

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #57**. In today's episode, we're going to talk about why action is the only true antidote to fear...and exactly what you can do to take those first very scary steps.

Hey there, and welcome back to the Do It Scared podcast! As always, my name is **RUTH SOUKUP**, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the New York Times bestselling author of five—very, VERY soon to be six—books!

In fact, my newest book, Do It Scared will be arriving in bookstores every NEXT WEEK, which means that if you haven't yet preordered, you need to do that very soon, because we've put together some INCREDIBLE bonuses that are so so good, and that you are definitely going to want to take advantage of. You can get all the details at [doitscared.com](http://doitscared.com), so be sure to go do that soon, if you haven't already.

In the meantime, whether you are new and just finding me through this podcast for the first time, or whether you've known me for a while from Living Well Spending Less or Elite Blog Academy—welcome! My hope is that this is a place where you will find new inspiration and motivation to move past the things that are holding you back so you can create a life you love.

In today's episode, we're going to round out this very practical approach to overcoming fear that we've been talking about over the past few episodes. The first part of this approach, which I talked about in Episode 53, is actually identifying what fear looks like for you. In that episode, I introduced you to the Fear Archetypes. I explained that fear looks very different for everyone, and also explained how there are seven unique ways that fear plays out and manifests itself in our lives—something I call the 7 fear archetypes.

And this is important, because the more you can start to see your own patterns of behavior, the more you can understand your own Fear Archetype and see how it is playing out in your life, the better equipped you will be to start overcoming it. Identifying your fear is the first step in conquering it for good!

But then next step in conquering your fear is what we talked about two weeks ago, in episode 55, and that was changing your mindset when it comes to fear—basically adopting a new set of core beliefs that will help you keep growing and that will help give you the strength and the courage to do hard things and to step outside your comfort zone.

But there is one more essential piece of this puzzle, and that is actually taking ACTION in your life. It's where you stop just thinking about all those things that you might like to do someday and actual start taking those first very scary steps in the right direction.

And that's what we are going to talk about today—why action is so important, why it is actually the only true antidote to fear, and exactly HOW to compel yourself to have the courage to actually take those first steps. Today we are going to get super practical and talk about the 7 very concrete actions you can take right away to get

yourself moving.

And ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It's about having the courage to look inward at where we're getting stuck, to face the fears that are standing in our way, and then to take action in order to get unstuck and create a life we love.

Because courage doesn't mean we are never afraid. Instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It is putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path will lead us.

Okay, so, as always just one more quick thing before we dive into all the practical application today's episode—As usual, I've got a great little download that you can grab that will outline all the practical strategies I'll be sharing with you today. You can get it, along with our show notes, by visiting [DoItScared.com/episode57](https://doitscared.com/episode57).

However while you're there at [doitscared.com](https://doitscared.com), I want to also encourage you to take our Do It Scared Fear Assessment, if you haven't already. It will allow you to identify your own fear archetype, and it is a super useful tool! The free version of the assessment will give you your top archetype, or you can upgrade to the premium version of the assessment and get information on your top three archetypes, as well as your overall fear score.

And actually, if you've ordered my new book Do It Scared, you can claim our book bonuses and get the premium assessment for free, so that is also a really good option. So once again, you can get all the information about the assessment or about ordering the book and getting the bonuses at [doitscared.com](https://doitscared.com)

Alright, with that out of the way, let's dive in!

And while I'm handing out instructions, the other thing I want to make sure I do is invite you to follow me on Instagram. It's the place I share daily thoughts and inspiration, and the one social media account that I manage personally, which means it is also the best place to message me directly with your feedback, comments and questions! And in the next couple of weeks, we're going to have a LOT of fun stuff happening on Instagram to celebrate the release of Do It Scared into the world. You can find me at [@RUTHSOUKUP](https://www.instagram.com/RUTHSOUKUP)—that's r-u-t-h-s-o-u-k-u-p.

Alright, with that out of the way, let's dive in!

It's often been said that the first step in any journey is always the hardest.

In fact, if you look at it another way, it's even one of the most basic laws of nature! Newton's 1st law of nature says that a body at rest will stay at rest unless an outside force acts on it. Nothing at rest ever moves on its own.

But there is a second half to that first law of nature, which says that a body in motion will STAY in motion, again unless an outside force acts upon it.

So what does Newton have to do with you?

Well, a lot, actually, especially when it comes to pushing past our fear and taking action towards our goals and dreams.

Think about it. A body at rest says at rest unless acted upon by an outside source. That basically means that when it comes to stepping outside of our comfort zone and moving towards our biggest goals, we tend to be wired to stay put. We are

predisposed to NOT take action, and to stay right where we are.

