

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #59**. In today's episode, we're going to talk about a few simple—but super powerful—tweaks you can make to your morning routine in order to completely supercharge your day.

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 six books, including my newest book Do It Scared, which JUST arrived into the world LAST WEEK.

The truth is that these last couple of weeks have been a total whirlwind of activity with all that goes into launching a book into the world, and I just want to make sure to take the time, before we dive in to the heart of today's episode, to say thank you! Your outpouring of support for this new book, and for the message of Do It Scared, has meant so, so, SO much to me. Seriously....I can't even tell you.

All the messages I've received and the stories I've heard and just the way so many of you have gone above and beyond to share about the book on social media....I'm truly just overwhelmed with gratitude.

I know it probably seems a little ironic, given that the title of the book is Do It Scared, but writing a book and putting your heart out there for the world to trample on is honestly pretty terrifying. I've had more than a few freak-out moments over the past month, moments of complete panic and fear and self-doubt.

And so the fact that so many of you have reached out to tell me how much the book has meant to you, and to ask how you can help support....it really does mean the world to me. So thank you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

And to answer that question—the very best way you can support the book is to, first of all, buy a copy for yourself, but also buy it as a gift for the people in your life who you know could benefit from this message. And then please, please TELL PEOPLE about it! Tell as many people as you can & help get the word out! If you see it in the store, in Target or Barnes & Noble or at the airport or wherever, take a picture and post it on Instagram or Facebook and tag me and use the hashtag #doitscaredmoment! And who knows? We're still giving away lots of prizes, so you might even have a chance to win!

And with all that out of the way, let me just say once again, 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 to the Do It Scared podcast! 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 get super practical and talk about how to supercharge your morning routine in order to be more productive all day long. I'm excited to talk about this topic, because I don't think we always realize just how much of a difference a few small—and pretty painless—tweaks to our routine can make to

not just our day, but our entire lives.

I think sometimes we think that if we're not making big dramatic changes, it won't really make a difference, and so there is no point. But that's not true. Sometimes it is the smallest changes that end up being the catalyst for everything else.

And that's what we are going to talk about today—how to add in a few simple but powerful practices to your morning routine that will help set the tone for your entire day....and your life.

And ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It's about daring to mix it up and make the changes that will help us 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 you can get all the show notes to this episode, along with links to anything I talk about, by visiting **[DoltScared.com/episode59](https://DoltScared.com/episode59)**.

And while you're there at doitscared.com, I want to also encourage you, if you haven't already, to take our Do It Scared Fear Assessment. It will allow you to identify your own fear archetype, and it is SUCH a useful tool! Seriously—the feedback we've been getting from people who have been blown away at the insight they've received is incredible. 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.

So once again, you can find that, as well as the show notes, at [DoltScared.com](https://DoltScared.com)

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

It never ceases to amaze me what a difference it makes to my day when I start my morning well.

You see, sometimes my mornings look like this:

I get up, a little later than I intended. Rather than jump right out of bed, I immediately pull out my phone and check what I've missed in the 7 or so hours I wasn't connected. I check my email and scroll through Instagram, and then through Facebook, and before I know it, I've already been awake for 45 minutes and I haven't actually done anything yet.

I finally manage to pull myself out of bed, already feeling behind. I make myself a cup of coffee and contemplate going for a run, but now I'm already running late and I really hate running, so I easily convince myself that I just don't have time.

Coffee in hand, I sit down with my laptop to try to get a little work done. I know I have a ton of work to do, and I just feel so overwhelmed, with so many thoughts swirling through my head, that I can't seem to focus on anything. And so, instead of doing any actual work, I almost instantly find myself distracted by email and social media and the latest celebrity scandal on DailyMail.com.

In my mind, I justify that too. After all, it's important to decompress, right? I'm under a lot of stress. I need to give myself grace.

And then suddenly it's time for the kids to get up and get ready for school, and suddenly the chaos of trying to get them—and myself—out the door eclipses everything else. We scramble to get ready, to make sure homework is signed off, that lunches are packed and that we're ready to face the day.

