

How To Overcome Procrastination

HOW TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION

SELECTED TIPS - 60 PAGES!



60 Pages!

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Enthusiasm - The Best Weapon In The War Against Procrastination

Enthusiasm is what makes the difference between reaching our goals and giving up before we get started. Thomas Edison said, "If the only thing we leave our kids is the quality of enthusiasm, we will have given them an estate of incalculable value." Edison's research laboratory burned to the ground when he was 67. As the fire consumed his world-famous "invention factory," Edison told his children, "Kids, go get your mother. She'll never see another fire like this one." Edison knew that enthusiasm is the best antidote for tragedy, and it's the most powerful weapon to use in the war against procrastination.

I have learned that my level of enthusiasm has nothing to do with my feelings; my feelings wake up on a different side of the bed every day. To take control of my life, I must choose the way I feel-I can't let my feelings control me. Can you talk yourself into a positive frame of mind when you're discouraged? How do you keep yourself motivated? How do you stay focused when a job is tedious? How do you handle failure when your plan isn't going well?

- Stay away from negative people. Attitudes are contagious-negative people infect us with negative attitudes. Associate with positive thinkers; their self-confidence is contagious, too.

- Schedule difficult tasks for the time of day when your energy is highest. If you haven't determined the best time for you to tackle the day's least appealing jobs, try doing them as early as possible.

- Tackle a problem that's been a thorn in your side. When you get in the habit of making things happen, your enthusiasm goes through the roof. Inactivity is a major cause of depression and anxiety. (On the other hand, you can increase your energy level without eliminating other forces that cause procrastination; teenagers are particularly adept at expending enormous amounts of energy without getting anything done. Always remember that any technique is only effective when used as part of a total strategy.)

When you breeze through a task with particular ease and competence, make a note of the time of day. And ask yourself what other factors might have contributed to making you more

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productive. When you start to discover a pattern, you will have found how to operate at a higher level every day. And when you identify the time of day when you are usually most efficient, schedule some of your least enjoyable tasks for that time.

We must continue to learn new things as if we were going to live forever, while living each day as if it were the last. Telling myself that "Today is the first day of the rest of my life" doesn't work for me. If today were the last day of my life, how would I live it? That is the question I ask myself when I must fight against the forces of procrastination.

Always remember that enthusiasm is a choice. Mark Twain said, "Do something every day that you don't want to do; this is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain."

How Conquering Procrastination Can Help You Reduce Stress

I believe that procrastination is the No. 1 cause of stress in our society today. Throughout history, great thinkers have noted the connection between the failure to take action and the feeling of anxiety. The American philosopher William James once said, "Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging of an uncompleted task."

If you have the habit of putting off tasks you fear-if you tend to avoid situations and events that terrify you-your fears have grown out of proportion. Every time you decide not to do something because you're afraid of failing, your self-confidence takes another hit. There is only one way to overcome fear-you have to force yourself to do the thing you fear. When you face your fear and do it anyway, your confidence gets a big boost. Soon you will laugh at the imaginary fears that have kept you from becoming all that you can be. And you can do something about it today.

Establish goals. Prioritize. Measure your progress. Ask friends and office mates for feedback. Adjust your goals if necessary. Reward yourself when you finish jobs. If you're a leader, get procrastinators to encourage each other. Help them overcome their fear of getting things done. Find a mentor to help you overcome your fear. When I have to do the thing I fear, I recite a verse from the Bible: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)

Be as truthful as you can in your estimate of how long it will take to do the things you dislike. Many of the tasks we put off are simple ones. They cause an amount of stress in our lives that is altogether out of proportion to the time they require for completion. Think of when it took you much less time to do a dreaded job than you thought it would take. Can you learn something from that experience that could be applied to a task that has been left undone? Research shows that workers waste as much as a third of their workday. These same workers habitually complain about chronic stress caused by not having enough time to finish their jobs. Can you see the connection? The less you accomplish, the more you suffer from the sensation of stress and anxiety.

The only way to get at the root of the problem is by measuring how you spend your time. Keep a log of how much time you spend on things that you don't need to do. Make a note of the things

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that could be done more efficiently. Try to do this for one full workday. When you analyze your list, you may be shocked at how much waste has seeped into your workday. Treat those items as a list of wasteful activities that need to be kept in check or completely eliminated. You probably don't control the cause of all the wasted time you've identified. Ask yourself what you can do to eliminate those things that you can control.

As the Mad Hatter said to Alice, "If you knew time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting it."