That's not great news.

BUT there is good news too—and that's the second part of the law. A body in motion will STAY in motion. That means that if you CAN take that first step and start setting yourself in motion, you will be much more likely to keep that momentum going. The first step naturally leads you to the second step, and then the third and fourth and so on.

And that means that all you really need to do, if you want to find the courage to take that first step and set things in motion, is find yourself an outside force. A catalyst for change that will compel you to take that first essential but often very scary step.

So what kind of outside force do you need? Well, that is what we are going to talk about today. In fact, I'm going to share seven specific actions you can take that can help you set yourself in motion. Seven actions that might be the catalyst to change you need to take that first step.

## **THE FIRST ACTION IS TO CLAIM YOUR TARGET.**

If you've been listening to this podcast for any amount of time, you know that I talk a lot about the importance of thinking big when it comes to your goals and dreams. In fact, if you listened to Episode 55 a couple of weeks ago, you know that "dare to think big" is actually my first Principle of Courage.

I explained in that episode, as well as in Episode 1, exactly why it is so important to set stretch goals that will push you past your comfort zone, goals that get you excited and ignite that fire in your belly, as well as why it is so essential to believe that you are capable of more, and to dare yourself past your current limits to create something amazing.

Because those are the goals that will motivate you.

Remember, when we set goals that feel safe and achievable, we are caving in to our own preconceived notions of what we are capable of and settling for the status quo. There is nothing inherently motivating about that. Because the goals are comfortable and familiar, they don't require us to stretch or change or work any harder than we already are. And that's when we get bored and we lose focus.

But the opposite of that is learning how to claim our target. It is setting—and committing to—a big goal, one so big that it freaks us out a little. And by doing that, we force ourselves out of that comfort zone into the unknown.

Without a target, we will always be a little lost. We need big goals to actually get big things done, and to let us know where we are headed. Without them, we're just spinning around in circles.

Don't forget—the flutter in our stomach and the tightening in our chest are indications of the good kind of fear, the self-preservation kind of fear that kicks in when we need to do things we don't think we can do. And that's the feeling we want to create by committing to stretch goals.

And so the first action step to take is to get clear about where you want to go—to claim your target. Ask yourself what you would do if nothing stood in your way. If money or family or your level of education or your current job—if none of those were a factor, what would you want to do with yourself. Give yourself permission to just dream,

without immediately self-editing or mentally listing all the reasons your ideas would be completely impossible.

The truth is that the only limit on what you are capable of, no matter where you are at in life right now, is your willingness to dream bigger. And that is why it is so essential to give yourself permission to start thinking big without any judgment or self-editing. Let yourself be free to dream about the what, without worrying just yet about the how.

And then, once you've given yourself permission to dream, pick the BEST idea. Pick the thing that gets you all pumped up, the thing that lights that lights that fire in your belly and makes you feel a little bit terrified. Pick THAT goal, and commit to it. Write it down. Start telling people about it. Make it real.

And claim your target—that's action step one.

### **THE SECOND ACTION YOU'LL THEN NEED TO TAKE, THEN, IS TO FIND YOUR WHY.**

And I want you to bear with me for a minute, because I know this is one of those things that can sometimes feel very nebulous and unsure. But truly The best way—maybe the only way—to motivate yourself to do hard things, to stretch outside your comfort zone and to persevere even when the going gets tough—is to get crystal clear about your why. It won't necessarily make things easier, but it will make the pain worth it. And sometimes that's enough.

Do you know your big why? Do you know what is driving you and bringing purpose to your life? Do you know what is worth fighting for? And how can you use that motivation to get you where you want to be?

Sometimes finding your why will mean finding a catalyst—something outside of yourself that will get and keep you motivated. It could be a tragedy or a really good opportunity, or it could be something you put in place, like hiring a coach or joining a support group.

Sometimes finding your why will mean connecting to a larger purpose, and keep in mind that the larger purpose might not have anything to do with yourself. Your motivation might be driven by a sense of responsibility or obligation to your family, or to your friends, or to a cause that you believe in deeply. Maybe you feel called by God, and that your purpose is really just to be obedient. Maybe your motivation is wanting to be financially independent so you can finally feel free. Maybe you just want to make a difference in the world.

But whatever your WHY, make sure to keep it top of mind. It should be something you refer back to daily, even multiple times a day if you have to. It should be the first thing you think about in the morning, and the last thing you think about at night.

That way, when the going gets tough, you'll be equipped with a why big enough to crush every fear. And that's action step #2.

