from taking twenty minutes a day to put your ideas into words and write them down?

See all of the rest of these excuses, and pick a few…

How have you been using money as an excuse not to do things that you love?

What other kinds of flow suffer from the same reasoning?

When you think about money, do you see it as being friendly to you?

**46*. My family won’t give me the space.***

This is what you say when you are not willing to step up to your dreams and take control of your energy. You are blaming your own family for holding you away from your life. It’s like you expect them to somehow magically know what you need, and grant it to you on a silver platter. Most families aren’t like that.

“They won’t give me the space.”

What space is that?

You don’t get space given to you. You create space. Space is like freedom. They don’t give it to you. You have to demand it, and take it, and make it happen.

When you scapegoat your family for your own failure to follow through on your dreams, you poison yourself and make them the source of your problems, making them wrong just for being there.

Is that what you want in the relationship?

What do you think would happen if you told your family your feelings about wanting to do something?

How can you create more space within the day, consistently?

Are you overlooking ways that you can have more of what you want because you think they will be dangerous to talk about?

**47*. My relationship will suffer***

Your relationship is what occurs between you and someone or something else, or between you, yourself, and you. It starts with relating to yourself.

If you don’t relate to yourself, but see yourself as part of a machine, or an object, or even as a doormat, you won’t have much to give.

That makes it your own responsibility to take care of being able to live up to what you have at stake.

Is this your relationship with whom?

Yourself? Is it with someone you truly care about?

Or is it someone who doesn’t believe in you and your abilities, and you are hiding from knowing that?

What fear do you have about something happening in your relationship when you use this excuse?

How does giving ground serve your need for comfort?

Are you resentful toward yourself for holding back?

**48*. It’s too hard.***

This is something you can always say about anything, if that’s how you want to create a sense of lack. That’s what you are saying, here.

“I lack the ability to do this, or to make the attempt and possibly not make the grade.” “I lack the ability to take the challenge and grow into it.”

Okay, so it’s hard. What makes it “too hard”? Be specific, here. And then look at it as though you are on the wrong side of the fence. What if it’s not as hard as you think? Or what if it IS that hard, and you grown huge new strengths from doing it?

Your poor estimation of your own abilities and your lack of willingness to take a chance on yourself is more important than accomplishing something? Please, slice off another excuse or two from somewhere, and put them on top of the pizza, and have a soda of self-doubt to go with it.

What have you done in your life that initially you thought was too hard?

How did you feel when you did it?

What great failure have you had that led you to a new kind of awareness?

49*. It’s too easy.*

This excuse is all about keeping yourself unhappy.

Having things be easy is often seen as making them somehow wrong, or worthy of suspicion, at the least. They are thought of as being not worthy of having because they don’t represent struggle, anxiety, or fear.

We are taught that things are hard, they are supposed to be hard, and that we deserve to have them be hard. So having things be easy makes it feel weird since that’s the prevailing worldview. It’s good for keeping you in the consumer mindset, and at odds with your own life...But think about nature. How hoard is it to enjoy a beautiful sunset, or the sound of the sea?

What makes the wealth of nature less valuable than that gained by struggle? Aren’t these ideas that involve making something “better” so that someone or something else can be important instead of “the grind”? It may be the majority view, however it isn’t one that leads to happiness or satisfaction, and so it is worth questioning this idea at its base.

How will you know it’s too easy unless you try it?

It might be more challenging than you think, and then you can use Excuse #48 instead.

What idea have you discarded because it seemed too easy or too good to be true?

If you thought about that some more, would you try it?

How can you make something easier right now?

**50*. I don’t really know what I want to write/do/be.***

This excuse comes from thinking that you have to know the answer.

It is related to the fear of “not knowing what you are doing”, which is one of the tricks you learned while you were being taught to be powerless. In reality, nobody really knows what is possible, or truly knows what exactly is being done while they are in the midst of the action. Life is a grand mystery with many possible solutions.

You have some ideas. You don’t know how they fit together. You wonder how worthwhile it is to say what you are thinking. It’s not going to be able to happen unless you let it happen, and step into the gap between what you know and what you don’t know. Give yourself permission to not know what you are doing!

