



THE ART OF
LAZINESS

Peter Taylor

The art of laziness

Peter Taylor

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Are you sure you want to read this book?

“Ambition is a poor excuse for not having sense enough to be lazy.” – Charlie McCarthy (Edgar Bergen)

Stop reading this book now!

Well actually I mean stop reading this book at the end of this chapter and then follow the instructions explicitly before you continue. Trust me on this one, I’m an author, and it really is in your best interests.

Clear? Good!

So let’s start with a simple summary of what lies ahead of you in this book and then take a quick test to see if it is worth your while investing your time (and money) further.

What is it all about?

The lazy winner is for anyone who simply wants to do more with less effort and succeed in their work and personal life without rushing around like a headless chicken or putting in 100 hour weeks. We are all too good to put our personal life and careers and work–life balance at risk by working too hard! Equally we can’t head off in the opposite direction and ignore the ‘work’ part of the equation while focusing our time and effort solely on the ‘life’ part. That is not a work–life balance at all and, unless you are already wealthy enough to go for just a life–life balance ([1](#)) then you do need to come up with a real ‘balance’ that applies to you.

You are just too good to fail at what you do and I want to help you get even better at succeeding in what you do in the future.

The lazy winner builds on the concept of ‘productive laziness’ which encourages people to apply more thought before leaping into action and

throwing effort at a problem or task. There are much better ways to progress in work and in life. I mean, what is the point in rushing around like busy bees all of the time and yet looking back at the end of the day and wondering what it was all about and what you actually achieved.

With a different approach to planning you can ensure that you are one of the lazy winners and achieve success in what you do at work and in life – achieving more impressive results with the minimum of effort.

What is it not about?

I want you to make the right decision here about this book and the outline of what it aims to do will, hopefully, put you on the right path. Equally I should be clear about what this book isn't about and what it won't give you.

There are hundreds of self-help books out there that will promise to help you 'get paid more, laid more and live a longer happier life'. This isn't one of them (I may have just lost out on a million sales with that statement but I have to be honest (2)).

What I do believe is that by adopting a few simple rules in your life you can make changes that can be quite significant, depending upon your starting point of course, and what your expectations are of such change.

What this book is then is a roadmap, a route planner, a step-by-step progress plan, to guide you on your way to achieving some level of 'productive laziness'. And that is an important thing to understand. You don't have to go for the 'big bang' (3) approach and you don't have to do 100% of what I suggest to achieve some benefits. I believe that you will achieve some advantage at each stage – small incremental gains as each lesson is learned and applied.

Again, many self-help books only work if you entirely immerse yourself in what they have to say and then adopt all the advice to the maximum. And when you fail to make any significant changes it will be your fault for not doing it all properly and thoroughly enough.

This book is not like that.

So, should you read this book?

You need to ask yourself some questions before you make up your mind.

What happens when you get involved in something? Do you get carried along in the excitement of it all, caught up in the rush, or just accept everything that heads your way with a spirit of fatalism? Or do you ever hold back and ask yourself:

- Do I want to do this piece of work, job or task? Even if I do want to do it, do I need to do it?
- Is the potential result or outcome worth my effort?
- Do I have to do it myself?
- If I have to do to it then what is the shortest path to the point of success?
- What exactly is that point of success and at what stage will I just be wasting my time?

If you get a clean run of ‘Yes I do that’ across all five questions then put your purse or wallet away and go buy something else. (4) You are most likely ‘winning’ already.

If you lost your way at some point in the short questionnaire, and that is going to apply to the majority of you I am sure, then you either just enjoy being a headless chicken and working 100 hours a week or you seriously want some help.

If the ‘100 hour per week chicken’ profile is your key to happiness then again, you don’t need this book. You can just carry on as you are and good luck to you. Contentment is a blessed thing and it is good that you have found yours.

