

Are you stuck in a rut?



Wayne - ESP

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Quote of the month

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Success is not doing extraordinary things. It's doing ordinary things consistently.

—
JEFF OLSON

GRACIOUSQUOTES.COM

Remember that September feeling? The crisp excitement of fresh notebooks, the promise of new beginnings, that unmistakable buzz of possibility?

It's a few weeks since schools went back, since many of us embraced our own version of "back to business" season. But if you're anything like most people, that initial spark might already be dimming.

The honeymoon period is over. What began as renewed focus and fresh routines might already be feeling... well, routine.

And there's a world of difference between productive routine and being stuck in a rut.

Three weeks is exactly when the novelty wears off, and real patterns begin to solidify. It's when we discover whether our September

reset has created a rhythm that serves us, or whether we've already slipped back into old habits dressed up as new ones.

Ask yourself honestly:

Are you still excited about those projects you prioritised?

Have your streamlined systems already become cluttered again?

Are you showing up with the same energy you had three weeks ago?

If the answer is no, you're not alone. And more importantly, you're not stuck.

A routine should energise you, creating structure that supports your goals. A rut is routine without purpose — going through motions because that's what you did yesterday.

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Are you already stuck in a rut?

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The warning signs are subtle: tasks that used to feel purposeful now feel mechanical; you're saying yes to things that don't align with your September intentions; you catch yourself thinking "this is just how things are" rather than "this is how I've chosen things to be."

Now is perfect for course correction. You've had enough time to test your new systems, but not so much that bad habits have become entrenched.

Think of it as a mid-term evaluation. What's energising you? Double down on these elements.

What's draining you? These are early warning signals — pay attention before they become bigger problems.

What have you already forgotten from your September intentions?

You don't need to tear everything down. Often, the difference between a rut and rhythm is surprisingly small.

Maybe it's changing when you tackle important work, swapping one meeting for a more energising alternative, or approaching familiar tasks with fresh curiosity.

The goal isn't perfection — it's momentum. It's ensuring your

September reset continues serving you, rather than becoming another autopilot habit.

As you head to the end of September, carry that same spirit of possibility you felt four weeks ago.

The children who walked into new classrooms are still discovering, adjusting, learning what works. Your business deserves the same flexibility.

What one thing will you do differently this week to break out of autopilot?

How will you ensure your routine serves your growth rather than limiting it?

After all, the real magic isn't in the fresh start — it's in having the courage to keep starting fresh, again and again.

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"I'd love to try that new idea, but I just don't have the time." If I had a pound for every time I've heard this from business owners, I'd be writing this from my yacht. The truth is, we all have the same 24 hours—but some of us have cracked the code on multiplying our capacity.

Let me share something that might sound counterintuitive: one of the best ways to create more time in your business is to give some of it away.

The fresh eyes advantage

Remember work experience? That nervous teenager who shadowed you for a week, asking questions that made you realize you'd been doing things on autopilot for years? Well, those fresh eyes are more valuable than you think—and now they come with actual skills.

T-level students aren't the work experience kids of old. These are young adults studying business, digital, or technical subjects who need real-world experience as part of their qualification. They're motivated, they're learning cutting-edge techniques, and they're hungry to prove themselves.

Why 1-2 days a week works

Here's the brilliant part: you don't need a full-time intern getting in the

The work experience solution

way. One or two days a week gives you enough support to make a real difference without the complexity of managing someone daily.

Those new ideas you've been wanting to explore? Perfect projects for a T-level student. They get hands-on experience, you get someone dedicated to moving things forward while you focus on revenue-generating activities.

I've seen business owners use T-level students for social media research, competitor analysis, basic content creation, process documentation, and even simple web development. Tasks that were sitting in your "someday" pile suddenly have someone excited to tackle them.



The learning goes both ways

What surprised me most when I first worked with students was how much I learned from them. They see your business with completely fresh eyes. They ask "why do you do it that way?" about processes you haven't questioned in years. Sometimes their suggestions are revolutionary, sometimes they're naive—but they always make you think.

Plus, they're digital natives. While you're struggling with the latest social media platform or wondering about new technology, they're showing you shortcuts you never knew existed.

Making it work practically

The key is having the right projects ready. Don't expect them to jump into your most complex client work, but don't give them just filing either. The sweet spot is projects that are important but not urgent—the ones that would move your business forward if you could find the time.

Create a list now: What would you tackle if you had an extra day or two each week? Market research for that new service? Finally organising your content strategy? Building that resource you've been meaning to create?

The time investment that pays back

Yes, there's some upfront time investment in training and guidance. But compare a few hours of setup to months of those projects sitting undone on your to-do list. The math is compelling.

And here's the bonus: many of these students are looking for permanent opportunities after they qualify. You might just find your next team member while solving your current time crunch.

