

Copyright

The Momentum Rule™

Book One in The Momentum Series

© 2026 Naomi Shields

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Dedication

For my son,

Who taught me how to shine in the trenches.

For Kate,

Who taught me "just for today" and refused to let me disappear with the doom committee.

For all the international volunteers who did it scared, some of you came home, some of you didn't. This book carries what you taught us.

For all the Ukrainians who have stood strong and fought and suffered for their freedom.

I honour you all, and you are not forgotten.

And for everyone in their own trenches right now:

You don't have to be fearless.

You just have to keep moving.

Even like that. Especially like that.

Preface

Why This Book Exists

My son asked me about his childhood yesterday.

I've been thinking about it all day.

But here's what I really need to tell you, and him, and anyone reading this:

It's not what I taught him that matters most.

It's what he taught me.

When he volunteered as an international volunteer and was on the frontline, I was terrified every single day.

Every phone call could have been the last one. Every silence felt like the end of the world.

I couldn't control anything, not the war, not the danger, not whether he'd come home.

And then he'd call.

And you know what he did?

He laughed.

He found something good to tell me about.

He showed up with humour and heart and this unbelievable ability to keep shining, even in the literal trenches.

He taught me how to survive.

Not by telling me it would be okay. Not by pretending it wasn't terrifying.

By showing me how to keep moving anyway.

When I didn't know if he'd survive the day, I couldn't fix anything.

But I could write one paragraph. I could record one song. I could help raise money for medical supplies.

I could do one small thing.

Like: "This is what I have. This moment. So, I'm going to show up fully. I'm going to make it count."

That changed everything for me.

He taught me that you don't have to wait for things to get better to shine.

That you can find humour even when everything's falling apart, and that hope is a choice even when it feels impossible.

You can keep moving, one small step, even when you can't see the end.

And that you can be in the trenches and still be fully alive.

We all have our trenches and our own battles.

So now, I want to share what I learned with you.

I learnt how to be brave.

Not by being fearless.

By being scared and showing up anyway.

All the work I've done, the books, the music, everything.

It wasn't just something to do while I waited.

It was me doing what he showed me how to do.

Keep moving. Find the good. Shine anyway.

He taught me how to live while he was fighting to survive.

Kate taught me how to stay sane while my world was falling apart by refusing to let me disappear and being there when it just felt impossible.

He had asked about his childhood.

And yeah, we had good times. Hard times. All the times.

My answer was about who he had become.

The man who could laugh on the frontline. The man who could find good in hell.

The man who showed up with heart even when death was at the door.

That's who taught me how to live.

I'm so proud of him.

Not just for surviving.

For how he survived.

For who he was in the trenches.

And I want you to know:

That you can be in the trenches and still shine.

That you can survive the impossible if you break it down into today.

This book is my way of passing that on.

To you.

Wherever your trenches are.

Whatever you're fighting.

Whoever you're trying to become.

You don't need to be ready.

You don't need to be fearless.

You just need to do the next small thing.

Even when you're doing it scared.

That's what he taught me.

That's what Kate and I taught each other.

Now I'll share what they taught me.

Author's Note

This book was not written from a place of peace. It was written from the thick of survival. And what I'm about to tell you is how I actually put that survival into practice.

I'll warn you upfront, it looks less inspiring than you'd expect.

Because if you're thinking, "That's beautiful, Naomi, but my life is chaos and I can barely function," then I need you to know:

I did not write this book from the top of a misty mountain at sunrise, drinking chamomile tea and journaling about "alignment."

Please.

I wrote this at the end of a day so long it felt like it deserved its own credits. It was the kind of day where you close your laptop and wonder, "Who trusted me with this much responsibility?" Then you notice you've been running on caffeine, chaos, and that strange burst of energy your body gives you when it's not sure what's happening either.

All of this while working full-time and raising a family. Zero mysticism, just momentum and mild delusion.