What are the top five ideas that you are wondering about?

Are you willing to see them as possible?

Write down all the things you don’t know about what you want to do. (These are the known unknowns.)

See a pattern?

What are the things that you don’t know about what you don’t know? (These are the unknown unknowns.)

Where is the place that these two lists meet?

**51*. Nobody cares what I have to say.***

This comes from your feeling of being invisible, and the resulting belief in a state of lack.

The belief that nobody will listen is going to cause you to keep your mouth shut and feel the resulting lack belief reinforcing itself. It’s a vicious cycle that diminishes your self-worth. It can even become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you never say it, how will you know that nobody cares?

Are you sure that you are so absolutely useless that you can’t even be used as a bad example?

What if somebody really DOES care what you have to say, and is waiting for you to say it so they can agree with you? Or disagree?

In what way are you feeling invisible in your daily life?

What does having somebody care what you have to say mean for you?

Is this really about a fear of being criticized or ridiculed?

**52*. It’s not time to (write my book, \_\_\_\_, make my art, do what I really want to do) yet.***

Wait for the ideal time, and you will wait till time no longer matters…because your life will be over and you never did get around to it. How does that sound?

There is never an ideal time for any thing or purpose to waiting around for that ideal time. Only you can create the moment of beginning, and there will always be some “reason” why it is or is not the right time.

Or that it is both the right time and the wrong time, which is more like what life really does as we are being shown the multi-faceted nature of reality. For you, it may be the right time, but it is not the right time for somebody else. What you are looking at in that case is how to create a balance of life and of relationship.

What is the thing that you are postponing?

Who or what is the beneficiary of you doing this?

What is being gained during the interval between now and the “right time”?

What is the cost to you in postponing it?

**53*. I don’t think I will follow through.***

Here is your inner critic in full swing. You are being put down before you even pick up!

Getting a lecture from your own mind so that you don’t have to deal with what will happen if you start something is a sure recipe for non-starting.

Often this excuse is seeded by a sharp remark from someone about not following through and how it shows you have poor character or are a loser. Hearing that from someone who is powerful in your life can really set you back. In fact, it is so hurtful that it results in taking the critic into yourself so that you won’t have to be hurt in that way again.

It’s a pretty mean way to look at creative energy, really. What if it might be okay to start something and change your mind about how important it is to you?

Do you have a story about how you are a flake because you started something and didn’t finish it?

What did that story do to your idea about doing something that is rewarding even if it is not easy to do it?

What would it be like, if you could make a promise to yourself, to either keep it or renegotiate it, and be okay with the results?

**54*. I am too disorganized right now.***

One of the most brilliant of all excuses, this one can stop you dead in your tracks and absolve you of blame for your own inner condition. Use it when you don’t want to answer to anybody at all.

You can use this at any time.

There is no way to be completely organized and still be a functional person. Something is always slipping through the cracks.

Who among us is truly organized in every area of life? Spare me from that person, who I am pretty sure does not exist, anyway. You have the ability to start anyway, even without the first clue of what you are doing.

Many times not being organized is seen as a sign of weakness, and the judgment that goes along with that can be paralyzing. What if you stopped judging your self and let the idea tell you how it wants to be shown to the world, instead of holding on to the idea that you need to know it all right now?

What if the idea itself has the power to show you the way to organize it, and you don’t have to figure out every single thing at once?

When you see chaos, what is your immediate emotional reaction?

If you let the chaos be there without judging it, what do you think will happen?

Can you see chaos as being part of a larger pattern that will reveal itself if you let it?

**Motivation Excuses**

When you think of motivation, what is the first thing you notice? If you said something lie, “oh, not that!” you have plenty of company. Building and maintaining motivation is the key to success, and it all depends on YOU! What a great weight, right?

The weight of the Universe is closing in on you, or worse yet, is already sitting on your shoulders. And you ask yourself, “why should I care?” or tell yourself, “I really don’t care!” and then feel bad about that, and onward into the downward spiral into the black hole of creativity, otherwise known as procrastination. A horrible ugly thing, procrastination eats up your life and takes all your good energy while siphoning it off to nowhere.