But, if this has made you consider in any way that there might be some changes that you could make – if only you had some sort of guide and reference point – then you need to learn the art of productive laziness and,

surprise, surprise, The lazy winner is a great place to start.

Try the questions again in the context of this book:

- Do I want to read The lazy winner? Do I need to read The lazy winner? Well you should have a clear view by now based on what you have read so far and on the answers to the questions above.
- Will the outcome of reading The lazy winner be worth the effort? Trust me, I will make it as painless as possible to get the most out of this book – working smarter not harder, I practice what I preach – you will gain in proportion to what you put into the process.
- Do I have to read The lazy winner myself? Ideally yes, but actually I can be hired at a ridiculous fee to come and read it to you – your choice, but why not give the book a go yourself first?
- If I have to read The lazy winner then what is the shortest path to the point of success? The book offers a flexible path to learning the art of productive laziness and I aim, as a smart but lazy author, to offer up multiple points of success along the way, chapter by chapter.
- What exactly is that point of success and at what stage will I just be wasting my time? When your chicken is no longer headless and you have reduced your working hours then you may well be reaching a point of return on your investment.

So, do you want to be a lazy winner or carry on being a busy loser? (5)

Hopefully I have demonstrated my integrity by being honest and upfront about what the book is and isn't. Out of that massive number of self-help books I noted earlier how many are actually read completely? How many are really used as they were intended? How many now sit on a shelf collecting dust or are destined for the next charity sale? We are all human, I know – we want to change but it is so hard sometimes and so much easier to just carry on with things as they are. I have twenty or so cookery books, beautifully

produced with wonderful pictures and stimulating recipes, but I still, mostly, end up eating the same meals that I always have done. Strange.

OK, enough of me talking here, it's time for you to make your mind up.

Decision time

So what is it going to be? You need to answer all of my questions but I know what you're thinking. 'Did he ask six questions or only five?'

Well, to tell you the truth, in all the excitement I kind of lost track myself, but being as this is a book about productive laziness, the most powerful way of working in the world, and could blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya?

Go ahead reader, make my day... (6) Or to be more precise, go ahead and make your day by learning to work in a better way, the winning way of productive laziness.

Just remember, 'Progress isn't made by early risers. It's made by lazy men trying to find easier ways to do something.' (7)

“Never be afraid to try something new. Remember: It was a lone amateur who built the Ark – and a large group of professionals who built the Titanic.” – Dave Barry

NOTES

1. If this is the case and you are just idly reading this book on your private yacht while waiting for the caviar to be served please send all donations through my website www.thelazywinner.com – thank you – all major credit cards accepted, naturally.

2. The publishers would like to point out that it may well be possible to achieve everything that other self-help books offer so you might like to buy the book anyway on the off chance that this happens – but no guarantee is provided. (A search on Amazon.com for 'self-help' books currently shows a staggering 129,325 books with 'self-help' in the title or as the contents tag. It is also said that the self-help market in 2010 was valued at just under \$12 billion.) Note: Perhaps the next book in the series will be The happy lazy book of getting laid and paid more.

3. The 'big bang' relates to the cosmological theory that the start of the cosmos happened at one moment in time. This is also the case with the big bang adoption type where a new system is adopted on one date (often applicable in software implementations).

4. You could invest in a 'get paid more/laid more' self-help book perhaps?

5. OK so you are not a loser – what I meant by that phrase is that you could perhaps be losing out by not working in a more

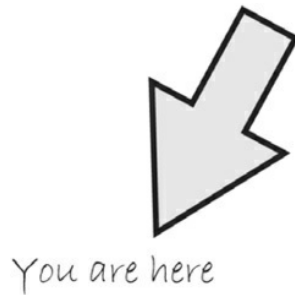
intelligent way.