### **ACTION STEP 3 IS TO CREATE YOUR PLAN.**

We've already talked about the importance of claiming your target—allowing yourself the freedom to dream big, then narrowing your focus and actually committing to one big goal, a goal so big that it scares you. And when you do that, it is important to focus on the what and the why, without worrying yet about the how.

But then there is a point, once you've started thinking big, then gotten clear about what you really want, and why you want it, that you will need to start thinking about the how. And if you want to actually accomplish all those big goals and dreams, you are going to need a solid plan.

Essentially, creating a plan is a process of breaking down those big goals into bite-size pieces, a process I explained in detail in Episode 15 of this podcast.

And while this sounds super straightforward—and it is—it is amazing how many people never take the time to do this. Instead, most people approach their days and weeks with a “what’s most urgent” mentality, focusing their energy and effort on the things that feel important and critical right now, without necessarily thinking about how those tasks fit into the larger picture. We’re always busy, but not purposefully busy.

The thing about life is that our time will always be filled, and there will always be things to do, no matter what those things are. And for most people, there will always be more things to do than we actually have hours in the day. At some point, we have to choose.

And make no mistake--it’s hard to make time for those big goals when they don’t feel as pressing as whatever crisis happens to be right in front of us, and when the payout is far into the future, rather than right now. That’s especially true when that big goal involves something hard or painful or less-than-pleasant. Our natural inclination is to put it off in favor of whatever feels more important in the moment, or whatever is going to give us that immediate sense of satisfaction.

But that is exactly why it is so important to break down those big goals into smaller milestones, and then those milestones into even smaller, more manageable bites, until you’ve got a set of tasks that feel doable.

So make your plan—that’s action step three.

## **YOUR FOURTH ACTION STEP IS TO FORM YOUR TRUTH CLUB**

This is where you get intentional about seeking out and surrounding yourself with people who will hold you accountable, speak truth to you, and push you to grow into the best version of you.

I promise you that there are people out there in the world who are your people—ones with whom you will feel a strong connection, ones with whom you can be real and authentic, ones who will push you to be better, and who won’t be afraid to hold you accountable when you need it. There are people waiting for someone just like you to brighten and enrich their lives in the same way they will be able to brighten and enrich yours.

But you will have to find them.

And that can feel pretty scary.

It will probably mean stepping outside the comfort zone of the people that you already know and associate with in order to make new friends. It might mean reaching out to someone you don’t know well, but perhaps a person you’ve admired or looked up to from afar. It might mean trying new activities—perhaps taking a class, attending a conference, or joining some sort of online accountability group, such as our incredible Doing It Scared community.

But I do promise that the right people are out there for you.

So go form your Truth Club. Do what it takes to discover your tribe, and then surround yourself with the people who will make you better and inspire you to take action. And that's action step four.

## **ACTION STEP FIVE IS TO STOP COMPARING**

And oh my goodness, this is SUCH AN IMPORTANT STEP!

Because whether you are trying to build a business, manage your home, get promoted at work, or simply create a life you love, comparison is a giant trap that will suck you in and not let go.

And let's face it—it's hard to stay focused on your own path when there are so many opportunities to get distracted. Social media offers up a constant reminder of all the things we're not doing and all the things we might be missing out on. We compare jobs and clothes and cars and houses and status, not to mention parenting skills, social lives, and even relationships.

No matter how well we might be doing in one area, there is always someone else who seems to be doing it better, or who is doing well in that area plus something else as well.

But the more we look around to see what everyone else is doing, and the more we compare our progress to those around us, the less success we will be able to create in our own lives, and the less satisfied we will be.

And honestly, I think the biggest reason that comparison is so sinister is that it doesn't happen on an equal playing field. What you want, and what you view as success, is a destination that is unique to you. That means that often the people you are comparing yourself to are on a completely different journey—one with different rules and different objectives.

Your journey is your journey, and ultimately creating a life you love means recognizing exactly what is most important and most meaningful to you. But it also means understanding that what is important and meaningful to you will not be the same as what is important and meaningful for other people, and vice versa. And that's okay.

Of course, the key here is getting crystal clear about what you want, and figuring out exactly what success looks like to you.

And then, once you've got your goal in front of you, and your plan in place, put your blinders on. Stop looking around, and stop comparing. And that's step five.

## **YOUR SIXTH ACTION STEP IS TO ELIMINATE EXCUSES**

The hard reality is that there is so much in life that is outside of our control. We have no ability to predict the future or the weather or what major world events and catastrophes will occur. We don't get to pick our family of origin, the color of our skin, or our social and economic standing. We don't get to choose our IQ. We can't control what other people do, or how they treat us, or what they might say. At any given moment, we could experience an unexpected trauma or tragedy or illness or setback—one we never saw coming.

Indeed, the only sure thing about life is that it is completely and utterly unpredictable.