A good friend of mine used to constantly say “procrastination is not road to success”, while talking about the need to continually practice in order to be a good musician. He was right. You can practice getting motivated, and it’s simple.

Building the habits that will sustain you and take the weight of the Universe off your shoulders can turn it into a counterweight that swings things your way can be done.

It’s a step-by-step process that you can create to support you and the things that you care about...and even those you don’t particularly care about but that have to get done anyway. And even, the things you actually hate can be turned into stepping stones to your freedom.

The following excuses are the roadblocks, the grease on the stepping stones across the stream, the stumbling blocks along the high road to happiness. Be watchful for them and look them in the eye...or grab hold of them if you would rather jump off the path and feel sorry for yourself. Once again, the choice is yours.

What do you really care about? And what are you going to do about it?

**55*. This is not something or somebody that I care about and I hate it.***

This is used when you are stopped dead in your tracks by one of the horror stories that come along in life, and you want so badly to run away that you are ready to abandon everything and everybody in order to keep your “safe zone” intact.

It’s not that the reaction of hating it is wrong, as such. The thing that makes this excuse horrible is that it keeps you from finding your way out of ghastly situations andmoving on to better things.

The thing ended up in your part of the playing field for some reason, whether or not it is a fair one. Wasting your time deciding that it’s not fair, and explaining why it is not fair, and why you don’t care, all shows that in fact you do care and you are really pissed about having to deal with it. Okay, so honor your emotions and move on to solving the problem. Notice how you feel, and then allow that feeling to move away from you, safely acknowledged, and move into the “danger zone” of making things happen that can remove the bogey from your life.

Use that emotional energy to hit the gas pedal and gun out of the hole!

What are you “stuck with” that you truly resent?

In what way are you giving this more of your emotional energy than it deserves?

Three action steps wait for you to name them. What are they?

***56.I am too tired***

***to care about writing/creating/doing/living.***

You say this when you don’t feel like you are getting what you deserve, and are hiding from that feeling.

Being tired happens, and rather often.

But *how tired is “too tired”*?

Where is that place in your life and what does it mean to you?

Are you tired because you have been kicking ass, or because you have been avoiding yourself?

Those two kinds of tired have completely different characteristics, and show up in your life as either energy that needs to be renewed, or energy that has been dissipated.

Tired of kicking yourself for not wanting to do something? How about if you decide that you don’t have to want to do it, and see what that looks like?

What would you be willing to do if your life depended on it?

When you don’t feel like doing anything, do you do something anyway?

How can you get rid of three things that you don’t care about doing but have been kicking yourself for not wanting to do?

**57*. People might be offended by my message.***

This is how you put your importance on the back burner, and bow to the Approval Gods in all their fickleness.

Most people are afraid of offending someone. In reality, it is likely that you will somehow offend someone without even trying at least once a day.

People whose agenda has nothing to do with you personally will take you as an example of whatever it is that enrages them, and project their feelings onto you without even thinking about it. And they will say they are offended.

So what if they are? Could be that is happening because you are actually telling the truth? Your own truth?

Are you going to take every single thing that happens personally? That’s the sure way to be exhausted and confused, and undoubtedly very angry, without knowing exactly how that happened. “Please all, please none” is an old and wise saying. Be real!

Every important idea is at first greeted by hostile audiences and mocked as being ridiculous or immoral, or both, and over time the merits of it override all objections until it becomes known as an “obvious truth.”

Are you offended by random remarks made in public by people you don’t know?

Name someone you respect whose opinion truly matters to you.

Will that person be offended if you say something that you truly believe is important to you?

**58*. Doing this will put me on the spot.***

This is used when you are afraid of your own power.

Your message is your truth.

Truth is a wonderful thing. You don’t have to explain it, or defend it, or do anything but acknowledge it.