Somewhere in that mess, I stopped long enough to look back. Not because I was reflecting on the meaning of life or having a spiritual epiphany.

No.

I was sitting at my desk, listening back to the tracks from my fifth music album, Unstoppable. I had already released four albums as The Winks, and I was deep in the middle of editing one of the books in my Life in Gestures series.

As the song "Do It Scared" came through the speakers, it hit me like a physical weight. I wasn't just listening to a track; I was listening to my own autobiography. It dawned on me right there: this was exactly what I had been doing this whole time. It wasn't about talent

or "alignment." It was the simple, gritty methodology that had allowed me to climb a mountain of work while I was terrified and exhausted.

Because somehow, somehow, I'd written those twelve books, a number that feels like an accident and a cry for help. Along the way, I'd also released five albums, nearly finished a satirical board game about US politics (until reality out-satirised me and it stopped being funny), and started a questionable number of side-projects that now live in a cheerful pile called "Yeah, I'll get to that eventually."

None of this happened because I had a flawless plan. Honestly, if you saw my planning system, you'd assume it belonged to someone in witness protection trying to hide from their own schedule.

And it wasn't confidence. If I waited for confidence, I'd still be gazing at a blank page whispering, "Not today, Satan."

This happened because I kept taking tiny bites. Small pieces. Manageable chunks.

"Naomi, finish this one little thing... then you can have an iced coffee. Or lie on the floor. Or both. But first, move."

That was it. That was the entire system. No colour-coded planner. No morning routine involving cold water and gratitude. Just a woman negotiating with herself like a hostage negotiator trying to talk someone off a perfectly comfortable couch.

It was momentum. The simple, slightly chaotic force of not stopping. One tiny, honest step at a time.

That's the whole secret. It's almost offensively simple.

It wasn't a dramatic transformation. It wasn't about selling everything and moving across the world with a dream, two kids, a husband, and a suitcase. I've done that four times.

Twice to Bali because apparently, I needed a second opinion, once to India, and once to Malaysia. Nobody was impressed by the fourth move. Mostly concerned.

Just one small thing, then another, then another, until your doubts are still filing a complaint about the first step and you're already three hundred steps ahead.

I realised that if I could name it, I could teach it.

So, The Momentum Rule™ became the first book I released and the foundation of The Momentum Series. This book became the thirteenth one I wrote, but it's the first one I'm handing to you. It is the foundation for everything else.

I wrote this book because I've seen what happens when you move forward in tiny pieces. Not because I cracked some secret code. Because I was tired, terrified, and too stubborn to sit still. And it turns out that's a strategy.

Now I'm here to walk with you while you do the same.

No BS.

Just forward motion.

Ready to stop overthinking and start?

Alright then.

Let's go.

Introduction

You're in the Trenches

Let's talk about YOUR trenches.

Not literal ones (unless you're reading this from an actual foxhole, in which case, respect, and what are you doing reading self-help right now?).

I'm talking about the places in your life where you're under fire.

Where you can't see the way out.

Where you're just trying to survive today.

Maybe it's grief.

Maybe it's an illness, yours or someone you love.

Maybe it's the slow collapse of a marriage, a career, or a version of yourself you thought was solid.

Maybe it's depression that makes getting out of bed feel like climbing Everest in flip-flops.

Maybe it's financial crisis, caregiving burnout, or just the crushing weight of holding everything together while pretending you're fine.

Maybe it's Sunday night, and you're staring at your inbox like it personally wronged you.

Maybe it's all of it at once.

Maybe it's Tuesday.

Whatever your trenches are, they're real.

And you're probably doing what most people do when they're in the trenches:

Waiting.

Waiting to feel ready.

Waiting to feel strong.

Waiting for clarity, energy, confidence, or some magical moment when the universe sends you a personal invitation that says, "Okay NOW you can start."

News Flash: That invitation isn't coming.

The universe is busy. It has other things to do. Like making sure your phone dies right when you need directions.