Except, I don't feel ready.

I feel frazzled and stressed, and as I get to the office, that feeling lingers all day. Instead of starting my work day with intention, I spin around in circles, never fully finding my groove. Every time I sit down to work, something distracts me or gets me off track, and I just can't seem to pull it together, and that sets the tone for my entire day.

I hate days like those. Those are the days I come home feeling stressed out and completely defeated, like I accomplished absolutely nothing all day long, because in truth—I really didn't accomplish anything.

And it's all because I didn't start my morning with intention.

Because whether we want to admit it to ourselves or not, the truth is that our mornings matter. Like it or not, how we spend those first precious minutes will set the tone for the entire day.

And yet, so often, we blow it.

We oversleep or get distracted. We waste time on social media or get sucked into email instead of attending to our most important tasks. We let the morning run us instead of the other way around. We start off behind, and spend the day playing catch-up.

But thankfully, there's a solution.

Because, you see, the simple secret to slaying your day, every single time, is to start your morning with intention. It's implementing a handful of simple yet powerful practices that will immediately stop you from spinning and set the tone for your entire day.

## **THE FIRST PRACTICE IS TO PLAN**

And if you're only going to implement one of these practices into your morning routine, it should be this one—taking the time, every single day, to actually sit down and spend 10 or 15 minutes making a concrete plan for what you need to accomplish.

This means not just making a to-do list, but actually taking the time to prioritize that to-do list into “must-do,” “should-do,” and “would like to do” categories, so that your brain recognizes what is most important, and what needs to happen first.

This is especially critical, because when all of those tasks are spinning around in our head, our brain has no ability to make sense of them, or to prioritize. Everything feels equally important, and equally stressful, even though the reality is that some tasks matter much more than others. In order to be able to recognize what's most important, we need to get those tasks out of our head and onto paper, where we can actually sort through them.

And while prioritizing your task list is essential, effectively planning your day also means taking the time to look at your schedule and block out time for each of your most important tasks, so that you don't get to the end of the day finding that you

didn't give yourself any time to get it done.

In essence, this basically means making an appointment with yourself to complete a task, and then taking that appointment as seriously as you would treat a commitment or appointment with another person.

And then finally effectively planning your day means identifying, from the very start, what your most important objective is for the day, as well as what a successful day looks like, and how you'll reward yourself for a job well done.

This is important because it helps you remember what's most important, and also because it defines success. Too often we beat ourselves up when we aren't able to do everything, when we should be celebrating our wins along the way. Accomplishing ONE important and essential task is SO much better than accomplishing 20 tasks that don't matter at all!

For this particular task, I love using either our Daily Focus Sheet or Daily Do It sticky notes. Both are designed to help you identify your most important task, as well as to prioritize your to-do list into must-do, should-do, and would-like-to-do items, as well as to identify what success looks like, and how you'll celebrate. The Daily Focus Sheet also includes additional space to plan your time blocks.

According to Brian Tracy, every 10 minutes spent planning will save you at least an hour in execution, and I can tell you from experience that taking 10 to 15 minutes each morning to fill out either the Daily Do It or the Daily Focus sheet is a GAME CHANGER. It literally will set the tone for the entire day, and let you know, with crystal clarity, exactly where your focus needs to be.

It's such an easy alternative to spending your day spinning around in circles, and yet, it never ceases to amaze me how often most of us—including me—don't take the time to do it.

So plan your day—that's practice number one.

## **PRACTICE #2 IS TO REFLECT**

And while it's probably pretty easy to see how taking 10-15 minutes to plan your day can make a huge impact on what you get done, the benefits of carving out a little reflection time each morning is not quite as obvious. In fact, for many of us, the thought of taking up precious time to simply sit quietly and think, to practice affirmations or visualizations, or to journal feels like a big waste of time.

