



The Deliberate Creative Podcast with Amy Climer Transcript for Episode #086: How to Implement Ideas with Steve Garguilo January 25, 2018

Amy Climer: Welcome to The Deliberate Creative Podcast Episode 86. Today's episode is all about taking ideas and moving into action, to making those ideas happen. It is about implementation. Those of you who are regular listeners you know about the Creative Problem Solving Process; the four stages to help you be more creative, and that last stage is implementation. This episode is all about helping you move into that last stage and actually making that idea happen.

I think, I can say with confidence that every person I have ever met has had an idea that they have not actually taken action on. They may have taken action on a lot of other ideas, but nearly everybody has something that they want to do that they have not done yet and they have not made forward progress with.

Today's guest is Steve Garguilo and he is going to explain what do you do if you have this idea and you have been sitting on it for weeks, months, years, decades even, how to move forward and take action. Steve has written the book [Surge: Your Guide to Put Any Idea Into Action](#). I highly recommend the [book](#). It is a short quick read, but super valuable.

There are two things in particular that I found valuable in the [book](#). The first is there are numerous short little stories, like paragraph-long stories of people who had an idea, they took action and then cool things happened. Some of the ideas were kind of silly, some of them were serious, some of them had a big impact on other people, some of them had a small impact but still a positive impact. Those stories are a great inspiration. If you are looking for an inspiration, it is a good source.

The second thing that is so valuable about the [book](#) is that it has a step-by-step process, a blueprint on how to take your idea from just an idea and move forward with it. He talks about some of the things that get in the way and then the steps you need to take. In this conversation

1



with Steve, we will go through some of that. I think one of the best things you could do is probably buy the [book](#) and get started after you listen to this interview.

All right, here is Steve Garguilo. Steve, Welcome to The Deliberate Creative podcast. Thank you for being on the show.

Steve Garguilo: Excited to be here!

Amy Climer: Can you start off and tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Steve Garguilo: My name is Steve Garguilo and I have a company called Action Surge. What Action Surge is focused on is all about helping people take their ideas into action. I have spent a lot of my career working with people in either presenting ideas or generating ideas. I have done a lot of work with TED Talks or in design thinking, a lot of that kind of stuff, but I feel like the next step is the hardest part for people, which is they now have some great idea, they have an idea they are passionate about, how do they actually make it happen. And so that is the focus.

Amy Climer: I find that all the time, that same challenge, within myself and with clients that I am working with. Like they want to be more creative, but they are not moving forward with it.

Steve Garguilo: Absolutely. The struggle is real, as they say.

Amy Climer: Yeah, exactly. I am curious why is taking action so important. Why is it important for people to do that and also why has this become your thing?

Why Taking Action is Important [04:12]

Steve Garguilo: If we did not take action, what would we have really? Of course, action is important. I think one of the things that we often struggle with when we think about action is how do we create a bias towards action. How do we make sure that we are taking more action in our lives? Because ultimately, we take action on things eventually, but I think where we struggle is recognizing that we could be taking more action right away, and that we could either not be procrastinating or that we could be taking more deliberate, better action on things to really put in motion the ideas and the kinds of things that we want to do in our lives.



There are a couple key things that I think are challenges when it comes to taking action and one of the biggest ones is when we have an idea that we are really passionate about, when it is something that, “Oh gosh, this is such a good idea. This is going to have a big impact. It’s going to be great either for my life or my clients,” or whatever it is, we want to make sure that we take the right actions. So instead of taking action right away, we spend a lot of time “thinking” or putting off taking action until we think about the right actions. We will say to ourselves, “I need to set aside a day where I can bang that out. I need a day in a perfect sound mind, with the perfect energy, with perfect whatever where I am going to figure out what to do for that idea,” but that day never comes. A week passes, a month passes and we still do not make progress on things. It is really important to think what are the things I can do right away.

Another big challenge, actually, is that we often think that we ourselves need to be the people coming up with actions for our ideas when the reality is it is actually way easier for other people to come up with actions for our ideas. How many times when someone comes to you with an idea is it super easy to be like, “Well, you could do this, you could do this. Have you tried this? Have you tried this?” We naturally want to help people come up with actions for their ideas, but we struggle with doing it for our own because of the curse of knowledge and we are too close and we have tried other things, we want to make sure we get the right thing, whatever. So that is another big challenge as well.

