

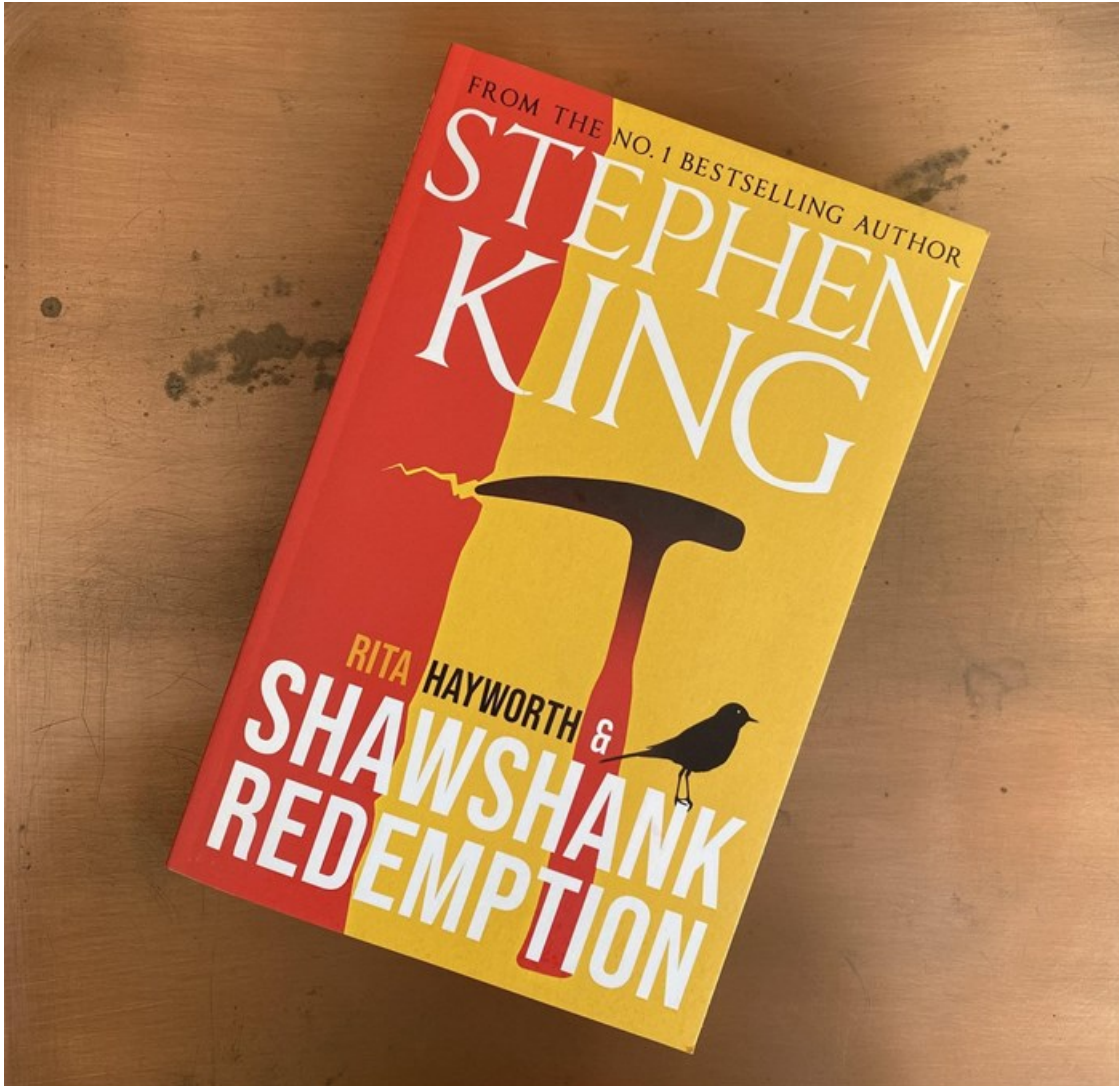
Do your time



By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

9 Aug 2021

It always comes down to just two choices. Get busy living, or get busy dying. - Stephen King, Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption.



I've been revisiting Stephen King's profound little novella, *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* this week.

Although the book, at its core, is really about hope and freedom; as I reread it, I saw that there are also other lessons around how to approach our life and work.

Stick with it

At some point, I understood gatekeepers are so mean because they meet many times 500 people and out of them only a handful will stay the course, only a few will not disappear. Do not disappear; if you want to work with the public, if you want to serve the people, your number one job is to not disappear. - Anna Gat

Firstly, the value of *commitment* and sticking with your plan, even as you are only making slow, small progress day after day. All too often we equate lack of *speed* with lack of success, while in fact, the reverse is true. The mental resilience to stick with a task, keeping a goal in focus is often the difference between those who succeed and those who fall by the wayside; an insight the protagonists in *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*, Andy Dufresne knew all too well, as his own plan took the better part of 30 years to complete.

“Overnight” success stories tend to take years of slow, steady, often *silent* work before they breakthrough, which brings me to the second lesson...

Do the work, don't talk about it

It can be tempting to talk about our grand ideas and ambitious aspirations before we have done (or even begun) the work to bring them to fruition. While true allies are indeed helpful and desirable, talking about our work prematurely can be downright dangerous and detrimental to our plans. Some journeys need to be taken alone; some hopes and dreams are too fragile to share in the early stages until they have grown too strong to be stopped by a careless, crushing word from a pessimistic (or even envious or antagonistic) naysayer.

Indeed, in Andy's case, letting slip even the most minor detail of his plan could have caused it to fail spectacularly. Secrecy was *critical* to his success.

So do the work. Put in the hours. Stick with it. And keep silent until you're ready to *show* what you've done.

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