But reflection time is essential, because without it, we are doomed to keep spinning around in circles, and to keep making the same mistakes over and over. Indeed, the only way to get perspective on our life, both on where we've been and where we are going, is to take a step back every once in a while.

That is where self-reflection time comes in.

And it is important to know that this self-reflection time might look very different for everyone. For one person, it may mean pondering life over a quiet cup of coffee before diving in to anything else. For someone else, it might mean 10 minutes of prayer or meditation. For yet another person, it could be 15 minutes of journaling.

The essential part of any sort of self-reflection practice is that it allows you to do just that—self-reflect on both where you've been and where you are going. It should be a

time to ponder the previous 24 hours—both the good and the bad, a time to celebrate and remember the wins, as well as a time to be honest about the mistakes and lessons you’ve learned. It should also be a time to practice gratitude, and to set your intentions for the upcoming day.

The biggest benefit of including this practice of reflection in your morning routine is that it will immediately calm you and center you, and mentally prepare you for whatever curveballs life might happen to throw your way on any particular day. Rather than starting your day by feeling frazzled and out-of-control, you begin with a sense of peace, both about what has already transpired and about what might be coming your way.

One simple way to add in this intentional reflection time is journaling through a specific set of questions that help you quickly recall what happened, how you’re feeling, what or who you’re grateful for, and any lessons learned. And that’s practice number two—reflect.

### **THE THIRD PRACTICE, THEN, IS TO MOVE**

I’m not going to lie—exercise has always been a struggle for me. But whether you are a hard-core fitness junkie or a couch potato like me, what I’ve learned is that movement and exercise is not only good for your body, it will help you up your mental game as well.

The truth is that modern life has made it far too easy for most of us to become almost completely sedentary. We spend the day sitting behind a desk, tied to our computer screens, then we come home and “veg out” in front of the TV, needing downtime to decompress from the stress of the day.

But this lack of movement not only compounds our stress levels, it is downright dangerous to our health. Women who sit for more than six hours per day are 40 percent likelier to die within the next fifteen years than women who sit less than three hours per day. Furthermore, people who hold “sitting” jobs are twice as likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease.

According to an article in Business Week, “When you sit, the muscles are relaxed, and enzyme activity drops by 90% to 95%, leaving fat to camp out in the bloodstream. Within a couple hours of sitting, healthy cholesterol plummets by 20%.” But the solution to this sitting epidemic is pretty simple—we need to get moving, and adding just a little bit of exercise to your morning routine is an excellent first step.

Luckily for all of us, exercising in the morning is proven to have some incredible benefits. First it gives your metabolism a jump-start and keeps your metabolism levels boosted all day long. Second, it will give you more energy and improve your focus all day long. In fact, exercise has been shown to provide more energy and mental clarity than drinking a cup of coffee!

But it’s not just increased energy in the moment—regular morning exercise will also help you get better sleep, which will help improve your energy levels in the long-term too. Finally, exercising triggers endorphins that help you decrease stress and feel happier overall—a feeling that tends to stick around.

It’s important to understand that adding movement to your morning routine does not have to add a ton of time. I’ve known a lot of people who take a very “all or nothing” when it comes to working out—if they can’t get in a full hour of hardcore cardio or intensive weights, they don’t want to even bother. But the reality is that just 15 or 20

minutes of getting your heart pumping and your blood flowing can give you nearly all the same benefits of a longer workout !

So add some movement and exercise—that's practice three.

**THE FOURTH PRACTICE** to add to your morning routine is one that I often like to combine with exercise, and that **IS TO FILL YOUR "INSPIRATION TANK."**

And by that, I mean to spend some time reading or listening to an inspirational or motivational podcast, or perhaps even reading the Bible or doing a devotional. Depending on how much time you decide to devote to it, your "fill up" time could even be a combination of those things.

I personally like to listen to audio books and podcasts while I run in the morning, which serves the purpose of a.) helping me forget how much I really, really hate running, and b.) making me feel like I'm being super-efficient with my time by getting double-duty out of my workout!