How Planning Can Help You Conquer Procrastination

Benjamin Franklin, who knew how to conquer procrastination as well as anyone, said that "by failing to prepare you are preparing to fail." How do you plan your work? And if you don't plan, how do you know if you're reaching your goals? It's time to find out.

Make a list of everything you've been putting off at work. Not just the big things, but all the little things, too. Make another list of everything you've been putting off at home-large tasks and small ones. If you can't think of anything right away, walk around the house. Walk through the yard. It won't be hard to fill a page with projects that have been talked about, but not carried out.

Make another list of things you've neglected to do in the area of your personal relationships. That includes letters, emails, phone calls, visits, family trips, and vacations. Then make a list of all the things you've put off doing for yourself-a class you want to take, an exercise program you know you should start, or a bad habit you know you should eliminate.

Don't worry about priorities. Just get the juices flowing and write down everything that comes into your head. It may be hard to get started, but once you start the ideas will come more easily. Keep writing them down; you'll be amazed at how one thought triggers the next. Words will start to flow onto your paper or computer screen.

Now let me explain why I asked you to do this exercise. First, you've probably been putting off more things than you realized. That's the first step toward defeating procrastination-recognizing it as a problem. Procrastinators go to ridiculous extremes to explain their inability to take action. Accepting the truth that procrastination is a problem is the first step toward overcoming it.

Second, I hope this exercise has taught you the importance of getting started. The failure to take action breeds doubt, doubt gnaws at your self-confidence and your diminished self-confidence increases your indecision. The result is paralysis-and the vicious circle of inactivity keeps turning. After you recognize that procrastination is a problem, the next step is to focus on one thing you've been postponing. Take one thing you've been putting off and make something happen. You started your list with one thing; it led to another. Take one action and that action will trigger another.

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Ask yourself how much time you waste in a day. Keep a log of how you spend your time. How do you plan your work to ensure that deadlines are met? Always ask yourself if the work needs to be done at all. According to research findings, we spend as much as 80% of our time on tasks that do not contribute to the success of our projects-many people load themselves down with work that is unnecessary, or that could be justifiably postponed. Learn what all successful people know: If you're failing to plan, you're planning to fail.

How To Beat Procrastination - Stop Gathering Information!

Research shows that most of us spend up to 80% of our time on activities that have nothing to do with the success of our projects. We load ourselves down with endless tasks that keep us feeling busy, yet at the end of the day we wonder why we have accomplished so little.

Why do we miss deadlines, put off doing things we dislike, and accept stress and procrastination as a necessary part of life? What experiences have shaped the way you think about time? Do you need to rethink your views? If you were asked to speak to a group of students about the best way to use time, what would you say to them?

This quiz will help you identify areas where you can take action to overcome procrastination today:

- I often delay taking action and making decisions because I need to gather more facts.
- I have a hard time knowing when to wrap up the research phase of a project. I worry about not having enough information to complete it.
- I tend to get stuck in the middle of a project if changing circumstances suggest the need to make adjustments.
- I always feel that I'm using my time well as long as I'm gathering information for a project.

If you answered "yes" to any of the above statements, you need to recognize that procrastination is keeping you from achieving all that you can in life. Many people delay taking action by convincing themselves they need to gather more facts. Successful people know that effective decisions are based on opinions and experience first, facts second.

Set deadlines for yourself, even when you don't have to. You will never be able to gather all the facts. You must learn when to say enough. Make the best decision based on the facts you have now. The important thing is to act. We live in an increasingly complex world; our information-gathering techniques can't keep up with all the changing circumstances that affect our lives. We

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cannot control many of these circumstances, and we cannot control how other people respond to them.

Force yourself to act. Whatever decision we make today, we will have to rethink it-and almost certainly modify it-when circumstances change. No matter what you decide to do now, you will need to make corrections as you make progress toward your goal. Delaying a decision in order to gather more facts is one of the most common ways that people waste time.

Always ask yourself if a task needs to be done at all. The Bible says, "How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove?" Ask yourself: What do all my tasks prove? Focus on getting things done, rather than on filling your day with more activities than you can possibly get around to. If you want to overcome procrastination, stop gathering facts and get started on your project.

How To Overcome Procrastination - Accept Responsibility

All procrastination is the result of deluding ourselves. Procrastinators deny reality, refusing to accept responsibility for their lives. To defeat procrastination, we must stop playing games with ourselves. You can't overcome procrastination until you accept the fact that you are responsible for what you make of your life. That may be more honesty than many people are capable of, but there is no other way to achieve a richer life.