So, here's the deal:

You don't wait until you're ready.

You move.

And then, plot twist, the readiness shows up later, confused and out of breath, asking what it missed.

This Book Is About Movement

Not the kind where you have a breakthrough and suddenly everything's different and you're glowing like you just got back from a spa retreat with your chakras aligned.

Nope.

And not the kind where you "manifest" your way out of hell by thinking hard about abundance while the bills pile up.

Hard pass.

The kind where you're still in hell, but you're moving anyway.

The kind where you do one small thing, and then another, and then another, not because you're brave or inspired or "living your best life", but because you're refusing to stop.

Even if you're doing it badly. Even if you're doing it scared. Even if you're doing it while muttering "this is stupid" under your breath.

The Momentum Rule™

This book is built on one principle:

You act your way into becoming.

Not by thinking your way there. Not by waiting, feeling, or journaling your way there (though if journaling helps, cool, do that; just don't mistake writing about doing the thing for doing the thing).

You move.

If they could move in literal trenches, you can move in yours.

Even if your trenches involve Excel spreadsheets and passive-aggressive emails.

Trenches are trenches.

What You're Going to Learn

This book isn't about motivation.

Motivation is that friend who shows up at 2 am full of ideas and energy and then ghosts you for three months.

Unreliable. Dramatic. Not invited to the planning meeting.

This book is about momentum, the simple, powerful, slightly stubborn force of not stopping.

Here's what we're actually doing.

Killing the myth that you need to feel ready before you move. You won't, and that's fine.

Destroying the idea that small steps don't count. They're the only thing that counts.

Giving you the tools to build momentum even when you're exhausted, scared, or completely lost.

Surviving heavy seasons without losing yourself or your sense of humour.

And keeping moving when everything in you wants to quit, or nap, or both.

And yes, I'm giving you playlists.

Because sometimes the right song is the difference between staying on the couch and getting up.

Sometimes you need sound to drown out the noise in your head.

And sometimes music is the only thing that makes you feel human again.

And because finding the right track when you're already in the middle of a meltdown is a job.

It's not required to get anything from this book.

The music is optional. The movement is not.

Is this book for you? Here's a test. Are you waiting for something, readiness, clarity, confidence, better circumstances, a sign from the universe, before you start the thing?

Then yes. It's for you. You've already passed.

Here's What I'm NOT Going to Tell You:

I'm not going to tell you to "find your why" (your why is "I'm tired of feeling stuck," and that's enough), or to "believe in yourself" (you can believe in yourself while moving, it's fine), or to "manifest your dreams" (no), and I'm definitely not going to tell you everything happens for a reason, because sometimes things just happen and they suck. I will personally fight anyone who tells you to just think positive.

Nope.

None of that.

No woo-woo.

No toxic positivity.

No "good vibes only" nonsense.

Here's What I AM Going to Tell You:

You don't have to wait to feel ready.

Or strong. Or brave.

You just need to do the next small thing.

Even when you're scared. Especially when you're exhausted. Even when you have no idea if it will work. And when you're doing it in your pyjamas at 3 pm because pants are optional when you're building momentum.

A breakthrough is not required.

A perfect plan is not required.

Changing out of your sweatpants is not required.

You just need to turn the page.

That's the first step.

Look at you.

Already moving.

One more thing before we start. At the end of every chapter, you'll see an invitation to your chapter chat. These are spoken check-ins, one for each chapter, with music underneath. Think of them as a conversation after the conversation. No reading required, just listening. They're designed to land differently from the written word, to catch the things that hit you mid-chapter and give them somewhere to go.

Each chat comes in two versions: male and female, because who you hear matters. Pick the one that lands. Sometimes it's just the one that shows up when you need it. You'll find them by following the link on each 'Chapter Chat Audio' or at www.themomentumrule.com/the-momentum-rule-playlists/. Enter the access code in the Companion Resources section – (not available in sample). They're optional. But they do add to the enjoyment of the book.