The point is not what you read or listen to, but really THAT you intentionally and regularly spend time filling your head with positive and uplifting messages.

Because the reality is that, as humans, we have a nearly insatiable need to be encouraged and inspired and motivated. All those curveballs and obstacles that get in our way on a daily basis also tend to bring us down and get us discouraged, which in turn makes us less likely to stay focused and on track towards accomplishing our big goals and dreams.

That's why we need to make a habit of filling up every day. Because the more positive messages we have pouring in, the more inspiration and encouragement and motivation we can feed ourselves, the more likely we are to retain it, and to not let those obstacles stand in our way!

So that's practice four—make sure to fill up your inspiration tank.

**THE FIFTH AND FINAL PRACTICE, THEN, TO ADD TO YOUR MORNING ROUTINE, IS DEDICATED FOCUS TIME.**

This should include at least 30 minutes—but ideally even 60 or 90 minutes if you can manage it—that is spent working on whatever it is that is going to get you closer to your biggest, most important goals.

For me, this means that I usually spend at least 60-90 minutes writing, because for me, as a writer and content creator, my biggest goals are almost always related to creating new content. And what I've found, is that early mornings—especially after I've taken the time to plan my day, self-reflect, get some exercise, and fill up my tank—is my most creative and productive time of the day. I get into the flow, and the words just pour out.

For you, depending on what your biggest, most important goal is right now, that might mean something different. If you are an Elite Blog Academy student, it could mean going through the course and diligently working on your assignments, without any distractions. If your goal is to lose weight, it might mean planning your meals, or cooking ahead, or even a more intensive workout. If your biggest goal is to start a business or make a career change or get a promotion, it might mean working on those tasks that will help that dream come true.

But in order to do this, it is important that you've actually identified your biggest, most important goals—that you know what you're aiming for so that you can start taking those steps in the right direction, every single day.

The amazing thing about adding this final practice of dedicated focus time for your biggest, most important goals, is that even just 30 or 60 minutes of time, done consistently every day, will help you get to where you want to be faster than you ever thought possible.

In the end, adding these five simple but powerful practices to your morning routine—a routine that you can complete in just an hour or two a day--will without a doubt transform your entire day—and over time, your entire life.

First, spend 10-15 minutes planning your day and prioritizing your task list using our Daily Do It or Daily Focus Sheet. Second, be sure to make time to self-reflect, both on where you've been and where you are going. Ponder the lessons learned, celebrate your wins, and be intentional about choosing gratitude. It will set the tone for your entire day. Third, get moving. Add at least 15-20 minutes of exercise to get your heart pumping and your blood flowing. The added energy and endorphins will stay with you for hours! Fourth, be sure to fill your "inspiration tank." As humans, our need for encouragement is nearly insatiable, which is why it is essential to keep filling up.

And then finally, dedicate at least 30 minutes to focused work on your biggest, most important goal. It's this final practice, spread over the course of weeks and months, that will do more to change your life than anything else you could possibly imagine. Indeed, the most effective change never comes overnight in one fell swoop, but in a thousand small steps taken in the right direction.

When all is said and done, way you start your morning will set the tone for your entire day, which means that if you want to build up the courage and the ability to do big things in your life, to face your fears and overcome obstacles and do hard things so that you can create a life you truly love, then you need to be intentional about starting your day well. And that means

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. You can find me there at \ [@RUTHSOUKUP](https://www.instagram.com/RUTHSOUKUP)—which is spelled R-U-T-H-S-O-U-K-U-P!

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 wherever you like to listen, to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we chat with the incredibly inspiring Carla Moore about crash moments, daring to pivot, and learning how to harness your personal power to make big changes in your life. Carla is an executive at HBO whose life changed dramatically 10 years ago after a serious car crash gave her the wake up call she needed to finally take control of her life. She lost over 100 pounds, but the bigger changes happened inside her head. Her story is absolutely incredible, and I promise that you will be blown away by all the wisdom she has to share—trust me, this is one episode you don't want to miss!

And I will catch you then!