

Monk Mode Changed My Life (Here's How)

The Power Moves | 1 January, 2019 | by Lucio Buffalmano

Monk mode is the deliberate elimination, partial or complete, of social interactions, dating, unhealthy habits, and time-wasting activities with the purpose of focusing solely on a specific self-development goal.

Monk mode empowered my life in ways that I had never thought were possible.

How?

Monk mode allowed me to build a business.

It made me financially independent, it cured my addiction (and dependence) on women, and it gave a deeper meaning to my life.

In this guide, I will explain to you exactly how I did that.

But let's go in order:

Contents

- [Monk Mode: How it All Started](#)
- [My Monk Mode](#)
 - [Work, Work, Work](#)
 - [Productivity Gain](#)
 - [I managed One Post a Day For a Year](#)
 - [Financing, & My Mom Not Wanting Me Back](#)
 - [I Overcame an Addiction](#)
 - [One Big Uptrend With August Jump](#)
 - [Acquired Great Backlinks](#)
 - [Of Course, Not All Was Perfect...](#)
- [Styles of Monk Mode: The Time](#)
- [Styles of Monk Mode: Intensity](#)
- [Monk Mode Necessities](#)
- [Monk Mode Personalities](#)
- [Why Monk Mode Works](#)
- [SUMMARY](#)

Monk Mode: How it All Started

Here is one example of monk mode: as the time of writing, it's the 31st of December.

And no, it's not afternoon, and no, I'm not writing with a drink next to my computer.

It's actually close to midnight, and fireworks are raging in the sky.

Part of me would like to be in the big square, celebrating with my nephew who's visiting town with his friends.

But I don't let my mind wander because I'm working and I have bigger goals.

This is the perfect capping of my monk 2018: a year with little socialization, lots of work, and a turning point in my life for the positive.

The following chapter is how monk mode has worked for me (so far).

Later, I will present you with the general theories on how to effectively enter monk mode if you are inclined to do so.

My Monk Mode

My monk mode was an “85% social monk mode” and a “95%+ wasteful activities monk mode”.

For most of the year I went out only on Wednesdays to a local Toastmasters club where I am the president.

Otherwise, I got groceries delivered at home, ordered take away food, and done the vast majority of my purchases online -of course-.

Exceptions were a small holiday in January, some dates sprinkled here and there, some rare walks outside, and some loose ends I was forced to take care of.

A big change compared to my past life.

As an introvert, I’ve always been comfortable on my own. And I never “needed” socialization much. But since my past life entailed a “normal” office job, more dates and more women, more friends, and more outings, monk mode surely was a revolution in my life.

What have I been doing?

Work, Work, Work

I worked every day.

Including every weekend.

As a matter of fact, I worked every single day of the year.

Just to be clear, in “work” I include reading and researching, which are a big chunk of what drives this website.

Sure, they are pleasurable for me, but so is most of the work I do. Monk mode is not supposed to be painful.

Some evenings I ended the day where I really looked forward to my habitual meditation because I was mentally exhausted, but I felt great.

Productivity Gain

I worked hard in making my time as productive as possible.

I listen to audiobooks while eating, and I started shaving my head with a razor instead of a clipper. How does that make me more productive, you might wonder?

Because I can listen to audiobooks with a razor! That’s how crazy I’ve been in my quest to squeeze productivity from anywhere I can.

I also mostly structure my days around routines. Not every day the *exact* same, but *very* similar.

My cooking is also simplified: it’s both healthy and simple to prepare.

The single biggest productivity hack for me, as simple as that sound, has been online groceries.

Guys, please, do that.

What kind of slob still goes in person to pick damn groceries?

I managed One Post a Day For a Year

When I started this website 2017 I was flabbergasted that some people could do more than 2 or even 3 posts a week.

Are they crazy, I thought?

In the beginning, I was thinking that one a week would have been a good pace to keep.

Well, a lot has changed since then.

In 2018 I published *more* than one post a day.

