

Quit Talking, Start Doing!

Motivate Yourself When No One Else Can

Get Over Procrastination and Boost Productivity towards Success

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Introduction

Procrastination is a big daily problem for many or most of us. It is the feeling that you know you should do something but you don't do it. You know you should go to the gym, but you stay at home and watch TV. You know that it's time to do the homework, but you went online and check Facebook. You know you should make a business plan today, but you decide to do it tomorrow.

These constant distractions in our life makes our focus very difficult to maintain. Distraction from work, home, friends and other events constantly compete for our attention and time. It takes time to stay focused on achieving our goals yet it is so easy to fall flat in maintaining our momentum and persistence needed to achieve our goals. As a result, we give up and think that our goal is just impossible.

In this book, not only you will know why you always put things off, why you keep what you've been doing but also how to overcome procrastination. At the end of this book, you'll be able to change your ways to get things done, be more productive and achieve your goals.

I'm not a professional at any of this, just a lifelong procrastinator. I'm still in a battle with my own habits, but I have made some progress in the last few years. Now I'm writing my thoughts from what's worked for me and I hope that these simple steps might work for you too.

It's not that hard to stop procrastinating. The first step in overcoming any procrastination you face is to understand why you are procrastinating. Several reasons why we procrastinate will be shown in the following chapters.

After understanding why you are procrastinating, you should know how to constantly motivate yourself to get started in doing what you must without putting it off. More examples and tips will be given to get you started.

The real challenge is if you can keep going without putting off a task. You have to stay motivated and focused to finish it and get things done constantly. How to? Take Inspired Action.

- Just Get Started
- Plan your day ahead
- Prioritize
- Avoid Excuses
- Focus on One task at a Time
- Break Big Tasks into Smaller Pieces
- Make it time-framed. Set deadlines.
- Challenge Yourself
- Aim Higher
- Use Time Blocks
- Avoid Distraction in the Middle of Doing a Certain Task
- Self-Discipline
- Have Daily Routines and Habits
- Clean your house. Literally!
- Generously reward yourself.

We have a lot to cover. Let's get started!

Chapter 1: What is procrastination?

“Procrastination is like a credit card: it’s a lot of fun until you get the bill.”

-Christopher Parker

Procrastination is the action of delaying or postponing something especially something that requires immediate attention. To procrastinate is to be slow or late about doing something that should be done; to delay doing something until a later time because you do not want to do it, because you are lazy, etc.

Procrastination is, in fact, an emotional issue, not a time-management issue. It is about the fear of success and the fear of making a mistake.

According to research, the emotional reaction of our brain usually leads reasoning. When our brain perceives a pleasurable experience, it produces a hormone called dopamine. The secretion of these hormones in the brain sets out an emotional response in a much shorter time than it takes the brain to think with logic and reason. So long as a task has a higher historical likelihood of producing dopamine, our brain is addicted to reproducing these activities thus we are avoiding the others tasks.

Symptoms of a Chronic Procrastinator

- getting up late
- always in hurry
- late in appointments
- making excuses every time
- slow to respond to questions
- have a messy room or piled up paper works
- have a “just one more episode” syndrome
- have a “student syndrome” (works on last minute or before the deadline)
- poor study habits
- always on Facebook

The list goes on and on...

Professor Joseph R. Ferrari of DePaul University said that there are two types of procrastinators out there: those who delay making decisions, and those who delay taking action.

The decision-avoiders are dependent on others, relying on them to decide for them. They're more submissive and tend to blame someone else if it all goes wrong.

The task-avoiders, on the other hand, have low self-esteem. They make a decision but don't follow up on it.

One thing is for sure, Procrastinators waste the most precious asset a human can have: time.

Chapter 2: Why do we procrastinate?

The first step in overcoming any procrastination you face is to understand why you are procrastinating. It helps us understand why we keep on doing what we are doing. Why do we put things off easily? Several reasons why we procrastinate are listed below:

#1 Unpleasant Task

Your brain does not perceive any immediate rewards associated with the task and as a result you quickly think of a way to escape from the work. When you procrastinate, you're avoiding emotionally unpleasant tasks and instead you do something that provides a temporary mood boost. The procrastination itself then causes shame and guilt — which in turn leads people to procrastinate even further, creating a cycle.

#2 Lack of Interest

All students from time to time lack interest in a course, however, not all of these students delay in studying or completing assignments. Throughout your life, you'll do many uninteresting things. Learning to read may be frustrating and uninteresting. Yet, reading will later prove useful, interesting, and entertaining.

Most procrastinators believe that something is wrong with them if they do not feel motivated to begin a task. Well, some activities just have “*boring*” written all over them. You procrastinate because you are not interested to do that certain task.

#3 Lack of Initiative

“I don’t feel like doing it!” We have the *“living the moment”* attitude and afterwards experience the *“lazy feelings”* not to take actions on them.

You feel that you deserve to have some fun before you get started on the job. You overestimate your efficiency and the amount of time left to perform the task, while underestimating the time needed to complete the task. You assure yourself that you’ll be able to work more efficiently with the deadline approaching fast.

You end up telling yourself that you’ll do the job early in the morning tomorrow, with a clear mind, when you feel more settled or rested. But when you wake up, you got distracted to do something else.

#4 Task is Not Important

You keep forgetting to do it because you don't think of it with high importance thus it always slip your mind.

Perhaps you are supposed to go to the Parent's meeting after work. Your wife kept reminding you before you get out of your house early in that morning not to miss the meeting because it was important for your child, but not to you, you thought. That evening you went home late and realize that you've missed the meeting because you did something else after work.

#5 Don't Have Time

"Oops! Something come up that needs to be done first. I'm busy. I'll just do it later!"

"I don't have much time right now, I'll just do it tomorrow."

One of the reasons why we procrastinate is because we dread spending long period of time working on a task. The problem with the excuse of doing the task tomorrow is that you'll most likely to have the same excuse by tomorrow and thus you are also declaring to procrastinate tomorrow.

You keep on planning on doing something important to you like some projects. At first, you're motivated and ready to make a killing. Then life gets in the way. You'll make an

excuse to do it tomorrow. You'll miss a day or two to do what you are supposed to do. Then you miss more days doing the task. You are already behind the plan and the due date is coming real fast. And finally you walk away from that project because "*you just don't have the time.*" Sounds familiar? Almost everyone has these moments, unless you've overcome it.

#6 Requires Major Effort

We get overwhelmed that we think there are lots of things to do to finish the task. Whenever you try to do something that is not part of your routine, it takes additional effort to finish the task especially if it is difficult or will take time to be completed.

Alternately, it may so happen that when you are required to do something out of your comfort zone, you get overwhelmed by the complexity or the ambiguity of the task, and so you delay it in favor of other simpler tasks, hoping to get someone to help you to do the bigger task.

#7 Fear of Failure

Perfectionism causes fear of failure.

We have a tendency to negatively evaluate one's own performance. Expectations and standards set by parents may be so high that no one could actually live up to them. Thus, procrastination steps in to ruin these expectations and standards set by your loving parents and prevent you from "really" failing.

For most of us, the "*I did not try and I failed*" attitude is far acceptable than "*I gave it my best and failed.*" If you don't try it, you don't have to confront the possibility that you can't do it. It goes something like this: If I really try hard and fail, that is worse than if I don't try and end up failing.

A student who never studies and flunks out may feel bad about failing but what if he had studied, and still failed?

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