[Chapter Chat Male Audio](#)

[Chapter Chat Female Audio](#)

There is also a music album that accompanies this book. Follow the link or find it on "The Momentum Rule" Album by The Winks on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and wherever you listen. The album is called The Momentum Rule. The signature song is "Even Like That." It's what the whole book was moving toward.

Don't worry, if you don't have music platform access, you can access the songs for this book by following the link on each song, which will take you directly to the song on the website. Please log in for the first time and use the access code found at the end of this book.

Here is the song for the Introduction: ["Even Like That"](#).

Chapter 1: You're Not Broken. You're Paused

Alright, let's deal with this first.

You're not broken.

Not defeated.

You're not even close to defeated. You're just someone who's had a few too many curveballs and not nearly enough time to process any of them. That doesn't make you a tragic warning story. What you are feeling is way less dramatic and far more human. You are stuck in a mental traffic jam.

The light turns green. Everyone else confidently moves forward. You sit there thinking, "Surely someone will come explain my entire life to me before I drive."

Nobody does. So, you stay still and call it failure.

Your brain hit the equivalent of the spinning loading icon and quietly said, "I need a minute."

But because you're a functioning human with inconvenient emotions, you interpreted that minute as personal ruin.

Let's be exact.

You have paused, not collapsed.

Paused is practical.

It's your brain saying, "I'm doing my best with the limited bandwidth you have left. Stop expecting miracles while I'm running on fumes."

But here is why the pause turns into a prison: You're hiding.

Not because you're lazy.

Because you care so much that the idea of getting it wrong makes your soul sweat.

You're sitting on the edge of your couch, fully dressed, staring at the wall like it owes you money.

It's not an ethical lapse. It's a nervous system that has quietly unplugged your internal power cord because it thinks stillness is safer than risk.

Imagine your brain as an overly dramatic personal assistant waving a clipboard titled “Reasons We Absolutely Cannot Start.”

It’s packed with worst-case scenarios, imaginary disasters, and director’s commentaries for films that haven’t even been cast yet.

The clipboard looks official. But it’s full of shit.

You are sitting still because the clipboard has been running the meeting. It insists you aren’t ready. It insists every idea is a potential meteor.

It acts like a very nervous security guard who has never once dealt with an actual emergency.

Waiting feels safer than moving because movement has consequences.

Staying still has consequences, too. They are just much sneakier.

The cost creeps in quietly. It erodes in small ways.

A hesitation here. An overthought moment there.

While you wait, everything stays theoretical. In theory, you’re still a rockstar. In the idea stage, you get to hold on to the perfect version of yourself.

The one who never fails.

The one who never looks stupid.

The one who never has to face reality.

Just enough that one day you realise your self-trust is slipping.

You’re living in the world of Almost. Almost starting. Almost ready. Almost becoming the person you imagine at 2 am.

Almost protects your ego, but it sacrifices your life. An unwritten book stays brilliant forever.

A written one has to face actual people with actual opinions.

Action ends the fantasy. And yeah, that’s uncomfortable. But you can’t steer a parked car.

Your brain is not here for your personal evolution.

It wants you predictable and wrapped in a blanket, binge-watching something you’ve already seen seventeen times.

To your brain, a new habit is a threat.

A new project is an intruder.

So, it offers "wise" sounding advice: "Let us not."

It sounds mature.

It sounds responsible.

It's just a paranoid troublemaker with a PhD in hesitation.

At some point, preparation becomes procrastination dressed in activewear.

You can spend three weeks organising your notes and colour-coding your dreams, but you're just avoiding the part where things get real.

Preparation will never feel finished because it's not meant to be finished. Movement is.

This is exactly where we apply the only law that matters. The Momentum Rule™.

It's the simple, slightly chaotic force of not stopping.

It does not care how afraid you are. It does not care how messy your first step looks.

It responds only to motion.

The Rule is simple: You act your way into becoming.