Now, to be fair, I had a huge advantage because some [book summaries](#) were sitting on my hard drives and some of those posts were everything but labor-intensive.

Some posts were also relatively easy, with “[power quotes](#)” or “[pick up lines \(and why they don’t work\)](#)” being quite easy to prepare. [Lists of the best books](#) were also a piece of cake to prepare.

But still, many of those were also high quality, heavily researched posts. Some are cutting edge stuff not available anywhere else, while some others took topics that are yes common, but provided a deeper analysis that people cannot find anywhere else.

On top of one post a day, I produced high-quality ebooks that review whole swaths of self-development and people’s related skills.

Plus several [YouTube videos](#), email automation, SEO self-training, and website fixes all went on top of that 1 post per day average.

And, of course, [social power](#). The flagship course that fills a niche that no other book, course, or resource in the world comes close to.

Most of the technicalities of running a website I had to learn from scratch, and that too a lot of time.

Plus, some big scares down my spine. Once a plugin crashed the website, and going behind a firewall led to Google de-indexing almost all of the website’s content.

Financing, & My Mom Not Wanting Me Back

With a mortgage coming due every single month, I sure had some major expenses to take care of.

More than once I thought that wanting to pay the mortgage back as quickly as possible when I still had a job was the most stupid financial decision I had ever made.

Still, to be honest, I wasn’t too worried about money.

I can’t go too much into details on this topic, but I had several systems in place to “break the fall”, so to speak.

And I had a “secret weapon” on my pack pocket: my parents.

I had told my parents I was considering spending a few months back, if I needed.

But that didn’t go down too well.

Now I know that I phrased it very badly and made them worry for nothing.

But it was still unfortunate that my mom called me back and said about my plan: “what would people think”.

Rationally, she was right.

Parents are people. And, like anyone else, they have a reputation to uphold. Having a child go back home screams “failure” left and right. I know where I come from, and the neighbors wouldn’t have talked about anything else for months.

But I was still hurt and angry to hear that my mother say that.

As you can imagine, my relationship with my mom is OK, but not the greatest ever.

At times, I also used that anger as motivation to channel into my work, together with all my other dark powers:

[My mother was just the latest person I wanted to prove wrong.](#)

It's the same dark motivation David Goggins shares in "[Can't Hurt Me](#)". Frankly, it's not the healthiest, and potentially very unhealthy if you let it get the best of you. But it gets you going.

I Overcame an Addiction

I used to be more of a slave to my drives, in the past.

Not that now I am *completely* broken free of the chains, but I have taken big steps towards it.

I always loved women.

Not just the sex, but the seduction, the romance, and the [bond and connection](#).

That was the good side of it.

But it was also a darker drive standing behind me.

Not too unlike the "need" of the toxicoman.

I feel that monk mode has moved me towards a much healthier place.

During monk mode, I have dated a few women whom I nexted after the first date. *Even though they were more than good enough for a sexual encounter.* That was a big break from my past. For the first time in my life I didn't feel the need to (try to) fuck them first.

Same for some contact details I took. For the first time in my life, I really didn't care whether we were going to meet or not.

Sometimes, I'd even secretly wish some girl would cancel so I could work more.

That was a *huge* change from my past.

Overall, monk mode made me much more independent -and stronger- at a mental level.

One Big Uptrend With August Jump

Thanks to the hard work I've been putting, this whole year has basically been a big upward trend for the website.

May-July though it was a very, very slow growth.

That got me thinking that I was getting the wrong idea of how quickly I could grow.

But then in August, there was another big jump.

A few things happened in August including Google algorithm updates, some major backlinks, and an SEO overhaul I have done.

It's hard to say which one was, but possibly all of them plus the normal upward trend.

I still failed some goals in the end.

Since I had broken past the first couple rounds of goals I set a much bigger one: 10.000 visitors a day by the end of the year.

And I fell very short of that one.

But to me, Monk Mode, or anything in life, is not necessarily about hitting goals, but about doing your

best. In my case, about working hard and being efficient. And **as long as you're doing your best, you're doing great.**

Goals are only as good as they help you move forward. Whether you hit them or not is almost irrelevant.