And then, of course, it is the importance of specificity, which is that if we come up with things that sound really hard, it is going to be really hard for us to take action on them. But everything in life that is hard is just a series of things that are easier. It is a matter of us coming up with those easy small things so that we can start taking action on them and create the momentum to make stuff happen.

Those are some of the key things, I think, that are a real challenge for people and if you, the listener, see yourself in any of those, you are not alone. There is definitely something that you can do about it.

Amy Climer: Nice. Yeah, I definitely see myself in those things, for sure. I feel like I am pretty action oriented, but still, even if you are someone like me, I feel like I implement pretty well but I still get stuck. In your book, [Surge](#), one of the things that you talk about as far as getting stuck is you talk about procrastination. I think it is something that plagues most of us at some point,



but you talk about productive and unproductive procrastination. I wonder if you can go into more depth on those differences and how to know which are we doing.

The Difference Between Productive and Unproductive Procrastination [07:40]

Steve Garguilo: It is interesting, in some languages, there are actually two words for procrastination. In English, we just have one so it is a little bit more of an abstract concept to understand. There is the procrastination that is the traditional definition that we all think about which is this; I know what I need to do and I am not doing anything about it. I am putting it off. I am deciding, instead, to clean the fridge or walk the dog or whatever it is.

Amy Climer: Right, something usually not that important.

Steve Garguilo: Exactly. Then there is this procrastination of this idea of like I actually do not know what I need to do yet and I am letting it kind of simmer back there in my subconscious. I am allowing for that slow burn to happen and hoping that two synapses might fire together that have not fired together before that might give me an inkling of what I need to do. And that is not a bad thing. I think, what happens, though, is we can often trick ourselves into thinking it is the latter when it is actually the former. We trick ourselves into thinking I need to keep thinking about this, I need to let this continue percolating, but the reality is, no, we just need to start doing it.

One of the examples that I use is like you could have on your calendar for six months that I need to write a business plan for this, I need to write a business plan for this, and you keep putting it off, putting it off, putting it off because it seems really hard. But when you finally break it down to like; Google business plan, read the first ten articles, pick a template, fill out the first section of the template, which is what you would do, anyway, when you finally kick yourself in the butt enough to do it, it is like, "Oh, if I had just like broken this down at the beginning, I could have done this six months ago instead of waiting on it."

I think, that is the key which is at any moment when you feel that sense of like I think I want to procrastinate or I do not know what to do right now, think about what is that big step that you are building up in your head and how can you just break it down right away to do something with it. Because as soon as you do that, then you can get on a roll.



Amy Climer: Do you feel like, as far as figuring out if you are engaged in productive or unproductive procrastination, is that what you need to do to figure out which you are doing, like okay, what is my first step?

Steve Garguilo: Yeah. I think, one, if you already are conscious of the fact that you are procrastinating, that is great. That is a really great first step, which is that self awareness to say like, “Uh, I’m procrastinating on this.” So then, yes. I think, diagnosing why am I procrastinating on this? Because this seems really hard or because I need this piece of information or whatever it is. It’s like okay, then go get that piece of information or go do X. What is the step you can take that will progress the idea? That is the most important thing. What is a step I can take right now that will progress the idea? It might not be the big action that I have in mind, but it might be something that starts to get me towards that. Versus, “Oh, it’s complicated. I’m going to go think about something else right now,” and then you do not make any progress on it. And that is the real struggle.

Amy Climer: Yeah, and I think people get stuck there a lot.

Steve Garguilo: Yeah, because we want it to be right. We love our ideas and we want to do them justice and so I totally get it. But it is definitely about thinking what can I do right now to progress this. A lot of times, that can be as simple as getting data on something. And that might be throwing up a poll to your Facebook friends or putting something out on Twitter. If I am unsure about something, how can I collect some data on this that would allow me to then make a better decision? Whatever it is, just do something so that you are not in that state of inertia, which is just a dangerous place to be.