You don't think your way there. You don't wait your way there. You don't feel your way there.

Taking one tiny action knocks the clipboard off the desk. It stirs the fear, yes.

But it stops your nervous system from preparing for an asteroid that doesn't exist.

A single small movement proves to your body that the sky is not falling. It starts teaching your brain that fear is loud, not truthful.

Action interrupts the fear cycle. Not instantly, but each small move adds evidence that the catastrophe your brain predicted didn't show up.

Your breathing steadies.

Your mind softens.

Momentum repairs that trust. Every micro action reinforces that you are someone who continues.

Every tiny action teaches your brain: "Oh, we're someone who does things now."

And your brain, being easily impressed, starts to believe it.

Each pause that turns into a stall reinforces the opposite.

Fear loves imagination. It can make up whatever it wants there.

Movement forces it to deal with reality. And reality is way less dramatic.

You do not need to be impressive.

You do not need to be transformative.

You just need to exist in the world of the "Done."

A tiny action taken while you're exhausted is more powerful than fifty perfect ideas collecting dust in your head.

You barely notice it at first.

Until your entire mood shifts and you wonder when that happened.

Then it hits you: "You're kidding. That tiny thing worked?"

You do not fix yourself first. You move first. The fixing is a side effect.

Stay paused and you stay a theory.

Move, and you feel alive again.

Not perfectly.

Not decisively.

Just forward.

That is enough.

End note: Pull up a chair. Close your eyes. Your chapter chat is waiting, and it has something to say about that clipboard.

[Chapter Chat Male Audio](#)

[Chapter Chat Female Audio](#)

And there's a song for this chapter, too. "[Running on Fumes](#)" - because sometimes exhausted and still moving is the whole thing. Follow the link or find it on "The Momentum Rule" Album on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and wherever you listen.

Chapter 2: The Myth of Readiness

People wait for readiness as if it were a well-mannered guest who shows up on time.

The kind who taps you gently on the shoulder and says:

"Now.

Now you may begin.

I checked your emotional stability, your calendar, your odds of embarrassment, and your risk of judgment. Everything is clear. Proceed."

Cute idea.

Never happens.

Nothing is running late here. The feeling you are waiting for does not exist. It is a myth with great marketing.

We tell ourselves stories, so hesitation feels responsible. Saying "I'm not ready yet" sounds reasonable. Saying "I am scared, and I do not want to look like an idiot" sounds human.

Most people do not need more time. They need permission to begin while mildly nauseous.

Because if you sit and wait for readiness, you may be sitting forever.

Here is what people really mean when they say they are not ready.

They fear failing.

They fear being seen.

They fear succeeding, because then they must act as they meant it.

They fear confirming something about themselves that they have tried to avoid.

None of this means you are broken. It means you're a human with a functioning nervous system and an overactive imagination. Congratulations. Welcome to the club. We don't have jackets.

Fear loves to dress as responsibility. It adopts a calm tone and pretends it knows what it is talking about. Fear is not the enemy. It just has terrible boundaries and an opinion about everything.

The problem starts when you let it drive. Fear in the passenger seat is fine. Annoying, but fine. Fear behind the wheel will have you parked in a ditch, engine running, going absolutely nowhere while it insists this is "the safe option."

It loves to yell the loudest in the room, sprinkling unsolicited opinions like it's seasoning a meal nobody asked for.

And its favourite costume? Perfectionism.

Perfectionism has incredible PR. Like award-winning, gold-statue-worthy marketing. It strolls in carrying a checklist, acting like it's purely here to "help." (Spoiler: It's not.)

On the surface, you'd swear it's just high standards. You tell yourself it's about care.

Responsibility. Maintaining your reputation as "the reliable one."

Then it drops that classic, toxic line: "I just want to do it properly."

Sweet. Very noble. Completely useless.

Because most of the time, excellence is just the cover story. Fear is the one running the boardroom.