6. 'Go ahead, make my day' is the catchphrase, written by Joseph C. Stinson and spoken by the character Harry Callahan, played by Clint Eastwood, in the 1983 film Sudden Impact. Note for Clint aficionados: the author has declined to address his audience as 'punk' in this instance. The previous quote (or misquote) is from the earlier Dirty Harry, a 1971 American crime thriller produced and directed by Don Siegel, the first in the Dirty Harry series.

7. From Time Enough For Love, Robert Heinlein, US science fiction author (1907–1988). Note: This is the quote that triggered the 'productively lazy' concept for me. Having trained many people over time in various jobs and roles I was constantly trying to explain how it was that I, and others, seemed to be so much more relaxed, organised, less stressed than others and yet delivered similar or better results. Reading Robert Heinlein's quote made it all seem so much clearer and simpler – I was 'lazy' and this was a good thing. A very good thing indeed I believe.

You are here

In order to help you navigate this book easily there will be regular tips to allow you to assess your progress on the path to productive laziness.⁽⁸⁾ Think of it as a ‘sat nav’⁽⁹⁾ for productive laziness – it will guide you to your destination but won’t get annoyed if you deviate in any way along the route or simply decide to go somewhere else if that seems a lot more interesting.



OK not particularly helpful at this point in time I know but we haven’t really started yet have we? It will get more useful later on. But you are already not where you started: you have considered productive laziness and, presumably, decided that this is the path you wish to tread. So, you are already changing in a small but significant way.

You just experienced productive laziness by the way.

As an added comfort to having parted with your hard-earned money (part of the reward for that 100-hour week being a headless chicken, perhaps), as if by magic, you have just experienced the productive laziness approach in the very decision making process that you went through.

By investing a small amount of time upfront you either just saved yourself the time and effort of reading another 29,000 words (plus a few pounds, dollars, yen, etc., depending on where you might have purchased this book), and gaining nothing from the experience, or you have prepared your mind to focus and learn to be generally more productive in the future. Both of these are good things.

Now we will begin in earnest.

Introducing Nigel

In which we meet the hero of our story, appreciate what it is that he feels about life and understand that he has a challenging and particular sense of humour – and keeps signs on his desk at work which present his insights about the world and where his mind is at right now.

This book could have been called Making Plans for Nigel.(10)

Nigel, our story's hero, is just this guy you know (for an alternative feel free to use Nigella).

So this book could have been called Making plans for Nigella.

He (she) is pretty happy with his (her) life and could just keep on doing what he (she) has been doing for some time now but there is just a little something inside him (her) – OK I am going to stop this now. You get my meaning, I am trying to be completely sexually non-biased, therefore, from this point onwards can we take it as read that when I say him I also mean her and vice versa? Thank you.

Nigel is just like a lot of us. Life is what happens to Nigel while he was busy making other plans. Nigel likes a particular story about the meaning of life; he tells this one quite a lot.

On the first day God created the cow.

God said, 'You must go to the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I will give you a life span of sixty years.' The cow said, 'That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. Let me do it for twenty years and I'll give back the other forty.'

And God agreed.

On the second day God created the monkey.

God said, 'Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I'll give you a twenty year life span.' Monkey said, 'How boring, monkey tricks for twenty years? I don't think so. Cow gave you back forty, but I'll give back ten okay?'

Once again, God agreed.

On the third day, God created the dog.

God said, 'Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a life span of twenty years.' The dog said, 'That's too long to be barking. Give me ten years and I'll give back the other ten.'

So God agreed.

On the fourth day God created man.

God said, 'Eat, sleep, play, have sex, enjoy. Do nothing, just enjoy life. I'll give you twenty years.' Man said, 'What? Only twenty years? No way. Tell you what: I'll take my twenty, and the forty cow gave back plus the ten monkey gave back, add that to the ten dog gave back and it makes eighty, okay?'

'Okay,' said God. 'You've got a deal.'

So that is why for the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play, have sex, enjoy, and do nothing; for the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family; for the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain our grandchildren; and for the last ten years we sit in front of the house and bark at everybody!

