

# Finish Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Finish identifies perfectionism as the biggest enemy of your goals, in order to then help you defeat it with research backed strategies to get things out the door while having fun, taking the pressure off and cutting yourself some slack.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



One of the biggest challenges of blogging is statistics. Not that you'd have to calculate anything, but most blogs die because people keep checking their numbers, which, inevitably, suck at first. While we know all we need to do is write consistently for a long enough time, everyone wants their first post to go viral.

Before we even begin, we've made a rule in our heads that says "if it's not that, it's not perfect and thus, not worth it." We don't know what the rule is, but perfectionism has ensured our project's dead in the water. This is the exact problem Jon Acuff addresses in his latest book, *Finish*.

So far, he's shown us how to quit the old, start anew, and do over when we fail. Now, it's time to kick perfection to the curb and finish anyway. Here are my 3 favorite lessons from the book:

1. Suck at some things on purpose, so you're free to be amazing at others.
2. Don't let last-minute doubts kill your project.
3. Track your progress to check it at times when you feel down.

If you're a chronic non-finisher, this is your chance to make a change. Let's do this!

**Lesson 1: Practice strategic incompetence to take off the pressure.**

When I started my blog, I spent hours upon hours tweaking the design. I downloaded themes, cropped pictures and figured out CSS hacks, only to have the majority of my first few readers tell me that my color scheme sucked big time. It took me at least a year until I finally realized: I suck at design and that's okay.

Going all in on my lack of graphic skills allowed me to focus more on what I could become good at: writing actual content. Especially as a solo entrepreneur or artist, the temptation to do everything yourself is enormous, because at first, you have no other choice.

However, the sooner you can move away from this task-hogging, time-wasting mindset, the faster you can put more time into the core activities that you're good at and that drive your venture forward. **By strategically choosing which areas you'll accept being incompetent in, you can prioritize your strengths.**

What's more, there are plenty of options to deal with these trade-offs. For example, I now handle design in several ways:

1. I never prioritize it at first. I pick something out of the box and go.
2. Later, I hire someone to help out with the first profits of a new project.
3. I always set constraints in how much time I spend on visuals.

Strategic incompetence, I'm telling you. It's a thing!

## Lesson 2: Pull the trigger once you reach the finish line.

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I'd love to tell you I'm always ahead of schedule with my posts, but I never am. I write about whatever fascinates me that week, and so there's always urgency to publish new pieces in time for the newsletter. Whenever I finalize drafts early, there's a little voice inside my head right before I want to hit 'Publish.'

It says stuff like "are you sure this is good enough?" and "don't you want to edit it some more?" or even "you know this is going to flop, right?" **As creators, it is our duty to shut that voice up and smash the launch button.** The reason this voice is so hard to silence is that it has a point: if we spent more time on our work, it *would* be better. However, 9 out of 10 times, 9 out of 10 people won't notice, because we're reaching for the last few percent missing for perfection, not fixing some huge flaw.

Of course we never have this problem when we're out of time. Work always fills the time we make available for it, so when we have to sprint to make the deadline, there's no time for self-doubt. This isn't to say you *should* procrastinate, but repeatedly quitting just before the finish line can have disastrous effects.

You won't just start blaming other people, for example by saying you sacrificed your dreams for your family or spouse, but you'll also reinforce the belief that you're the type of person who never keeps the promises they made to themselves.

There is nothing sadder than that.

## Lesson 3: When you feel like you're not moving forward, check your numbers.

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While checking your stats several times a day might destroy your blogging dream in less than a week, taking a peek once a week when you feel like nothing's happening can be a good thing. One of perfection's sneakiest tricks is to tell us we're "not making enough progress," when actually, we've never defined what enough progress looks like!

Yes, most people won't reach 1,000 people with their writing in their second week, but as long as you reach 15 more than in the first, who cares? **Tracking your numbers is productive, as long as you check them at the right times.** Very few projects warrant daily reports, but you can use weekly or monthly summaries to visualize your progress, regardless of what perfectionism tells you.

Here are some numbers I track weekly:

- Money earned on various platforms.
- Weight. I step on the scale every Sunday morning.
- Daily steps taken.
- Social media stats.

Don't let vague doubts kill your vibe. Look at the right numbers at the right time and you can focus on progress over perfection.

## Finish Review

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Jon learned most the lessons in this book from hard data. Thousands of people have taken his 30 Days of Hustle challenge, and, interestingly, performed best after the lessons that took the pressure off. He turned his hard-won knowledge into *Finish* and the result shows. The book is a fun, but powerful way to put perfection in its place and wrap up what you start.

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- What separates real winners from quitters
- How to avoid the planning fallacy
- Why very few of the people who regularly run actually should
- How figuring out your own perfectionist rules can keep you from going insane

## Who would I recommend the Finish summary to?

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The 16 year old, who's on her third instrument now, the 40 year old professor, who longingly stares at the drawer in his office that contains the first chapter of his sci-fi novel, and anyone who self-sabotaged their performance minutes before game time more than once.