It just keeps showing up. Your truth is always going to be with you, as a silent partner, or as a constant nemesis. The choice is yours about how to deal with this, your most constant and intimate friend, the one who knows you better than you know yourself. Running away from the mirror doesn’t make you go away. It simply makes it so that you can’t see what you look like.

What does being put on the spot mean in your mind? If you are standing in your truth, you can have the spot you truly want, the spot that supports you, nurtures you, and will always be there. There really isn’t a better place to stand, when you think about it.

What situation have you been in where you felt put on the spot?

How did you deal with it at the time?

If you faced that same feeling now, how would you deal with it?

Do you feel you need to defend your point of view at all costs?

**59*. \_\_\_\_\_\_ won’t let me do that.***

This is used when you don’t have the simple courage to say “NO”.

In this excuse, you shift the responsibility for your condition to another person, who conveniently is not around to shoulder the burden directly during the current conversation!

A perfect shell game with no immediate consequences, but the long term results are very insidious and self-defeating.

Even worse than that, this one may actually be the truth of how you are letting yourself be given the short end of the stick in a relationship. What are you getting out of it?

Hiding behind others…a very good device to ensure that you remain powerless, angry, and frustrated. Of course you can tell yourself you are “good” for being obedient, the hidden poison of approval dominating your life. Is it really worth the destruction of your own well being to obey someone who wants to keep you from doing what you really want to do?

Who or what do you believe will not let you do what you want to do?

What is the reason that you are telling yourself is their reason for preventing you from taking action?

Is that really their reason, or is it a story of your own that you are putting into their mouths without asking them if it is true?

***60. I don’t know what I am talking about.***

When you say this, you self-refer as a person who is not worthy of being trusted. It is one of the three thieves, or all of them, who is taking control here...Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt.

Probably you know more than you think. If not, you have the ability to learn, which is always a good idea anyway. Every expert started as someone who didn’t know the topic.

It’s amazing how much people don’t know, about exactly the thing that you DO know about. Experience is a tool and a source of confidence. Consult the minds of others, and get their ideas, and add them into the mix, and before long you will KNOW that you know more than you think, and also less than you thought, so keep learning!

What else do you need to know about what you want to do or write? There are lots of ways to find out more about it. Research can be very powerful in filing in your gaps and giving you the confidence to make your case intelligently and persuasively.

What obvious gaps in your knowledge or skill do you feel are holding you back?

What do you think is keeping you from finding out more about what you need to know?

Do you think you need to already be an expert in order to deserve to have a voice?

**61*. It’s going to wreck my schedule.***

Here, you are placing yourself in the victim role with time as the persecutor. It’s the idea of there not being enough of things, again. This time, it says it’s about time. It’s not. It’s about your ability to make choices that serve your best interests.

It’s YOUR schedule.

What’s more important than being your true self? Time is your master or you are its master.

What is your choice in this matter? Will you choose to put yourself into a small space and say that life is doing something to you, or will you give yourself space and gather life around you?

You can tame even the most intense monster of discord by organizing it to death. One moment at a time, you can take your life back and give it more color, put more meaning and happiness into each breath.

The power of a schedule can not be overstated. When you know what is your next step, one more barrier to taking it has fallen.

What are you using as distractions to fill up gaps in your day?

How are there decisions affecting your ability to feel that you have control over your time?

At what time of day do you start to feel that you are different from the way you were in the morning when you woke up?

**62*. My family will be embarrassed that I am so full of myself.***

You say this when you are self-conscious about your worth, hiding from a belief that your ideas are worthless and stupid. And your family is your scapegoat!

This is the by-product of a situation where somebody put you down and criticized you before others for having too high an opinion of your own abilities, in order that they could assert power over you. Being shamed by a person who has more power and wants to “put you in your place” has life long echoes and can be the way that you create a shell around yourself that keeps you forever unhappy.

This is a devastating experience that is a cause of deep fear of the idea that it might happen again.

For some people, it is the beginning of hiding from their own abilities and choosing a lesser version of themselves so that they will fit in with the energy level that will not cause others to feel threatened by their brilliance. What that means is never stepping fully into the game again. Are you one of those people?