Nigel isn't a bad man, despite the sense of humour, but he does feel that things could be somewhat better and in the back of his mind he senses that he could make some changes that would be good for him and for his family.

But what should he do? Why is he working so hard and for such long hours? Why is he so tired all of the time? And why does he never feel that he is up to date with anything or actually making some sort of progress? Why is his inbox and his 'to do' list so full? Life seems to be all about treading water. And why is that there are other people who seem to float around without a care in the world and yet achieve success in an effortless way? What is it that they do, or don't do, that Nigel doesn't, or does?

And why does he have a sign on his desk that reads 'Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.'?

NOTES

8. It will also let you cheat if you want to – in a productively lazy way. After all, why should I (the self-proclaimed lazy master) expect you to read 30,000 words when I can make it easier and quicker for you?

9. 'Sat nav' is an abbreviation for the 'satellite navigation systems' designed for use in automobiles. They typically use a GPS (Global Positioning System) navigation device to acquire position data to locate the user on a road in the unit's map database. Using the road database, the unit can give directions to other locations along roads also in its database.

10. you would like to listen to Nigel(la)'s theme tune try 'Making plans for Nigel' by XTC. Drums d Wires is an XTC album released on 17 August 1979. It reached No. 34 on the UK album chart, and No. 176 on the US Billboard album charts. It contained the successful single 'Making Plans for Nigel', which was released on 14 September 1979, and reached No. 17 on the UK singles chart. Note: Using the masculine and feminine of Nigel has also allowed the author, in a moment of self-indulgence, to include the name of his favourite TV chef – Nigella Lawson – thereby winning a bet of some small financial but significant personal importance.

The science behind the laziness

This isn't all just made up you know, there is science and history behind all this theory.

The Pareto principle (also known as the 80/20 rule) states that for many phenomena, 80% of the consequences stem from 20% of the causes. The idea has a rule of thumb application in many places, but it's also commonly misused. For example, it's a misuse to state that a solution to a problem 'fits the 80-20 rule' just because it fits 80% of the cases; it must be implied that this solution requires only 20% of the resources needed to solve all cases.

The principle was in fact suggested by management thinker Joseph M. Juran and it was named after the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who observed that 80% of property in Italy was owned by 20% of the Italian population. The assumption is that most of the results in any situation are determined by a small number of causes.

So '20% of clients may be responsible for 80% of sales volume'. This can be evaluated and is likely to be roughly right, and can be helpful in future decision-making. The Pareto principle also applies to a variety of more mundane matters: we might guess – approximately – that we wear our 20% most favoured clothes about 80% of the time; perhaps we spend 80% of the time with 20% of our acquaintances, and so on.

The Pareto principle is unrelated to Pareto efficiency, which really was introduced by Vilfredo Pareto. Vilfredo Pareto (born 15 July 1848 in France, died 19 August 1923 in Lausanne, Switzerland) made several important contributions to economics, sociology and moral philosophy, especially in the study of income distribution and in the analysis of individuals' choices. He introduced the concept of Pareto efficiency and helped develop the field of microeconomics with ideas such as indifference curves. In 1906, he made his observation about Italian property which was later generalised into the Pareto principle, and into the concept of a Pareto distribution.



The Pareto principle or 80/20 rule can and should be used by every smart but lazy person in their daily life.

The intelligence of laziness

It's no good just being lazy; you have to be better than lazy, you have to be lazy in a very smart way.

Productive laziness is not just about being lazy, it requires something more – and that is a powerful and magical combination of laziness and intelligence. Smart lazy people have a real edge over others in society and are most suited to leadership roles in organisations. This theory has existed for many years and has been applied in a number of interesting ways. One of the most famous of these was in the Prussian Army.