Acquired Great Backlinks

The Power Moves has been quoted next to my names on websites such as BBC, NBC, BusinessInsider, INSIDER -that names always cracks me up- and a few good more.

But most of all I loved Psychology Today.

Those guys only usually accept Ph.D. and practicing psychologists -and for a rebellious fuck like me, academia was never going to work for a life job-.

Of Course, Not All Was Perfect...

Of course, there were a few hiccups during the year as well.

Here are a few low points:

- **Moving to Virtual Hosting: A Big Mistake**

The Power Moves moved from shared hosting to a virtual server somewhere in late summer.

I wanted to move to US servers to be closer to the main English-speaking market, and I decided to “kill two birds with one stone” and upgrade my hosting as well.

The second bird was *speed*.

Speed guys! I wanted fast loading.

It wasn't the smartest move though.

Right off the bat, I got bandwidth issues: the website was crashing out of limited resources.

How can you get limited resources when you *upgrade* capacity?

Well, I'll spare you the details, but I can tell you the mindset mistake.

It's the geeky mindset coupled with a boyish attitude.

It was like going back to being a kid, reading cars' magazines, and comparing cars... On maximum speed, acceleration, and weight/power ratio.

My first question as a kid, for every car, was: “how fast does it go”. That was all that mattered.

All about specs and superficial performance.

Fast forward to decades later: now I was salivating at the servers' specs, imagining how much faster the site would load.

Blinded by speed and specs I didn't research well enough. And didn't make a rational decision. The price for hosting shot up of course, but speed barely budged and SEO benefits were close to zero.

Hangs head in shame as he mutters “boys will be boys”.

Lesson learned: now I force myself to decide for what works, not what necessarily what I like.

- **3.000 Users a Day: A Sad Milestone**

I was looking forward to 3.000 visitors a day and have a nice dinner for celebration.

But on the same day the website reached 3.000 I realized that some Airbnb guests had stolen my father's golden medals.

They were medals from his days in the navy. My dad was proud of his time in the navy, and we considered it to be a father-son hand-down memory.

It wasn't a very happy day.

I wept and cried.

I got to think about legacy and all that my father did for me and for the family.

My father kept those medals for 50 years. I got them for a few months only and managed to have some son of a bitch steal them from my own flat. My man cave.

Besides the tears, I raged.

I thought how great it would feel to shoot the mothafucker.

But I had to admit that, ultimately, I wanted to relieve myself from the guilt.

That was another reminder of why I even started The Power Moves in the first place. There is lots of good in this world. But also evil in this world.

And yes, sometimes the line can be blurred. When you let yourself open for exploitation, you will meet far more evil than you need to.

Preparing ourselves for evil makes it possible that we can all enjoy more good.

Stay strong and keep yourself, your families -and your belongings- safe my friends.

Styles of Monk Mode: The Time

Enough with me, back to how you can implement monk mode to advance your self-development and your goals.

There are different ways of going monk:

- **Monk of the hour**

The monk of the hour only allocates a few hours a day to monk mode. This is more akin to "[Deep Work](#)" than to monk mode.

But if you do it consistently and while removing time waste, then it's also, in a way, a mini-monk mode.

- **Monk of the week**

Depending on your work, you could pick weekends for your monk mode. Or the other way around.

I like this approach because if you want to work on social skills you will never completely go off the grid for long stretches of time.

And if you are a more extrovert type of guy, you will still get your fill of socialization and can keep the monk efficiency for as long as you want.

- **Seasonal monk**

I like this variant a lot, and in good part, that's what I did by intensifying my monk mode during winter and relaxing it during spring/summer.

You can pick a few months of the year when you will do monk mode, and then go back to "civilian life" during the rest of the year.

If you live in a cold country for example winter is a perfect period to go monk mode.

Bears and some animals go in hibernation, you go monk mode. No wonder we've become the most

dominant specie in the world :).