You're panicked that getting it wrong will accidentally prove those ugly little doubts you carry around like a secret receipt you keep re-reading.

Let's stop calling it a strength. Perfectionism is fear dressed up like a respectable adult who owns matching Tupperware.

We didn't fall in love with quality and decide to become perfectionists. We adopted the habit because feeling imperfect no longer felt safe.

Somewhere along the line, being messy got punished. A mistake cost too much. That "not good enough" feeling hit so hard that your nervous system decided, Fine. We're never doing that again.

That's when the survival strategy started. You started to delay. You polished. You overthought. You ran one more mental simulation, added one more tweak, and rewrote a paragraph twelve times.

Call it what it is: You named it "standards" so it would sound less like a panic attack.

Perfectionism isn't your shield. It's your cage.

It promises control. The sales pitch is always, "Do it perfectly, and you'll be safe. No one can criticise you."

Except the delivery never arrives. Perfect is stuck loading while life keeps moving. Your "safe" update is stuck at 1%.

"Perfect" is a moving target that changes the rules mid-game. It raises the bar the moment you get close. It acts as if it's personally offended by your progress.

There is always one more "tiny" adjustment. Something that somehow devours three hours and your will to live.

Meanwhile, time doesn't pause to admire your draft. Life keeps walking. And you're stuck in the corner negotiating with a font choice.

How many things have you labelled "not ready" when they were just "not safe to be seen"?

This habit doesn't just delay a project. It keeps you small. It keeps you invisible.

That's the brutal irony. Perfectionism looks like commitment. It's actually just avoidance with better branding.

Many self-proclaimed procrastinators aren't lazy. They're just scared shitless of being seen doing something imperfectly.

If that stings, good. That sting is clarity.

Whether it's readiness you're waiting for or perfection you're hiding behind, the result is identical: you're standing still and calling it strategy.

Standing still is not a strategy. It's just expensive procrastination with a better narrative.

And then there is the trap called "one more day."

A single day sounds harmless. That is why it slides past your guard.

One day becomes a week. A week becomes a month. A month becomes a year. Before you know it, you are grieving the version of yourself who almost started.

Most regret comes from the things you postponed until they quietly expired. Like that gym membership. And your New Year's resolutions. And your entire twenties.

So here's the part nobody puts on a poster.

Readiness is not something you wait for. It is something you choose. And choosing it feels terrible. Like going to the gym while unfit, slightly resentful, and already planning how few minutes can still count as exercise.

Movement leads the feeling. Not the other way around. Nobody ever got confident by thinking about it really hard in their pyjamas. That's not how this works. That's not how any of this works.

Waiting has never once given you useful information. Questions have.

What's the smallest step you can handle today? Not the bravest. Not the most impressive. The smallest. The one that makes your brain shrug and go, "Fine, I suppose that won't kill us."

What does forward look like at five per cent? Not a hundred. Not fifty. Five. The kind of effort that barely registers but somehow still counts.

Pick one action instead of running another imaginary disaster scenario where everything goes wrong and you somehow end up living under a bridge.

Reality has a softer touch than the horror films fear likes to direct in your head. Fear has terrible taste in movies. All jump scares, no plot.

People you admire learned this the same way. They didn't feel ready either. They just moved anyway. Everyone could tell they were faking it. Nobody cared.

Fear stayed in the room with them the whole time. They just stopped letting it drive.

A leap is not required here. One step will do the job. Even a tiny, messy, half-assed step counts.

Forward is forward, no matter how small it looks or how stupid you feel taking it.

That's all readiness ever needed to be.

End note: Pull up a chair. Close your eyes. Your chapter chat is waiting. Mildly nauseous is fine. Come as you are.

[Chapter Chat Male Audio](#)

[Chapter Chat Female Audio](#)

And there's a song for this chapter, too. "[The Waiting Room](#)" - for everyone who's been sitting in it a little too long. Follow the link or find it on "The Momentum Rule" Album on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and wherever you listen.