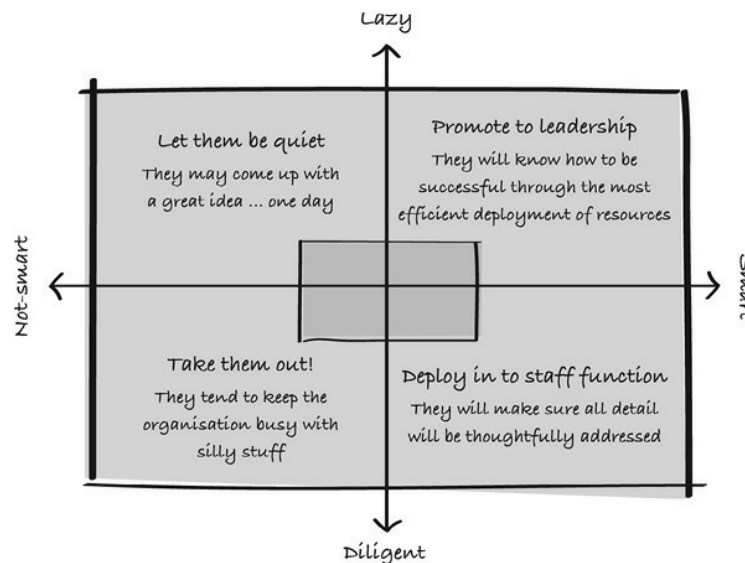
Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (26 October 1800–24 April 1891) was a Generalfeldmarschall. He is widely regarded as one of the great strategists of the latter half of the 1800s, and was the creator of a new and more modern method for directing armies in the field.

In 1857 Helmuth von Moltke was given the position Chief of the Prussian Grosser Generalstab (military staff), a position he held for the next thirty years. As soon as he gained the position he went to work making changes to the strategic and tactical methods of the Prussian army – changes in armament and in means of communication, changes in the training of staff officers and changes to the method for mobilising the army. He also instituted

a formal study of European politics in connection with plans for campaigns which might become necessary. In short, he rapidly put into place the features of a modern General Staff.

Moltke had a particular insight and approach to categorising his officer corps, something which lives on to this day within many armed forces, and something which can be applied to all forms of leadership, including project management.

If you consider the two ranges of individual characteristics, those that go from diligent through to lazy, and those that go from non-smart through to smart (yes, I am being politically correct here), then you end up with the four character types in the diagram below.



General von Moltke divided his officer corps into these four distinct types, depending on their mental and physical characteristics. He ended up with (and he never had to be politically correct, having been born in the nineteenth century and being chief of the Prussian army) type A: mentally dull and physically lazy; type B: mentally bright and physically energetic; type C: mentally dull and physically energetic; and type D: mentally bright and physically lazy.

TYPE A officers, who were mentally dull and physically lazy, were given simple, repetitive and unchallenging tasks to perform. They had reached their

career peak in the army. That said, if left alone they might just come up with a good idea one day; if not, then they wouldn't cause any problems.

TYPE B officers, who were mentally bright and physically energetic, were considered to be obsessed with micromanagement and would, as a result, be poor leaders. Promotion was possible over a period of time but not to the status of commanding officer of the General Staff. These officers were the best at making sure orders were carried out and thoughtfully addressing all the detail.

TYPE C officers, who were mentally dull but physically energetic, were considered to be somewhat dangerous. To Moltke, they were the officers who would require constant supervision, which was an unacceptable overhead and distraction. Because they would potentially create problems faster than could be managed, these officers were considered too much trouble and were dismissed. No career there, then!

Which brings us to TYPE D officers. These were the mentally bright and yet physically lazy officers who Moltke felt could and should take the highest levels of command. These officers were smart enough to see what needed to be done but were also motivated by inherent laziness to find the easiest, simplest way to achieve what was required. Put in a more positive way, they would know how to be successful through the most efficient deployment of effort.

OK, now take your pick. What do you want to be? Type A, B, C or D?

Tough question, eh?