When was the last time you took out somebody you cared about by telling them they are “too full of themselves?” What does that mean, exactly***? Who or what else are you supposed to be full of, anyhow?***

Who can you remember that had power over you who used it to hold you in a position of powerlessness?

What would it be like to be scared to say something, and say it anyway?

If you did that, who do you think would judge your opinions?

**63*. I might look like an idiot.***

Judgement about what other people will think of you and your ideas before they or you even have seen them in the light of day!

Fear of being laughed at! What clown is this? Can’t you just hear them snickering behind your back....stop, dive for cover, and hide, really hide. Now you won’t be an “idiot” except for yourself, and nobody else will know, or so you think. Hmm, what is missing here?

When I first got into sales, I was so terrified that I would feel sick to my stomach at the idea of picking up the phone, much less going to an appointment in person. I was able to overcome this when I realized that the worst that would happen was not going to be a slap in the face! It might be some version of a condescending smile, or it might be sincere admiration at my nerve (because once I DO get up my nerve, look out), and it might even result in a sale! Worth it! Even though I know for sure that at times I DID look like an “idiot”, even in those cases people gave me credit for making the effort. “I’m not wearing the right shoes, my makeup is no good, clothes look stupid”, etc. It is not as important as your scared self wants to tell you it is!

Comedy is one of life’s great gifts. If you feel like an ass, you can amplify it until you see the humor in it, and possibly give the world the gift of laughter. Or you may see that you are not really looking so idiotic after all.

What exactly are you feeling when you call yourself an idiot?

Who do you know or know of that you would truly describe as being an idiot?

Do you think that you have to be good at everything?

**64*. There’s just no time to do things I want to do.***

This is what you say when you are giving away not only your power but your whole life.

What would be the result if you kicked out of your life those things that sap you and dry up your joys?

What if you made a list of the top five priorities, the bottom five, and the middle five? Then, kick the bottom five out of your life (yes, you can do this), concentrate on the top five, and the middle will take care of itself. Let’s do that right now.

What are the five things in your life that you truly care about, for yourself? The things you really care about, not the ones you “think you should care about”.

What are five things that you are telling yourself are important but you know In your heart don’t mean a darn thing to you?

**65*. I have no idea how to create the structures needed.***

This is actually about confidence and not about structure.

It’s another self-esteem vacuum in disguise.

No two people or projects are alike, and there isn’t any reason they should be.

Structure is important, but it is not the very first thing you need. “Form follows function”. Structure takes a visible form and function, as you understand what you want out of something. When you are clear about the exact nature of the results you want, energy and structures will begin to suggest themselves to you.

What is the exact result you want to achieve in taking on this project?

What is your motivation for doing this?

Is this for you, or for someone else?

If someone else, who?

How important is it to you, really?

**66*. I feel like a mess every time I start to write/be creative/take care of myself.***

Feeling like a mess is a sign that you are actually engaging with something that is out of your comfort zone, which is where all the energy and good stuff lives.

Soup or nuts? You can have both!

So, stir the pot, and if you feel like you are nuts, or going in that direction, ***let it be okay while you are swimming in the soup***.

Your insanity is probably not going to take over your life, and if it does, it’s not really insanity but creativity. The creative process means going to the edge, finding the message, and bringing it back for the rest of us. The tipping point is where all the action is. So recognize it, see it for what it is, and take action on the message it has for you. Have you been overdoing it? Or do you feel like you have been a slacker?

Either way, today is already here, so start again and do what will make things work, NOW, the way they are.

What does “feeling like a mess” mean for you?

What are you afraid of happening when you have that feeling?

If someone else, whose opinion you respect, knew about that feeling, what do you think they would say to you about it?

**67*. It’s so hard for me to follow through for myself.***

This is about fear of perseverance. When things get to be hard to do, or they are no fun anymore, or when you are angry and bored over the whole idea and how inconvenient it all is, this one can be a great way to cop out on yourself.

Most people will start something, and then either quit before they get results, or say the idea wasn’t worth it, or find a way to blame someone else.

In order to follow through, you have to actually start!