Amy Climer: Absolutely. One thing I love in your [book](#) is you created this Action Surge Blueprint to just lay it all out. Like you want to take action, here are the steps. I think there were maybe ten steps?

Steve Garguilo: What good process does not have ten steps?

Amy Climer: That is right. It is perfect, you know.

Steve Garguilo: Exactly.



Amy Climer: I am wondering if you can just walk through that process, quickly explain those ten steps and then maybe we can dig into a couple of them.

How to Take Action on Your Ideas [11:53]

Steve Garguilo: The ten steps, basically, go across three main themes. The first is about just making sure an idea is clear. Let me preface this by saying what we have designed is, actually, a collaborative process. We have a couple of different versions now of the Action Surge Blueprint, including, one that people can do by themselves. But what we found is that, actually, one of the keys to being able to take massive amounts of action is engaging other people. And actually, being a collaborative process helps things go much, much faster, both from being able to generate diverse action's perspective and also crucially from an accountability perspective and being able to have someone to continue to bounce things off. That is kind of foundational, which is that we think of the Action Surge Blueprint as a collaborative process.

1. Be Clear on the Idea

Across those ten steps, the first phase of steps is all about just being really clear on the idea. Like what is the idea? How specific is the idea in your mind right now? What is the passion driving you towards that idea? Just making sure that you and the people you are working with are super clear on what is that idea and refining down to a clear idea statement to know that everyone knows this is what I am trying to make happen.

2. Action Storming

The next thing is what we call Action Storming. Action Storming is like an action oriented form of brainstorming. In that phase, it is all a matter of thinking what are things that this person can do to progress this idea? What are actions that this person can take to turn her idea into a reality? And that is a lot of the real power of this because you have other people helping action storm for your idea and coming up with things that you might not have thought of.

It is not about making the idea better, it is not about oh, what are other ways to solve the problem, whatever. There are plenty of things that are focused on creativity which are really great tools, but this is about saying once you have that idea, what are specific actions that you can take to make it happen, and then working to make them as specific as humanly possible,



which might mean including a phone number. It might mean doing whatever it is to make it ultra-specific so that no one has an excuse to not make it happen.

3. Action Planning

The third phase of steps is all about the actual action planning. In the first few phases, you are really being expansive and thinking about what are all the possible actions that I could take, then it is really important to say, “Okay, which of these are actions I will take and which of these are actions that I’m going to commit to in a clear schedule?” Where what we found is actually breaking things out into actions that you will take in the next 48 hours, actions that you will take in the next ten days, actions you will take in the next 30 days and then actions beyond that 30 days is really important. And so then everything gets refined into a clear action plan and then an accountability plan, as well, to ensure that it actually happens.

That is basically how the process works. What we found is that it can just be super valuable to give yourself the gift of time to plan out your actions so that you can then do them.

Amy Climer: I love that, the gift of time. So true. Steve, where do you find, within in this process, where do most people get stuck?

Steve Garguilo: Most people get stuck by not ever initiating anything like this process. Because they get stuck in their heads of thinking about, “Oh, I don’t know what I could do, or maybe I could do this or hope I can do that.” The point of any good process is to make it so simple that you do not really get stuck. I would say if anything, maybe some of the biggest challenges come from people who struggle with the accountability to an action plan. Because a lot of us, maybe in some of our own type of way, we might create action plans for ourselves. We might create to-do lists, we might create whatever, but we can struggle often with accountability. And so being really self-aware of what works for you to hold yourself accountable is super important. Because for a lot of people, we will hold ourselves accountable for that damn meeting with that person who requested an hour of our time, we will prep for that, we will make sure that we are ready for that hour on Thursday morning to talk to X person that we do not ever care about, but we will not hold ourselves accountable to our ideas that we are passionate about that we want to see happen. And that is crazy time, but we all do it.

It is a matter of how do you hold your time precious for yourself, how do you hold yourself accountable to do things, and how do you set yourself up so that you make sure that you are

7



actually doing the important things that you want to do and not just the urgent things that come up day-to-day.

