

ARTICLES TO LIVE BY!

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Getting Things Done: **Start to Finish**

One of my art students has had a challenging time making it to class every week, due to a heavy traveling schedule with work (plus some family obligations). So the painting she's been working on has been in process for 5 months, but with only eight actual weeks of painting time.



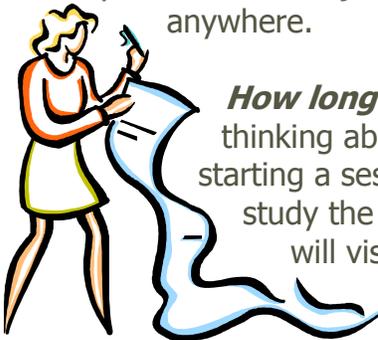
She will tell you today that persistence pays off! She's delighted with her first painting, as you can probably tell by the photo. Although there were times when she wondered when she was going to be able to make it to class to finish up, she made it enough times to produce a beautiful finished painting! And now she's on to her next!

Let me ask you this: how many times in your life has a project or opportunity been haunting you, knowing that if you just kept at it and persisted that you would eventually complete it and feel great about sticking to it?

I don't know about you, but since I have such a busy, creative mind, I seem to have too many ideas about things I'd like to do. Sometimes projects get started but not finished.

The best thing about starting is finishing. But you will never have a chance to finish if you never get started! –Lois Gallo

That's why I like Nike's brand of advice: "Just Do It!" I've found that once I just start something, no matter how I'm feeling about it, that it's mostly downhill from there. My feelings start catching up with me and enjoying the process. Then I'll come up with more creative ideas to make the project even better along the way. But if I never "jumped on the moving train," I never would have gotten anywhere.



How long does it take to start something? While you're thinking about that, let me share with you what I'll often do when starting a session to work on one of my paintings. I will stand and study the painting and figure out what I need to do to finish it. I will visualize the areas to be painted and how they will look, and remember how great I will feel once the painting is done.

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That usually is enough motivation for me to start mixing up the paint to work on it. Breaking it down into small areas of things to do also makes it more doable and more compelling.

So if you have projects that have been calling out to you to either start or bring to completion, why not look at them in a different way? Break them down into small sections. If you don't have much time, give each part of the process a time value (e.g., putting down the layout on canvas - 15 minutes). Complete that part when you can. If you lack motivation, just look at the project for a few minutes and imagine yourself completing each part of it. Then just get everything together to begin - and *start!*



How long does it take to start something? Well, by now you probably know that it takes only as long as your decision to do so! So decide right now when you will complete the most nagging and important project. Get it in your appointment book or on your list, and then at the appointed time simply – *begin!* Think of how much more energy you'll have freed up without worrying any longer about getting that one thing finished!

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