So, smart lazy people have a real edge over others and are most suited to leadership roles in organisations. The Lazy Project Manager is all about applying these principles in the delivery and management of projects. It is assumed that you are not stupid (well, you have bought or borrowed this book and I see that as a positive sign of intelligence), so you are already on the right hand side of the diagram. What you now need to do is hone your lazy skills in order to rise to the top right hand side of the diagram. Do this, and not only will your projects be more successful, you will also be seen as successful yourself, and a safe pair of hands for future leadership roles.

“Whenever there is a hard job to be done I assign it to a lazy man; he is sure to find an easy way of doing it.” – Walter Chrysler

A final definition

It's a kind of magic: when one plus one equals so much more than two.

So what do you get when you cross one of the seven deadly sins (sloth – number four in the modern-day listing, as it happens) with an accelerant for resource usage (good old productivity)?

- lazy [leizi] – adjective (lazier; laziest)

1. If someone is lazy, they do not want to work or make any effort to do anything.

- Lazy and incompetent workers are letting the company down.

- I was too lazy to learn how to read music.

- laziness – noun

- Current employment laws will be changed to reward effort and punish laziness.

2. You can use lazy to describe an activity or event in which you are very relaxed and which you do or take part in without making much effort.

- Her latest novel is perfect for a lazy summer's afternoon reading.

- We would have a lazy lunch and then lie on the beach in the sun.

- lazily – adverb

- Lisa went back into the kitchen, stretching lazily.

3. If you describe something as lazy, you mean that it moves or flows slowly and gently.

- ...a valley of rolling farms spread out along a lazy river.

- lazily – adverb

- The river threaded its way lazily between the old city and the new.

Laziness – sloth: apathy and inactivity in the practice of virtue (personified as one of the deadly sins).

So lazy – or laziness: is mostly seen as a negative term, or at the very best, as a term of selfish indulgence.

Productiveness – on the other hand, is seen as a very positive term: the ratio of work produced in a given period of time. Productivity relates to a person's ability to produce the standard amount or number of products, services or outcomes as described in a work description.

So, put the benefits of productiveness together with an intelligent application of laziness and you get 'productive laziness'.

Or, to put it another way, you get the maximum output for any given input, with an eye to minimising the input as well. Or, to put it yet another way, you get a lot of bang for your buck, as some like to say!

You have reached your destination

Only you will know what your destination is, based on the work that you did at the start of the book.

Have you reached it?

Have you at least started out on the journey?



I joked that you could think of this book as the 'sat nav' for your journey for change.

Well these days I use a satellite navigation system in my own car. Not all of the time though since it is not built into the old Saab that I drive but has to be stuck on the windscreen and connected to the power from the lighter socket. So '2006' I know, but that's just the way it is.

But it is a comfort and I do enjoy the calm, unruffled and dispassionate advice that she hands out to me by voice and by graphical display.

I say 'she' of course since I have selected the voice of 'Carol'. My wife on the other hand has selected 'Ken' the Australian for some bizarre reason. Each to their own is all I can say.

The old days of map reading and general direction guidance was an instant recipe for marital strife since neither the driver nor the guide could ever agree on the need for information, the speed of supply of this information, the accuracy of the information, or anything really. A simple trip to a new location for a convivial lunch with relatives or the delivery of a small child to

the house of a new friend could escalate the likelihood of divorce proceedings being initiated as easily as match ignites dynamite.

These days it is so much better. ‘Carol’ (let’s assume that I am driving) asks me where I want to go, and when, and then breaks the route down into small steps or stages and off we go. The great thing is that when ‘Carol’ is wrong (I do occasionally obviously know better than her and her satellite friend) and I drive past the turning she politely asked me to take she quietly acknowledges my superior intelligence with the phrase ‘recalculating’ and then gives me the right directions. She can be wrong, but just appreciates the lessons learned and recalculates. I am told that ‘Ken’ does this as well.

Conversely the mere hint that I might not manage to take that sharp left that was announced to me a massive twenty-five metres before the actual turning by my human navigator can result in three weeks of subsequent marital silence.