You will never be able to control everything that happens to you, or how people treat you. At some point, the deck will be stacked against you, and something won't be fair. Someone will treat you badly. You might get sick or injured. You'll have a financial setback. You'll be betrayed.

It is not so much a matter of if one of those things will happen, but when. Because they will happen. And that's why it is so critically important to understand, in the core of your being, that the only thing you will ever be able to control is you.

You can't control what happens to you, or how people treat you, but you can control how you choose to respond. As we saw back in chapter 10, your control—and your choice—is in the ownership you choose to take, regardless of the circumstances.

But make no mistake—taking full responsibility for your life can feel pretty scary. It means that there is nothing left to hide behind, and that you are standing out there in the open, vulnerable, exposed, and raw.

And that takes real courage.

Because here's the thing guys, if you are looking for an excuse, you will ALWAYS be able to find one. But remember, even a good excuse is still just an excuse. The only way to escape the disease of excusitis is to refuse to make it an option, under any circumstances.

So from here on out, eliminate excuses from your vocabulary. Stop looking for justification—because you'll always find it—and instead focus on the one thing that you can control—yourself. Stop giving yourself a way out, and instead push through. That's action step number 6.

Your seventh and final action step, then, is to Stay Encouraged.

Because when the going gets tough, it can be tough to stay encouraged. But that is exactly the time when we need encouragement the most. And while you could sit around waiting and wishing and hoping for that encouragement to come from somewhere or someone else, the reality is that you'll probably be waiting a very long time.

The thing is, as humans, I'm pretty sure that we have an insatiable need for encouragement. It doesn't seem to matter how often we might hear that we are smart or capable or beautiful or courageous or any other number of positive messages, we still need to hear it again and again. No sooner than we've heard it, we forget it again. Life gets crazy or hard or stressful, self-doubt and all those fears creep in, and suddenly all that confidence starts to fade away yet again.

And that's why it is so important to keep filling up. There is no limit to the number of motivational and self-help books you should read, the number of times you should read your favorite Bible verses or devotionals, the number of inspirational podcasts you should be listening to, or the number of events or gatherings you should attend, because the energy and excitement, the motivation and the inspiration that feels so incredible in the moment will eventually fade away. But even so, the more positive and uplifting messages you have pouring in, the more likely you'll be to hold on to some of it.

So make it a habit to listen to podcasts while you're driving or working out or doing the dishes. Make it a goal to read at least one inspiring book a month (or just read

your favorites over and over.) Be on the lookout for events and gatherings happening in your area that will get you fired up and allow you to meet like-minded people. Schedule time with the friends and mentors who you know will both challenge and encourage you. Join our Doing It Scared community.

But keep filling up. Stay encouraged. The final action step to take.

At the end of the day, action is the antidote to fear, and that means that taking focused action is truly the only way to get where you want to go. Even so, knowing exactly what action steps to take can feel a little daunting. So start here, with the seven action steps we talked about today. First, claim your target. Because if you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time. Second, find your why, and make your why bigger than your fear. Third, create your action plan. Break down your big goals into manageable bites. Fourth form your Truth Club. Surround yourself with people who will push you to be the best version of you. Fifth, stop comparing. Your journey is YOURS, so get clear about what success looks like to you. Sixth, eliminate excuses from your life. Because even a good excuse is still an excuse. And finally, stay encouraged. Put safeguards in place that will keep you motivated and excited so that you can get to where you want to be.

Remember--in the end the only difference between the people who succeed and the people who fail is that the successful ones refuse to quit.

Okay, so don't forget that if you would like the worksheet that goes along with this podcast—that will walk you through the steps I shared and also include links to the resources I talked about, you can get it, along with our show notes, at [doitscared.com/episode57](https://doitscared.com/episode57). Once again, that's [doitscared.com/episode57](https://doitscared.com/episode57).

Before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I LOVE hearing from you! If you have any questions about what we talked about today, or any other topics that you would like to see addressed on the Do It Scared podcast, please feel free to reach out, either via email or just by messaging me on Instagram.

And that about does it for this episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup podcast! Thank you so much for joining me today! If you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes, or, better yet, share this episode on your Insta story and tag me to let me know! If I repost your story, we'll send you a do it scared t-shirt just for fun!

Also, be sure to subscribe, either on iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you like to listen, to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week for a very special episode and something we've never done before. Instead of being the interviewER, I will be the interviewEE. My COO Laura Miller will be interviewing me and believe me when I tell you that this is like no interview I have ever given before. It's raw and real and packed with a whole bunch of truth bombs that you need to hear. Buckle up for this one—it's going to be good!

And I will catch you then!