Amy Climer: Wow! So true. I am curious just if we can dig in a little bit on a couple of the pieces in the blueprint. A couple of them that really stuck out to me when I was reading it was just the action storming and then the enhancing that action storm of like listing out all the steps and then getting really specific. Not I am going to call Steve tomorrow, but I am going to call Steve tomorrow at 10 am and here is his phone number, and here are the specific things I am going to ask him. Can you go into more depth in those?

Action Storming Step of the Action Surge Blueprint [017:29]

Steve Garguilo: One of my favorite parts about this is in the collaborating setting, one of the things about the Action Surge Blueprint is that it is all about really maximizing energy as well. Because energy is so important for being able to take action on ideas, not just from the standpoint of having enough energy to take action, but also having the right kind of energy to be generating the right kinds of actions and all that kind of stuff. We are very intentional about having really good energy, which means, people are up and active throughout all the beginning parts of the Action Surge Blueprint.

But when we get to the action storm, it is now the first time where, actually, everybody is either sitting or standing in silence generating actions for five minutes. Being in that moment of having all of that energy and now channeling all that energy into your fingertip, into your pen to go as fast as possible generating actions is a really exciting thing to witness. Because it is activating your full brain, coming up with actions and just sitting there with that person's idea in mind generating actions, generating actions, generating actions. There is a lot of power that goes into that.

Action Enhancement Step of the Action Surge Blueprint [18:40]

The enhancement of that action storm is all about just making sure that those actions will actually be realized by making sure they are specific enough and that they are articulated clearly enough. Some of the exercises that we will do are the classic facilitation exercises like, "Raise your hand in the air as high as you possibly can. All right, now raise it a little higher." Inevitably, everybody can raise their hand a little bit higher than they said that they possibly could and it is



like what is that about? And it is like we naturally always hold something back. We are always taught to hold something back.

So do not hold anything back, but also we want to make it as specific and clear as possible so that you can always add that extra little bit. And so just making sure that it is super clear for somebody so no one has the excuse to say, “Well, I didn’t quite understand that or I don’t see that,” whatever, that they can actually make it happen. Yeah, I really like those steps. And that is something that you can do with anyone, anytime. It does not have to be through the Action Surge Blueprint Ten Steps.

I hope what you as a listener can be taking from this is oh gosh, that idea that I am sitting on, that I am not making a lot of progress on, if I just bring one or two other people together right now, whenever, set up some time with a couple of people who I trust, whatever it is, and just chat about, “Here is my idea. What might be other things I can do to take this into action? What might be other things I can do to progress this idea?” They are most definitely going to come up with some things that you have not thought of and they are most definitely going to help you think about what you can do to make that happen. That, already, should be a really big insight, is the importance of enrolling others. That is why I really like those steps.

Amy Climer: That is great. I love it. I am just thinking of a couple of projects that I want to do this year in 2018 and there are things that I would do by myself that do not necessarily require collaboration, but I am already thinking there are two friends who we meet regularly and we talk about our businesses and I want to go talk to them and say, “Hey, what steps would you take? What ideas do you have for how I can take action?”

Steve Garguilo: And people love doing that, right?

Amy Climer: Oh yeah.

Steve Garguilo: You love being asked that question so other people love being asked that question, too.

Amy Climer: It is so true! And like you said before, it is so easy for me to come up with this for someone else and vice versa.



Steve Garguilo: Exactly.

Amy Climer: I am curious about what role do you feel like mindset plays in this whole process of taking action?

The Role Mindset Plays in the Taking Action Process [21:20]

Steve Garguilo: I think it is huge and it can go one of two ways. Because we can have that more limiting mindset for ourselves to say that, “Well, I don’t know what I can actually do right now or I only have this much time or I only have this much talent or I only have this much whatever,” and so it can play that role as a limiter in your ability to take action. But I think more importantly, if we go in with that optimistic mindset and that mindset where we really have the passion for our idea in mind -- that is why it is so important at the outset to know why is this idea important to you? What changes in the world when this idea is realized? Why do you want to see it? Make sure that you start to feel that passion inside of you for like eff yeah, there is a reason I want to see this idea happen, and you let that now fuel your actions, that is the space that you really want to be in.