Your next step

If this sounds interesting, reach out to your local college or sixth form. Most have business partnership coordinators who can match you with the right students. You're not just gaining time—you're investing in the next generation while they invest their energy in your business.

That new idea you've been putting off? It might just need a fresh pair of hands to make it happen.

Your Autumn shopping list

You know that feeling when you see kids heading back to school with their crisp new uniforms, shiny shoes, and bags full of fresh supplies? There's something infectious about that "new year, new me" energy. And if you're smart about it, the Autumn can be your business's most strategic spending season.

While everyone else is winding down from summer, savvy business owners are gearing up. This is investment season—the time to put money into your business before the Christmas rush hits and that crucial final quarter begins.

I remember watching a client struggle through December a few years ago. Great sales, overwhelming demand, but their systems couldn't cope. They were manually

processing orders that should have been automated, working 16-hour days to fulfill what better equipment could have handled in half the time. "I wish I'd invested in September," they told me. "I could have enjoyed my success instead of drowning in it."

That conversation changed how I think about Autumn spending. It's not just about buying things—it's about buying freedom.

The investment mindset

Here's what I've learned from years of watching businesses thrive (and struggle): the companies that finish the year strong are the ones that plan their investment. Not just sticking to the start of the year, in January when everyone else is making resolutions, but right now when there's still time to see returns before the holidays.

Think about it. If you invest in new equipment, systems, or team members now, you've got three full months to see the payoff during your busiest season. Wait until January, and you're playing catch-up all year.

The psychology is important too. When you invest in your business in September, you're making a statement of confidence. You're

saying "I expect to be busy, and I'm preparing for success." That mindset shift alone changes how you approach the final quarter.

Your business "Back to School" list

Just like those students need new kit for the year ahead, your business might need some fresh equipment too. Here's how to think about spending strategically:

Essential upgrades first. Is your laptop slowing you down? Is your software outdated? These aren't luxuries — they're productivity investments. I worked with a designer who was losing 20 minutes every day to a sluggish computer. A new machine cost £1,500 but saved him 120 hours over the final quarter. That's £12.50 per hour for significantly less stress.

Christmas preparation. If you're in retail or any seasonal business, early spending is crucial. Stock, additional staffing, upgraded systems to handle increased volume — these investments pay for themselves during peak season. But even service businesses need to prepare. Can your booking system handle increased inquiries? Will your email platform cope with holiday campaigns?



Your Autumn shopping list

Team expansion. If you've been thinking about hiring help, Autumn gives new team members time to get up to speed before the Christmas rush. Whether it's a part-time assistant, a virtual PA, or specialist support, they need weeks not days to become genuinely helpful.

The final quarter advantage

I see too many business owners treat Q4 like something that happens to them rather than something they prepare for. But here's the thing: your competitors are probably doing exactly that. They're hoping for the best instead of investing for success.

When you spend strategically now, you're not just buying things—you're buying capacity. The ability to handle more clients, process more orders, deliver better service when everyone else is scrambling.

Here's a question that separates strategic thinkers from reactive ones: "What would I need if I had 50% more business tomorrow?" Your answer is your Autumn shopping list.

Smart spending vs. panic buying

There's a difference between strategic investment and impulse

purchases. Before you buy anything, ask: "Will this make me money or save me significant time in the next 90 days?" If the answer is yes or probably, it's likely a good investment. If it's "maybe someday," save your money.

The businesses I see succeed are the ones that spend with intention. They invest now because they've planned for Q4 success, not because they're trying to solve yesterday's problems.

I also recommend the "Christmas test"—would you rather have this expense spread across your best months, or deal with the problem during your busiest period? Usually, spending now wins.

The ROI reality

Let's talk numbers. If you spend £2,000 on business improvements now and they help you handle just 20% more business during Q4, what's that worth? For most businesses, significantly more than the initial investment.

But the real return isn't just financial—it's freedom. Freedom from stress, from working ridiculous hours, from watching opportunities slip away because you're not equipped to handle them.

Your Autumn investment plan

What's on your business shopping list this month? What equipment, training, or support would transform your final quarter?

Start with the biggest frustration—the thing that slows you down most or causes the most stress. Then work through your Christmas capacity needs. Finally, consider what would help you capitalize on opportunities rather than just survive them.

Remember: money spent wisely now is money earned back (with interest) by Christmas. That's the kind of math that creates real money freedom.

Routine without the rut...

A few weeks back in the office after your summer holiday and I bet you're starting to notice patterns. Some feel energizing—like that morning coffee ritual that sets your day up perfectly. Others?

Well, they're starting to feel more like mental quicksand.

Here's the thing about getting back into routine: your mind craves the predictability, but it rebels against the monotony. The trick is knowing the difference and making adjustments before you're stuck.



The mental audit

Your brain is incredibly efficient at creating shortcuts. Once it learns a

pattern, it tries to automate it to save mental energy.