- **Intermittent monk**

This is another option I like a lot.

It's similar to what Tim Ferris recommends in [The 4 Hour Workweek](#) where he takes “mini-retirement” every so often.

Work your ass off, achieve some big milestone, and then pull the plug and take it easy for a while. A life of high efficiency and mini-retirements spread all over is an awesome life if you ask me.

A friend of mine did this also while working for a big corporation.

He'd put in a massive amount of time that accrued on his holiday, and he'd deliver such quality work that nobody would dare busting his balls when he eventually took off for months.

- **Forever monk**

For some people and for some lines of work, a forever monk mode might do the trick.

This is not my style though and not something I'd recommend for many types of endeavor.

What's the point of a 100%, forever monk mode if you're not going to enjoy the fruits with some of the people that matter the most to you -or who *will* matter the most-?

Also for most lines of work, it's best to maintain some people contact, which will keep you grounded and will sometimes provide much valuable input.

Monk Mode is about becoming a more powerful being

Styles of Monk Mode: Intensity

A monk can cut out on two different time wastes:

- Cut useless socialization
- Cut daily time waste

A serious monk mode will seek efficiencies in both realms.

A *really* serious monk who wants to go places quickly will ruthlessly cut waste in both areas. Those are what I call “holed in monks”.

But you don't have to go extreme right off the bat.

At a very low level of intensity, a budding monk will seek to cut out smaller activities. For example, you can start cutting out “Friday happy hour” and “Saturday clubbing”.

At very high-level intensities instead, the pro-monk will do the opposite. **The pro-monk starts from a clean slate by removing *everything* that does not directly serve his purpose, and then he will only add non-purpose related activities that are important for his physical health or mental sanity** -monk mode can be taxing, especially for extroverts-.

However, you must be strategic when cutting down, because the tendency is to start off too extreme.

Imagine you want to make your car as fast as possible, and you want to remove all unnecessary parts to cut down on the weight.

Well, you don't want to be that driver who doesn't even enjoy the driving anymore because there is nothing left except for the steering wheel and an extremely uncomfortable driver seat.

Cut down all unnecessary activities, *while still* keeping your sanity *and* a good quality of life.

If you can't manage to go full monk yet, it's OK. You can work your way up to higher levels of monk-dom step by step.

And that will help develop your mental resilience.

As somebody said: you don't become a priest on your first day at church. First, you work your ass off as an altar boy (daaamn that was a cool dark joke, wasn't it).

Monk Mode Necessities

An effective monk mode must have the following to be effective:

- **PURPOSE**

If you are starting a monk mode without a clear purpose, then I would ask you if you are running or shielding from something?

A monk mode must have something you want and need to focus on.

I can be a skill you want to deepen, a (side) project you want to work on, a mental state or confidence level you want to reach, but might even be a posture you want to improve -or all of them together-.

It can also be all together, but it must be clear and *focused*. General self-improvement must be with you for your life and doesn't necessarily need a monk mode.

Ideally, you will make your purpose a *measurable* purpose.

- **PLAN**

Plan in advance what you are eliminating and what you will be doing during that time.

This is especially important if you are trying to overcome small addictions in your life and if you're not used to solo-time.

Once you said no to your games, socializing, drinking or whatever, then they must stay forbidden -unless they're part of your relief valves, more on it later-.

Also, remember this: your plans **cut out what's wasteful, not what you don't like**.

If the two overlap, great, but otherwise you must cut what's useless *depending on your purpose*.

If you're trying to improve social skills, then your monk mode will be monk only relative to your typical friends but you'll go out to meet random events. If your goal is to become a professional videogame player, then, of course, videogames are not a wasteful activity for you.

- **EXERCISES**

If you go on a high-intensity monk mode and you do desk-based work -which will be the case for most of us-, then you won't be moving much if at all.

That's very unhealthy unless you intersperse it with some physical exercise.

I exercise while listening to audiobooks to maximize *all* of my time. You might prefer taking a walk every once in a while, or going all out in the with weights in the gym.

