



# Chapter 6

## Doer-Thinker

Ever known someone who seems to think or talk endlessly about doing things without ever actually doing them? As a doer in many situations I find this frustrating. My wife will talk endlessly about a home improvement, but rarely jump into action. I eventually get tired of listening to her talk and just do it. Then, of course, she starts talking about a different improvement. Sometimes she'll mention something she wants me to do before the end of the day and I'll start doing it. Surprised at my action she'll say, "you don't have to do it right now." On the other hand, I thought about this book for several years before I nudged myself into action.





# Doer–Thinker

*Things do not get better  
by being left alone.*  
-Winston Churchill

## **Active–Passive**

**Active** people don't have any trouble getting right into it. So, "just do it."

**Passive** people keep waiting for a stimulus. Ask yourself: "Haven't I waited long enough? Or am I just going to keep putting it off? What will it cost me if I wait?" In the Peanuts cartoon strip, Charlie Brown still hasn't spoken to the little red-haired girl, and it's been decades.



In some situations a person can be an active doer and in others the same person can ponder, think, discuss, and consider taking action for a long time. My wife's grandmother came across America in a covered wagon. From the time she retired at the age of 65 until her death in her 90s she talked about writing a book about her experiences as a young girl on a wagon train—stories her family would have cherished.

So this motivation program will determine if you jump into action or if you need some prodding to take action. This motivation program has been described as active-passive or proactive-reactive.

If someone asks you: "What do you want in a job? do you answer: "I want to be able set my own objectives and schedules." or do you answer: "I want my boss to tell me what is required and I'll get it done." Are you a "self-starter" or a "kick-starter"?

## **Business Applications**

In the workplace, there are jobs that call for either active and passive motivations. A salesperson has to be active to make sales calls. A passive-orientation might be ideal for processing incoming calls, correspondence, or orders—the arrival of an order triggers the processing of it. Just as a passive person might be miserable in sales, an active person might be bored processing orders.

In a business relationship, do you think that actives and passives understand each other? Probably not. Which one tends to get more rewards and recognition? Which one feels undervalued? But consider that a salesperson probably couldn't survive without the people who process

# Questions & Answers

- Ask:** What do you want in a job?  
Tell me about a time when  
you really got things done.
- Listen:** doing (active)  
reacting (passive)

## Motivating Language

Active (20%)	Passive (20%)
Just do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Haven't you waited long enough?</li><li>• Consider, then do it.</li></ul>

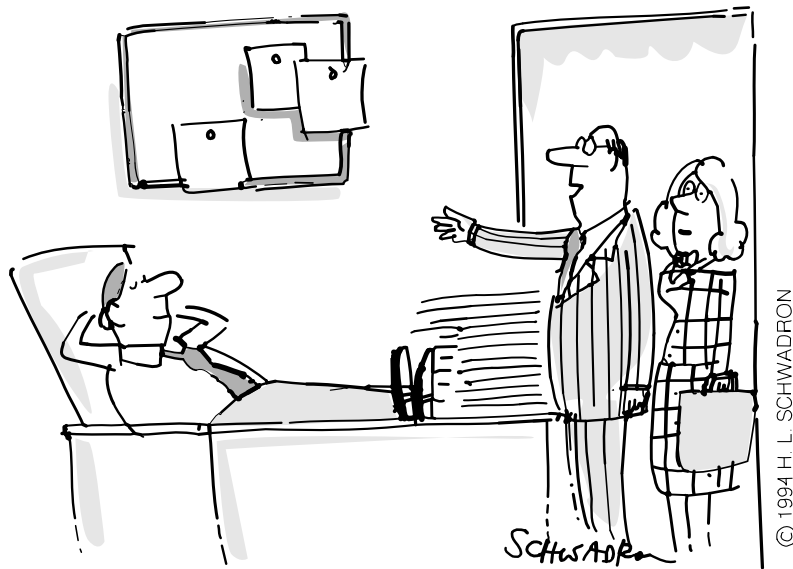
the sales orders and deliver the goods. Success in most endeavors involves using all of the motivation styles to optimize the outcome.

If someone asked you: "What do you want in a personal relationship?" Would you reply: "I want someone who's willing to go after everything we want in life." or do you reply: "I want a relationship where I can fully support whatever it is we decide to do." This motivation style can have profound affects on a couple's experience.

20 percent of people will be active *doers* in any given situation; 20 percent will be passive thinkers; and 60% will do some of both: thinking then acting. For the majority in the middle this is often their strategy: consider, then act. For example, I like to research major purchases before I buy. I'll read Consumer Reports or internet reviews before I take action. But once I decide, the action follows almost immediately. I don't have to have anyone nudge me into action.

Unlike the other motivation programs, there aren't any ideal questions you can ask that will determine where someone is active or passive. The real test is in their behavior. Do they "just do it" or do they have to "think about it" and finally be "told to do it?" In your own life, think about the things you jump into doing without a lot of thought. Now consider the things you tend to analyze, study, and ponder before taking action. It might be investing for retirement or writing a book. Most people have certain aspects of their life that make them hesitate, but haven't you waited long enough to start taking some action in these areas of your life, or are you going to wait until it's too late?

# Passive



*“We used to call Ferguson ‘lazy’ --  
but now it’s ‘motivationally impaired.’”*

**Active** language involves statements of what is going to be done. Active people might say: "Consider it done." "Let's make it happen." To motivate an active person is easy, say: "Here's what's needed...how soon can you have it done?"

**Passive** language involves questions about what to do and how to do it. Passives might ask: "What do you want me to do?" To motivate a passive, say:

"Haven't you waited long enough to start this project?"

"What will it cost you if you wait any longer?"

"Are you fed up enough to want to do something about this or do you want to wait until it gets even worse?"

"You're tired of waiting, aren't you?"

Doers don't take much encouragement to get them going, but passives often do. So haven't you waited long enough to start helping the thinkers in your life accomplish their dreams. Don't think about the remorse they will feel later in life having wasted all those precious years thinking, when they could have been doing something to achieve their goals.

## Marketing

Marketing to *active* people isn't that hard. If they're *internal* you give them information and ask them to act. If they're *external*, you show how they'll be joining an elite group supported by experts in the field.

Marketing to *passive* people requires a little more attention. Use phrases like "for a limited time only" to compel them to stop thinking and start doing. Limit the number of classroom seats or products available to create a sense of *scarcity* that will trigger action. "After all,

haven't you waited long enough to own your own home, car, stereo, cell phone?"

## Teams

Teams can get into trouble if they don't have any active doers on the team. Compare an effective team with another that wasn't. What was the difference? In some teams, conflict among various motivation programs will stop a team, but in other teams, there isn't an active leader. I worked with one reengineering team that did a beautiful redesign, but couldn't get started on the actual business change. I suggested to the VP to get an active, procedural doer to lead the implementation and the project took off.

## Hiring

Everyone seems to want to hire *active* go-getters, but aren't there positions which require a *reactive* or *passive* strategy? Answering the phone, customer care, repair, and maintenance are just a few of the jobs that are triggered into action by an external force. Match the right people to the right job and you'll have a highly productive workforce.

## Personal

Take a moment to examine your own life. In what areas of your life are you *active*? You know, where you get things done easily and quickly.

Now in what areas are you more *passive* or *reactive*? Simply recognizing these areas is the first step to becoming more resourceful. Set time limits for taking action on these delayed projects. Consider what you'll lose if you don't start taking action now. You've waited long enough; isn't it time to get started now?