I think, what can happen is we can be in that excited place when we come up with the idea and then immediately, we just go to that stressed out place when it comes to taking action and that can really work against our ability to make those actions a reality. And so making sure to channel that passion and channel that energy I think is really important.

Amy Climer: Yeah, absolutely. And like you said, looking at why do I care about this and touching back into that why and that purpose to help you get energized. One of the things, Steve, that I like to do on this podcast towards the end is offer listeners a weekly challenge. We have talked about how to take action and some mindset, some things that get in the way. If there is one thing listeners would do this week to apply what they learned, what would you challenge them to do?

Weekly Challenge [23:12]

Steve Garguilo: I would say to you, first off, if you are someone who is listening to this podcast, you have already given yourself so much permission to say I want to be creative, I want to be deliberate, I want to make things happen. You are already on the right track in so many different

10



ways and you already have so many different insights about how to help yourself. So kudos to you. You are amazing!

All you need to do right now is think about what is one really big idea that you have in the back of your head that you know you want to take action on. And it is a really good time for this because it is early in 2018 and so you are probably thinking about those kinds of things. Think right now about what is one thing you want to take action on this year and then just take that and say, "What is something I can do to make progress on that right now?" I know this sounds super simple, but the fact that it is in the back of your head is the problem. You need to bring it back to the front of your head and then bring it back to what are some things that I can do right now to start to take progress on that.

There is a reason that that is the first thing that came to mind because that is the first thing that is important to you. So give that the importance that it deserves to start making some progress on it. Once you start making progress on it, it is much easier to continue making progress on it. And that might mean engaging with others to think about actions. That might mean creating an action plan for yourself. That might mean coming up with an accountability plan for yourself and setting up time or whatever it is that means for you. Those are all advance next level things that you can start to do. But I think, the first thing is think about that one idea you want to take action on and then write out some actions that you can start to take this week and you will be amazed what you can do in a week.

Amy Climer: I love it. Super simple. Really, no excuses not to do it because it is like maybe ten minutes.

Steve Garguilo: Exactly.

Amy Climer: I am going to go do that this afternoon, actually.

Steve Garguilo: Perfect!

Amy Climer: Steve, what can people find you if they want to learn more about you and the work you do?



Steve Garguilo: You can find me on Twitter at [@sdgarguilo](https://twitter.com/sdgarguilo), I am on www.stevegarguilo.com and then Action Surge is all on www.actionsurge.com. I would love to hear what you all think about it.

Amy Climer: Awesome! Thank you. Can you just briefly talk about your [book](#) before we go?

Steve Garguilo: The book is called [Surge: Your Guide to Put Any Idea into Action](#). It is all about the science of action as well as stories of action. The science of action stuff is basically saying that having done all this work in creativity and becoming this idea magnet of people talking to me about their ideas, I became so frustrated about what are the things that actually spark people to act or hold people back from acting. Why do so many things hold people back from acting? We talk about, actually, the science behind that and how you can make sure that you are setting yourself up to have that action bias all the time and to be taking action.

To illustrate that, we have a lot of just honestly, fun and silly stories because I think those are the best in being illustrative. One of my favorite ones is a guy who is at a pool party and he sees a white flamingo pool raft and he is like, "This is really cool. I think it would be cool to have a pink flamingo version of this." None existed at the time. Most people would have left it there, but he decides to Google "China manufacturer". He calls up somebody in China and he is like, "Hey, can you design this raft? I want it to look like this, blah, blah, blah." Six weeks later, it shows up at his house. He has a pool party, everyone loves this thing, so he started www.giantflamingo.com and now makes six figures a year selling pink flamingo pool rafts just because he had that idea and took action on it at that time to say that this would be an interesting thing.

There are dozens and dozens more stories like that that you look at and say, "Gosh, I could have done that," and my response would be, "Great, well you didn't, so now go do yours." That is what we really want to see happen for people who read the [book](#).

Amy Climer: That is awesome. I actually hung out on a pink flamingo pool raft this past summer. I read the story and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I have hung out on this raft! This is so awesome! This is some guy's random idea that he made happen."