Start with that! There are ways to keep yourself and your energy going, and to make it easier to do that. Connect with other people who have the same interests and get some support.

Forgiving yourself for the things you did, that you thought were mistakes, can free up a lot of energy. Each of those things was simply a step on the path. It’s your idea that makes them “right” or “wrong” and creates the difficult situation where you have painted yourself into a corner, feeling like it’s no use.

Make room for yourself and listen to your own ideas. You actually know what to do but have forgotten.

Do you shut down or “go away” when you feel like things are hard?

What one tiny step can you take right now on something that you think is too hard?

**68*. I think I am selfish to want this.***

So, you think you are selfish…Judge, jury, and executioner, all in one person! Do yourself a favor, and be wrong about this.

This excuse is usually about being unclear about what is selfish and what is good self-interest.

What is the true meaning of selfishness?

True selfishness consists not in wanting something for yourself, but in wanting another to do things the way that you say to do them at their own cost.

What is your definition of self and how does it relate with what other people think, or who they think you are?

Are these ideas accurate?

Are other people’s ideas about you coming from a position that is good for what your needs actually are?

If you do something just because you want to do it, do you feel bad about decoding to do it?

What do those feelings do for you?

Who in your life helps you to believe that wanting things for yourself is bad?

**69*. The whole idea just seems too big for me.***

So, you have ideas...Big ideas…the very thing you were warned about when you were told not to get too big for your britches, right?

“Don’t get any big ideas.” “You have your head in the clouds.”

“Yeah, sure, dream on.” Sound familiar?

Often these putdowns come from the very people who think they are doing you a favor by not letting you get too far ahead...of yourself, or of them. They just want to keep you in line so they can keep an eye on you. Ask yourself, what is this going to do to my idea? Stop it, dead in its tracks, that’s what.

“You are making everybody else look bad.” That one is really going to “keep you in place”. Stick with the herd, and nothing will really happen, either good or bad. But at least you will be invisible.

***A really huge project that is making you shake in your boots???***

All the more reason to do it! The longest journey starts with the first step. Break it down, step by step, moment by moment, and see the beauty of it instead of being terrified by its grandeur.

What idea do you have that is too big for the person you think you are?

If you broke it up into a series of steps, would you feel more like you could do it?

Who would you need to be, to do that?

**70*. I feel like I am stealing from the rest of my life.***

This is all about how your life has been given away and you have guilt about this. Your time and space are spoken for, claimed by others, and you are looking for a way to hide from doing anything about that. You are pretending you don’t know that you have a right to make your dreams happen. You are pretending that you don’t exist!

Whose life is it, again?

What is stealing and what is a gift of realization?

This hiding behind a sense of guilt to avoid noticing your own feelings and to cling to your conditioning, is designed to make you feel powerless. And it’s going to work, as long as you keep buying into it.

When do you take time for your own needs?

Is that time non-negotiable?(This is when you say, it’s a given, and that is that!)

Do you feel that you need to explain to somebody about needing this time to nourish yourself?

**71*. I just got overwhelmed and didn’t remember to do it.***

Too much to do, and not enough of you to do it...so overwhelm “solves the problem” by creating a space of confusion and further compacting the situation. Not really a viable strategy in the long run, this one, although it may help you to get out of something you don’t really want to do, by having others give up on you.

Being overwhelmed can be simply a sign that you need to get something off the list.

Think of being overloaded; visualize a truck loaded up so much that the leaf springs are groaning and moaning...like you would be doing if you gave yourself permission to do, and stopped feeling like you need to handle absolutely EVERYTHING... and you may now take yourself out from under the load, reinvent yourself as the driver, who says “nope, this is over the limit! Something’s gotta go”, and you are in a position to do something about taking the extra lumber off the truck. Use it, fix it, or dump it. Decide!

Buried alive…What are you getting out of this? You can feel like a victim of your own life for as long as you want, and prevent yourself from ever having to deal with managing the challenges of success.

Do you really want to be the best-loved loser in town? It’s time to figure out what you are rally good at, and let go of needing to do and be more than you really get the payoff for doing.