This is brilliant for things like driving to work or making your morning tea. But when it starts automating your creative thinking or problem-solving, you're in trouble.

I call this the "mental audit moment"—that point where you need to consciously examine which routines are serving you and which ones are just... happening to you.

The warning signs are subtle: You find yourself on autopilot more often. Tasks that used to engage you feel mechanical.

You catch yourself going through motions without really thinking about why.

The power of micro-disruptions

The solution isn't to abandon routine altogether—that leads to chaos. Instead, introduce what I call "micro-disruptions."

Small changes that keep your mind engaged without destroying the structure you need.

Take a different route to your first meeting. Try working from a different location once a week. Switch up the order of your morning routine.

Change when you tackle your most challenging work.

These tiny shifts force your brain to stay alert and present instead of sleepwalking through familiar patterns.

The weekly reset ritual

Here's a practice that's transformed how my most successful clients manage their mental energy: the weekly reset ritual.

Every Friday afternoon (or whatever works for your schedule), spend 15 minutes asking three questions:

What energized me this week?

Notice what made you feel engaged and alert. Double down on these elements.

What drained me?

Identify the patterns that left you feeling flat or frustrated. These are your rut warning signs.

What will I change next week?

Routine without the rut...



The goal is to give your brain something novel to process while maintaining your productive routines.

Protecting your mental space

Here's what I've noticed: the business owners who stay mentally sharp are ruthless about protecting their thinking space.

What one small change will you make this week to keep your mind engaged?

How will you ensure your routine supports your thinking rather than replacing it?

Remember: the goal isn't to eliminate routine—it's to make sure your routine serves you, not the other way around.

Your mind deserves better than being stuck on repeat

Pick one small adjustment—just one—to keep things fresh.

This isn't about constant change for change's sake. It's about conscious choice instead of unconscious drift.

The fresh challenge practice

Your mind needs something new to chew on regularly. Not huge projects that overwhelm you, but fresh challenges that create just enough mental friction to keep you sharp.

This could be learning a new skill relevant to your business, tackling a problem from a completely different angle, or even just reading something outside your usual field.

They don't fill every moment with input. They create buffer time between tasks. They're comfortable with moments of quiet.

Your mind needs processing time, not just input time.

If you're constantly consuming—emails, podcasts, social media, meetings—you never give your brain space to do its best work.

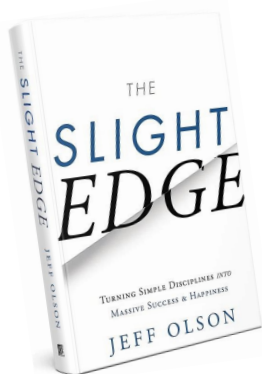
The routine refresh

As you head deeper into autumn, resist the urge to lock down your routine completely. Yes, structure is important. But so is mental flexibility.



Sharpening the saw...

Why **"The Slight Edge"** should be your next business read



I'll be honest—when I first picked up Jeff Olson's "The Slight Edge," I was sceptical. Another business book promising simple solutions? But sometimes the most powerful ideas are also the most obvious ones we've been overlooking.

The premise is deceptively simple: small, seemingly insignificant actions, repeated consistently over time, create extraordinary results.

It's not about dramatic transformations or overnight success—it's about the compound effect of doing just a little bit more (or less) each day.

What I love about this book is how practical it is. Olson doesn't overwhelm you with complex strategies or unrealistic goals. Instead, he focuses on what he calls "simple disciplines"—things like reading 10 pages a day, making one extra sales call, or choosing the salad over chips. Easy to do, but equally easy not to do.

The real genius is in how he explains why most people fail. It's not because they don't know what to do—it's because the results aren't immediately visible.

We expect instant gratification, but success often looks boring in the moment. Those daily disciplines don't feel significant when you're doing them, but they're everything over the long haul.

For business owners, this hits differently. We're constantly looking for the next big breakthrough, the game-changing strategy, the perfect system.

But Olson argues that success is

actually found in the mundane—the consistent follow-ups, the daily learning, the small improvements that compound over months and years.

The writing style is conversational and encouraging, never preachy. Olson shares plenty of personal stories and examples that make the concepts stick. You'll find yourself nodding along, recognizing your own patterns and behaviours.

If you're feeling stuck in a rut or overwhelmed by big goals, "The Slight Edge" offers a refreshingly manageable approach.

It's not about doing everything perfectly—it's about doing simple things consistently and trusting the process.

At just over 200 pages, it's an easy weekend read. But the ideas will shift how you think about progress, both in business and life. Sometimes the most profound changes come from the smallest adjustments.



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wayne@espbiz.co.uk



ESP Business Solutions

87b Westgate, Grantham, NG31 6LE
01476 862172 sayhello@espbiz.co.uk
espbiz.co.uk