So it is clear to me that it is the calm and assured leader who gets you from ‘A’ to ‘B’ in the most effective way.

Now, great as my ‘sat nav’ can be it has one huge drawback. If I follow the instructions once to find my ‘B’ then I will most likely not be able to find it a second time through my own devices. I will need ‘Carol’ the second time as well, and the third.

I will need a guide each and every time unless I look up and do it myself at some point.

The real art here is to learn what you need to learn and then make it your own. It is your ‘change’, your ‘journey’, your ‘life’, so take what you need from this book and adapt it all to turn yourself into the ‘winner’ that you want to be, the lazy winner hopefully.

“Following instructions blindly teaches you nothing.”

The ultimate answer

Or just three steps to heaven.

Step one: buy a copy of this book for all of your project team members, sponsors, steering committee members, users and subject matter experts – probably best to buy, say, a hundred to be on the safe side.

Step two: get them to all read it thoroughly, or at least read the chapter on ‘Even quicker tips for the really lazy’.

Step three: book me as a speaker at the very next opportunity you have and leave the rest to me.

www.thelazyprojectmanager.com

Easy!

Alternatively you could just move to Lazy in Poland.

Lazy	
	
Coat of arms	
	
Coordinates:  50°26'N 19°24'E	
Country	 Poland
Voivodeship	Silesian
County	Zawiercie
Gmina	Łazy
Area	
- Total	8.75 km ² (3.4 sq mi)
Population (2001)	
- Total	7,139
- Density	815.9/km ² (2,113.1/sq mi)
Postal code	42-450
Website	http://www.lazy.pl/

A final thought

There was once a little bird who, though a very nice little bird, was also a very, very lazy little bird.

Every day, when it was time to get up, the other birds had to shout at him again and again before he would finally struggle out of bed. And when there was some job he had to do, he would keep putting it off until there was hardly enough time left to do it. His family and friends kept saying ‘What a lazy bird you are! You can’t just keep leaving everything to the last minute.’

‘Bah! There’s really no problem,’ answered the little bird. ‘I just take a bit longer to get around to doing things, that’s all.’

The birds spent all summer flying and playing, and when the autumn came and they started feeling the cold, they began to prepare for the long journey to a warmer land. But our little bird, lazy as ever, kept putting it off, feeling quite sure that there was plenty of time. Until one day when he woke up and all the other birds were gone.

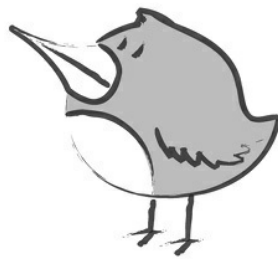
Just like every other day, several of his friends had tried to wake him, but – half asleep – he told them he would get up later. He had gone back to sleep and only woken up again much later. That day was the day of the great journey. Everyone knew the rules: you had to be ready to leave. There were thousands of birds, and they weren’t going to wait around for anyone. So the little bird, who didn’t know how to make the journey alone, realised that, because of his laziness, he would have to spend the long cold winter all on his own.

At the beginning, he spent a lot of time crying, but he had to admit that it was his own fault. He knew he could do things well when he put his mind to it so, putting his laziness aside, he began to prepare for the winter. First, he spent days looking for the place that was best protected from the cold. He found a place between some rocks, and there he made a new nest, well built with branches, stones and leaves. Then, he worked tirelessly to fill the nest with fruits and berries, enough to last the whole winter. Finally, he dug a little pool

in the cave, so he would have enough water. When he saw that his new home was perfectly prepared, he began to train himself on how to get by on very little food and water, so that he would be able to endure the worst snowstorms.