Whatever you do, don't skimp on exercise (and sleep).

- **RELIEF VALVES**

Monk mode, proper monk mode, can be highly taxing.

If you are planning to decompress then you are just chilling and taking a break, so don't call it monk mode because that's *not* monk mode.

In my case, for example, the social relief was the weekly Toastmaster meeting -which also helped my development with public speaking and leadership experience since I was the president-.

And my personal relief valves are small "goal-hitting" celebrations I do in between work when I order food I love and open a nice bottle of wine.

You will be looking forward to these small celebrations and they will make your day.

Some other times I just listen to music while eating and/or dance around instead of the usual audiobook.

These all help me stay a "normal" happy bunny.

Monk mode develops a new superpower: independence

Monk Mode Personalities

Monk mode will work at different levels depending on personalities:

- **Socially anxious: don't let it be your excuse!**

Socially anxious should NOT use monk mode to stay within their comfort zone and avoid the world. It's OK to take a break if they are not being successful. But they must use the break in a way that will really move them forward. Studying theories socialization, meditating, taking up some good courses and then go out there more centered knowledgeable.

- **Introverts: easy for you, guys**

Monk mode is surely easier on introverts.

[Introverts](#) recharge their batteries with lone time and they won't suffer nearly as much from the socialization withdrawal.

- **Extroverts: great challenge**

Monk mode will be tougher on [ambiverts](#) and extroverts.

The good news is that they can manage to stay away from socialization and social time-waste, they will come out of monk mode so much more powerful: they controlled their urge of socializing and talking. What else can they do?

- **Highly driven: it's a must for you guys**

Monk mode is the bread and butter of highly driven, self-development focused men.

They can zero in and get so much more done in so much less time.

As a matter of fact, "take it easy" types of men are not doing monk mode, they're doing a masturbation marathon, a video-game marathon or a Games of Thrones marathon -is that shit still popular?-.

Or all of them together. But not monk mode.

Monk mode requires no effort for the driven man: it's what he naturally falls into

Why Monk Mode Works

Monk Mode “works” because, well, it’s the only real way of being highly productive.

Most people don’t go monk mode, and most people are not very productive and are not going places with their lives.

In a way, all highly productive people are in a monk mode, they just might not call it that way.

[David Goggins](#) has been on record saying he has few social interactions and never “hangs out”, [Steve Jobs](#) was a super driven monk and any artist who wants to ship must at least at times go monk mode.

Monk Mode works because it allows you to focus deeply on something specific, and that’s the definition of efficiency.

That’s how Daniel Coyle defines “deep practice” in [The Talent Code](#) and that’s how Cal Newport defines “[deep work](#)” in the book going by the same.

If you want to reach your maximum potential, then you must cut out the unnecessary time waste and spend more time honing your craft -or yourself-.

Finally, monk mode will increase your resilience and independence. If you were able to cut people and pastimes from your life, what does it say about you?

It says that you’re independent and self-reliant.

A good monk is his own man.

And that will shoot up your confidence and self-esteem.

Successful monks are their own men

SUMMARY

Monk mode consists of eliminating waste in your life to dedicate more time to a specific goal, project, or personal self-development.

The goal of monk mod is always to come out of it a better, more powerful, more accomplished or more skilled individual.

More extreme monk modes, which I like to call “holed in monk mode” are more like a parenthesis in your life because they are difficult to sustain in the long run -and probably should *not* be sustained in the long run-.

My Monk Mode: Summary

Overall, my monk mode has been an awfully good time and a *huge* step forward in both my business and my self-development.

That’s why I can recommend monk mode to most guys.

I’ll soon take another break for vacation, and then I will keep it monk for one more winter months before thawing out of it.

This summer I am planning to take it slightly easier. And I also look forward to coming out of monk mode. That’s another beauty and another pleasure of monk mode: the feeling of going back to the world as a much improved, wiser, and upgraded individual.

Great confidence boost.