What can you kick out of your life that is not giving you any return on what you put into it?

When you do that, what will you do instead?

**72*. My job is too demanding.***

This one makes you into a victim in your mind, and puts you on the losing side of the deal. Use it when you have no desire to step into a better situation, because you are too comfortable with the known, and too afraid of the unknown, and hide behind being busy, rather than fulfilled.

Any job worth having is going to make demands of you. You look at the costs and benefits, and make the commitment that is appropriate, if you have seen what the trade-off in accurate terms.

What demands do you make of your job, while we are at it? What demands do you make of yourself, for that matter?

Are you ready to insist on getting what you want? Until you are, you aren’t going to get it. Don’t’ think that you will get your freedom by asking nicely for it. That isn’t how you get to be free. It takes using the most powerful word in the Universe, which is simply this…”No.” Big surprises happen when you say no to what you don’t want. It gives permission for you to have what you do want.

What are you wishing you were brave enough to say “no” to in your life?

Who would be the person who heard you say it?

Where would that put you in the next moment?

**73*. Family energy drains away all my time.***

Convenient, perhaps, in the sense that you don’t take responsibility for your relationships, this one is a deadly trap for your happiness.

“Drains away your time” says that you are not getting nurtured, and you are positioning yourself as a martyr.

Here, you are blaming your family for being in your life. How is that going to make your family happy?

Teaching them to use up all your energy will create deep resentment and make them feel guilty, more than it will help them.

Take a stand for yourself, and gain the respect you deserve. It gives other people permission to take the initiative and create methods and goals that work for them, rather than feeling traped as “pleasers”.

What one simple thing could you do to let your family know that you need them to depend on you a little less, thereby helping them to be more independent and fostering their self-esteem?

How would that free up your time?

If you cut yourself loos from one entanglement, do you feel you would need to create another one to fill the space?

**74*. I spend so much time at the screen already, I hate to do any more (used by writers more than anybody else, but can be used by anyone).***

This one is declaring that you have no control over how youyou’re your time and intelligence, that you are a slave to the media. You have given in to the hectoring voices of the new cycle, enmeshed in pros and cons, and feeling disgusted with yourself for buying into it all.

You can use it to avoid writing, or to avoid learning about things you want to know, or to avoid finding resources to make your life better. Pretty handy!

Screen time is so all-encompassing for so many people. Before you know it, you are sucked into the news, lost on social media, or shopping for things you don’t really even want, simply out of habit.

So you begin to hate the machine...As a writer, I can see how that could happen. But it’s still an excuse.

How many hours of your day are spent looking at some flat piece of plastic?

What is to be gained, by you, in each encounter with the vast machinery of modern consciousness? Set a time when you lean into this, doing the actual writing, as something that you WANT to do, and you wont’ feel that it’s a chore. Or, if that doesn’t work….Use a notebook! There’s also some pretty good software out there that will do the typing for you, if you want to simply talk and see the words magically appear. You may see some very amusing typos along the way.

How much time are you spending interacting with machines each day?

How many people do you talk to each day, on average?

**75*. Time spent commuting makes it impossible to do anything.***

This is a way of avoiding thinking about using time in ways that are unfamiliar. There is nothing truly impossible, according to the laws of physics. Some things are just more likely than others.

If you have a belief that you are not enough, this one will be useful in keeping it going. You can shrink yourself into impossible thinking, and stash all the things you want most along that timeline.

What other way can you see that interval between places?

Lots of time driving or riding is wide-open space of a type.

You can use it to clear your thoughts, to discover what you truly need. Talk into your phone, and then send the recording to yourself to use later. All that time is a precious resource of open energy waiting to be used.

Or listen to something that will motivate or educate you. You can learn a new language pretty fast by listening to recordings, or gain skills to be able to give presentations practicing along with a voice teacher.

When you say something is impossible, how do you feel?

Do you still want to have the thing that you are saying is impossible?

What would it take to change your mind about whether it is possible or not?

