

What is Thirty Days Project?

Thirty Days Project is a practical way to fight Option Paralysis.

Creative people often have the luxury of being able to do anything but just as often end up doing nothing. Thirty Days Project is thirty deadlines; finish a piece of creative work by the end of each day.

Tasks expand to fill the time allotted to them, and this is especially true of the tasks of every-day life. For too many of us minor necessities expand to fill the hours of the day at the expense of creative endeavours.

Creativity, however, often responds well to a little external pressure. More precisely, the pressure of a deadline “encourages” decisions to be made which in turn allow creativity to flow unimpeded.

Thirty Days turns on the pressure with thirty daily deadlines. Each deadline forces the artist to choose a subject, an approach and a tool and create something by the end of the day.

By establishing deadlines, even artificial ones, the act of creation is given a higher priority in the hierarchy of everyday activities. Re-prioritizing daily tasks is often difficult at first, but becomes easier over the Thirty Days. The aim is to get something made by the end of the day. It may not be your best work, but it will give you experience with re-organizing your life to make creating art a priority. Something you are accustomed to doing may end up being squeezed out in order to make room for your creative work. This may be for the better.

Some people will not understand the need for this kind of project. To those who can and do create every day we tip our hat. You have our respect. We desire to be more like you and this is a way to accomplish that.

Others will recognize in this their own frustrations and see Thirty Days as an opportunity to work around them.

If you have ever wanted to make changes we encourage you to try Thirty Days. You may end up with thirty new pieces from which to expand, or even enough for a show, an album or a book of poetry. At the very least it will have you organizing your time in order to create. Whatever the cost of making art every day may be, you will know it by the end of the Thirty Days.

How it works:

You create something before the end of the day every day for thirty days.

What you could do:

- Complete thirty software tutorials.
- Record thirty pieces of music in various genres.
- Photograph subjects that have always intimidated you.
- Record thirty monologues.
- Write thirty poems from a new point of view.
- Draw thirty versions of the same object.
- Write thirty short stories.
- Sculpt thirty maquettes.
- Copy thirty pen drawings from the Masters.
- Animate thirty walk-cycles.
- Thirty comic strips.
- Develop abandoned ideas from old sketchbooks.
- Experiment in a style the interests you.

Who started Thirty Days Project? When?

Aya Ikeda-Barry, Keith Ikeda-Barry and Tim Gerwing.
The first Thirty Days Project was in April 2005. It was just the three original members. There was no website or showing of work.

What are the origins of Thirty Days Project?

Tim is a musician who earns his living mostly from programming and creating websites. Aya and Keith are visual artists who have a small business creating content for the film industry and other clients. Each of them has classical training in their fields and looks for opportunities to innovate and extend their abilities.

They often meet up for an afternoon coffee, discussing work projects and challenges. One conversation centred on how creative work takes long periods of uninterrupted concentration and the demands of daily life tend to “fragment” the day, resulting in reduced opportunities for personal creative work. Many creative people will recognize this frustration.

Unless you are paid to use your creativity, work, personal commitments and the demands of daily life usually take precedent over creative endeavours. Bills and deadlines are powerful motivators for action; they make a kind of structure that organizes effort and time.

Seeing the benefit of this kind of structure, the three friends eventually came upon the idea to apply contract-like deadlines to their own personal work for a limited time. They tried an experiment: start and finish one new piece of work each day for thirty days in a row. The results were better than they had expected.

It turns out that even an arbitrary, artificial deadline can be compelling; no one in the group wanted to "let down" either themselves or the other members by missing a daily deadline.

They had discovered a method for increasing creative output in an otherwise busy life. The deadline is a crystallizing force, pushing the desire to create out of the realm of thought and into action.

What were the results of that first experiment?

It worked so well that they decided to take the project on-line. They made a simple website and invited creative people around the world to join in and post their work each day for thirty days in June 2006. The results were amazing. Participants from the UK, Japan, Australia and across North America created music, short stories, sculpture, comics, photography, drawings, paintings, multi-media pieces and videos, sharing the daily work on the website.

Some participants collected their work into shows, published books and CDs, and sold their work on their personal websites. The Thirty Days Team organized a group show in Vancouver to enthusiastic response from the public; a sign-up sheet for people to be included in the next Thirty Days Project ran to six pages of e-mail addresses.

In June 2010, the team adapted the Thirty Days Project to a blog format, with participants registered as Authors. This year's Thirty Days Project in June 2011 will be the seventh iteration, and membership continues to grow.

Thirty Days Project Team

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To register for Thirty Days Project:

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