Steve Garguilo: Exactly. That is the best.



Amy Climer: Yeah, that is super cool.

Steve Garguilo: And they are a lot of fun.

Amy Climer: They are! Actually, it was funny because there was something about the pink flamingo that just made it a little more fun and silly than if we just had a regular old raft. So there you go. He is making a difference in the world in his small little way.

Steve Garguilo: In his own way, exactly.

Amy Climer: Yeah, that is cool. Steve, thank you so much for being on the show and for sharing your wisdom. I really enjoyed talking with you.

Steve Garguilo: Thanks, Amy, and thank you to all the listeners. Go take action.

Amy Climer: Thank you, Steve. So awesome to have you on The Deliberate Creative podcast. You all, if you have not yet, check out Steve's book, [Surge](#). Really great insights. He has an awesome blueprint in there to help you take action towards your goals and make them happen. We all have ideas in our head, but they are not helping anyone up there. Even if your idea might seem silly, even if it is just making a blow-up raft that looks like a pink flamingo, go do it. You never know. You might really make some people's day and you might make a really good living at the same time. So check that out.

You can find the link to the [book](#) as well as other resources on the show notes page. That link is www.climerconsulting.com/086. Head on over there to find all the show notes. Also, while you are there, check out [Episode 84](#). It is also an episode around goal setting where I was talking about more strategies around taking action towards your ideas. And more importantly, I have some downloads there that you might be interested in. There are some kind of cheat sheets to help you reach your goals that are hand drawn sheets that I made that are kind of fun so you might enjoy those as well. So check that out on Episode 84.

I have a few announcements I want to share with you. The first is that I am so excited to say that The Deliberate Creative Podcast is now part of [C-Suite Radio](#)! As of this week, I am one of the handful of podcasts that are specifically sponsored and supported by [C-Suite Radio](#). If you are not familiar, [C-Suite Radio](#) is a collection of podcasts, specifically for those of you in the C-Suite, so CEOs, COOs, CFOs, et cetera. You can check out The Deliberate Creative Podcast there as well

13



as a bunch of other great shows. The link for that, I will put that in the show notes, and you can also head on over to www.c-suiteradio.com. Head on over there if you want to check that out. I am just really honored and feel so grateful to be part of that network and that group of people. They are doing really great stuff over there.

The second announcement I have is that I am doing two free webinars this week and next week. The first one is today, January 25th at 1:30 pm and it is specifically for summer camp staff, directors and assistant directors, program directors. If you work at a summer camp, then this webinar is for you. It is called Five Training Activities to Engage Camp Staff. I am going to share with you five activities that can help you elevate your camp staff's engagement all summer long. So check that out. It is absolutely free.

I am also doing another webinar for the same audience -- for summer camp staff -- on February 1st at 1:30 pm Eastern Time, and that is called How to Foster Creativity in Your Summer Camp Staff. I strongly believe that summer camps who are highly creative and who are able to foster that creativity, they are going to be more successful. They will be more successful at reaching their goals and creating a strong impact on campus. They are also going to be more financially successful because campers are going to be coming back year after year. To me, it is a no-brainer to help you foster creativity and innovation in your staff because if they do not know how to do that, then they are not going to do it. So come check out that webinar.

You can sign up for either of these webinars at www.climercards.com/events. Head on over there, you can sign up for either of these webinars. If you cannot make the exact time for the webinar, sign up, anyway, and you will get a few replay. Although there will be some things happening only in the live event, but the replay is better than nothing. Head on over there, I hope you can join me, and I hope I can help make your summer camp amazing.

Big shout out and thank you to everyone who has left a review on [iTunes](https://www.apple.com/itunes/). Thank you so much for the feedback and the insights. I love hearing from you. If you have not done that yet, look down at your phone where you are listening to right now and leave a review on that app. Whether it is [iTunes](https://www.apple.com/itunes/) or whatever app you are using, leave a review for the podcast. It means a lot to me and it also helps other people find the show.



You all, thank you so much. I hope that the implementation of your ideas is smooth and amazing and creative and I look forward to hearing all about it. Have a wonderful week. I will see you next time. Bye.