**76*. I am drained and exhausted after work.***

Use this when you are feeling like throwing in the towel would be great. You don’t have to care about your life, your feelings, or whatever problems you have been avoiding, because you are too exhausted, and therefore everybody should go away and get off your back, until you are ready to rise up in rage! Then you can feel guilty about all the stuff you are not doing about any of it. The short way to get to nowhere...

Being tired is a reality at times. However, if it comes up as a “reason” not to do what you love, it means you are choosing not to make yourself happy with your life.

Work makes you tired. That’s why it’s called work.

The reason you work is so that you can live, right? You work because you have to work? So it’s all a drag?

Ask yourself what it would sound like in your mind, to choose to work, so that you can actually enjoy life. What parts of yourself are you ignoring? What are you choosing to pay attention to instead of these things? Are you ready to change your mind about this?

Get better rest, better nutrition, and refuse to allow yourself to become distracted. Success is a choice, happiness is a choice, freedom is a choice.

What will you choose in this moment?

Think of a success you have had recently, however small and insignificant you may think it is. What does success feel like in your body when you notice it?

**77*. All my extra minutes are spent on (social media) (entertainment) (doing as little as possible).***

Use this tone when you feel like kicking yourself and labeling your life as being that of a loser. Here again, you are demonizing yourself and time...it’s a flat out admission that you don’t care at all!

There are no such things as extra minutes. What extra minutes?

Everybody has the same day. How you use that day is what counts. What are you willing to trade this day for, and how worth it is that thing to you? How many minutes a day are you feeding into a void of excess information that doesn’t contribute to your goals? Is it really necessary to know every single bit of “news”? Does knowing each and every last detail really add value to your day?  
What would you rather be doing instead? What can you kick out of your life to make more room for what you actually want?

Time is the one thing in life that you can’t get back. Money comes and goes, health comes and goes, people come and go, places come and go. Each of those can be replenished.

Time doesn’t come back.

What are you doing with pieces of time during the day that contributes to your goals?

How are you defeating yourself by using time against yourself?

What are you masking through doing this?

**Epilogue**

And here, I conclude the list of excuses.

They each resemble one another in important ways, and yet each one has a different hook, a special little way of glancing at you knowingly, a bit of a wiggle, that makes it seem like it is okay. It winks and beckons. It is not okay.

Each of these excuses is an invader that has come to you bearing flowers in its hand, and with a sword behind its back. It is a harmless little nothing, a quick dodge, a way of feeling less of the underlying pain...or so it says.

Excuses come sneaking up, one after another. They come from behind, asking you to fall back on them, that they will take care of you. Oh, they will take care of you, all right. Bit by bit, they will tear you down. Like the little guys in Gulliver’s Travels, they will rope you in and leave you with fewer and fewer choices. You will look up at them as a pitiful helpless giant, cut down by tiny mocking faces.

How do I know these excuses so well?

Simply put, it is because I have personally used and become acquainted with each and every one of them. I have accepted them from others, and seen relationships go down the tubes as a result. I have lost self-esteem, short-changed myself and people I care about, and failed to reach goals that were important to me, by using these very excuses, and their relatives, to fill in the places in my life where I was feeling hurt, or left out, or like my feelings were too dangerous to express.

Yes, they will take care of everything, if you let them! Take care of making sure that you have a gray empty feeling of knowing you fell short, that you let yourself down.

One day, I decided that if I didn’t want to have the same experience over and over, I should learn the lesson of the excuse pattern, be honest with myself about what I was doing, and do something about it.

Since I began taking the different road of seeing my true motivations when excuses show up, asking me to go for a ride, (and they still do), my life is far better, richer with possibilities, and I am able to get things done that seemed at first glance to be impossible.

Taking the initiative and seeing excuses for what they truly are, the road map to failure, gave me the tools to create success.

Failure and excuses are first cousins. They are signposts, leading to false destinations, nothing more.

Decide to use them, instead of letting them use you, and make your life what you want it to be.

Success is a decision. That’s what I want for you.

Let’s talk about it.

Betty Withrow [betty@thewriterslaunchpad.com](mailto:betty@thewriterslaunchpad.com)

Copyright 2018 Betty Withrow