And, although many would not have believed it possible, all these preparations meant that the little bird did survive through the winter. Of course, he suffered greatly, and not a day of that winter went by without him regretting having been such a lazy little bird. When the spring finally arrived, and his old friends returned from their voyage, they were all filled with joy and surprise at seeing that the little bird was still alive. They could hardly believe that such a lazy bird had managed to build such a wonderful nest. And when they realised that not even a bit of laziness remained in his little body, and that he had turned into the most hard-working bird of the flock, everyone agreed that he should be put in charge of organising the great journey the following year.

When that time came, everything was done so well and was so well prepared that they even had time left to invent an early morning wake-up song, so that from that day on no little bird, however lazy, would have to spend the winter alone again.



The little bird had learned from a costly error that working in a productive way was a better path to being ‘lazy’ in the sense that being prepared, being organised, and being focused on what you do leads you to a world of ‘productive laziness’ and indeed a better life.

Do you have time in your life to stop and listen to the birds singing in the trees occasionally?

“If you always do what you always did, you’ll always get what you

always got.” – Anon

One final word of caution

Success is really defined by what you are looking for.

A project manager was out walking in the countryside one day when a frog called out to her. She bent down, picked up the frog and put it in her pocket. The frog called out again, saying ‘If you kiss me I shall turn back into a handsome prince, and I’ll stay with you for a week as your lover.’ The project manager took the frog out of her pocket, smiled at it and put it back in. The frog called out once more. ‘If you kiss me and turn me back into a prince, I’ll stay with you for as long as you wish and do absolutely anything that you want.’ Again the project manager took the frog out of her pocket, smiled at it and put it back. Finally, the frog demanded ‘What’s the matter? You can turn me back into a handsome prince, and I’ll stay with you forever and do anything you want. Why won’t you kiss me?’ to which the project manager replied, ‘Understand, I’m a project manager. I simply don’t have time for a boyfriend, but a talking frog ... that’s cool.’

(Of course, not all project managers are female, as I can personally attest, so just reverse the sexes, or not, to suit your own personal point of view

or taste.)

And the moral of the story is: if you decide to not become productively lazy – and that is entirely your choice – then you will probably still think a talking frog is cool. And you won’t have a need for a nice comfy chair, since you will be far too busy.

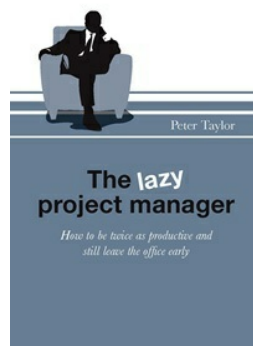
“Find yourself a nice comfy chair, read this book and then take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things in a productive lazy way.” – The Lazy Project Manager, 2009



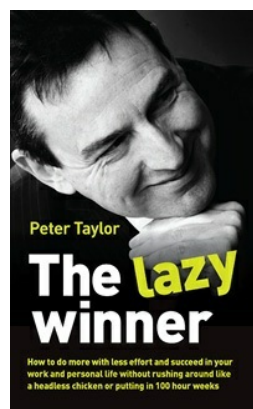
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This ebook was extracted from Peter Taylor's two bestselling books *The Lazy Project Manager* and *The Lazy Winner*. Both are available NOW on Kindle so why not download them today?

[Download The Lazy Project Manager for Kindle](#)



Peter Taylor reveals how adopting a more focused approach to life, projects and work can make you twice as productive. Anyone can apply the simple techniques of lazy project management to their own activities in order to work more effectively and improve their work–life balance. By concentrating your project management and learning to exercise effort where it really matters, you can learn to work smarter. Welcome to the home of ‘productive laziness’.



[Download The Lazy Winner for Kindle](#)

Have you got what it takes to be too lazy to fail? The lazy winner builds on the concept of 'productive laziness', developed in Peter Taylor's bestselling The lazy project manager, which encourages people to apply more thought before leaping into action and throwing effort at a problem or task. Here Peter applies his 'lazy' concept to solving the work-life balance conundrum with concise, practical advice, laced with humour, on how to achieve more with less.

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