The first step toward overcoming procrastination is recognizing that it's a problem.

Procrastinators have big problems and small problems, but most of their problems are caused by procrastination.

All procrastinators share certain traits:

- They know what they should do about a problem, and in many cases they know what specific action needs to be taken. Yet they find reasons to avoid action.
- They are reluctant to do anything about a problem now, but vow to take action at some vague time in the future.
- They promise to take action when the "right" circumstances present themselves. By making performance of the job depend on something else, they justify their decision to delay action. They delude themselves into thinking that their hands are tied. They would like to do something but can't-it's not their fault.

Research shows that you can develop new habits in just two weeks if you're serious about changing. Think about people you know who always get things done. What are their work habits? How do they approach unappealing tasks? How do they stay focused?

Here are some simple tips that can help you take charge of your life today:

- Mentally prepare yourself to be productive. I begin every day in prayer and meditation. I keep inspirational messages where I can see them. Then I visualize my success during the day.

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Procrastination is a real monster, and it won't go away unless we do something about it every day. If I'm passionate about a job, I can get it done at any time of day and under any circumstances-the problem is when to tackle the hardest and most tedious jobs. Always ask: At what time of day am I most productive? Most people say they're most productive early in the morning; by mid-afternoon it's harder for them to sit still and concentrate on work. Try to schedule the hard jobs for your most productive time.

- Don't over-socialize at work. Office chitchat and gossip keep many people from getting more accomplished. Let people know when you don't want to be disturbed. Think about the things in your work environment that contribute to staying focused. What things distract you or make you want to postpone a job? How can you redesign your environment to eliminate causes of procrastination? (A workspace doesn't have to be neat, if you know where to find things.)

We are not victims of our circumstances. You can overcome procrastination now-you can do the things that need to be done. And you can learn to distinguish between the things that need to be done now and the things that can wait.

How To Overcome Procrastination - It All Depends On You

Procrastinators put off all the hard jobs. But they get stuck in a vicious circle of postponing the easy jobs, too. And the longer they put them off, the harder the jobs are when they finally get around to them. Successful people fight the same war against procrastination that we all face, but they have learned not to give in. They know that procrastination is the cause of many of the problems we face in our daily lives.

Procrastination creates a never-ending cycle of frustration, stress, and defeat. When people learn how to take charge of their lives, their self-esteem improves and their confidence grows. No matter how long you've been struggling with the demon of procrastination, you can start to take control of your life today by tackling a job or responsibility you've been putting off.

There are many books, online courses, and methods for changing your life and developing your personal and professional skills. I believe that procrastination is the root cause of the majority of problems that people face. Best-selling author Wayne Dyer said: "Procrastination is one of the most common and deadliest of diseases, and its toll on success and happiness is heavy."

Take the first step toward a richer life by getting serious about overcoming procrastination. The following quiz will help you identify areas where you can take action today.

1. I have written a list of my life-time goals.
2. I have written a list of my short-term goals (6 months or less).
3. I keep these lists where I can see them; they help me stay focused.
4. I establish priorities; some things that seem urgent are not important when I focus on the big picture. Yes () No ()
5. Once I've made a decision, I don't worry about whether I made the right decision or not-I just concentrate on getting the job done.
6. I know when to say "no" to avoid taking on too many jobs at once.

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7. I live in the present; I focus on what I'm doing now instead of dwelling on what I should have done in the past.

8. When I've done the best I can, I know when to wind up a job-spending more time on the same job only keeps me from starting something new.

If you answered "no" to any of the above statements, make a commitment to take corrective action today. Choose one item and do something about it. Don't move on to the next item until you can truthfully answer "yes" to the previous one. You've taken the first step by reading this far; now take the next step and do something you've been putting off. If you want to change, you can-the best time is now.

How To Overcome Procrastination - Just Do It!

The first step toward overcoming procrastination is recognizing that procrastination is a problem. Procrastinators have big problems and small problems, but the fact is that most of their problems are caused by procrastination.

All procrastinators share certain traits:

- Procrastinators know what they should do about a problem, and in many cases they know what specific action needs to be taken. Yet they find reasons to avoid action.

- Procrastinators are reluctant to do anything about a problem now, vowing to take action at some vague time in the future.

- Procrastinators promise to take action when the "right" circumstances present themselves. By making performance of the job depend on something else, they justify their decision to delay action. They delude themselves into thinking that their hands are tied. They would like to do something but can't-it's not their fault.

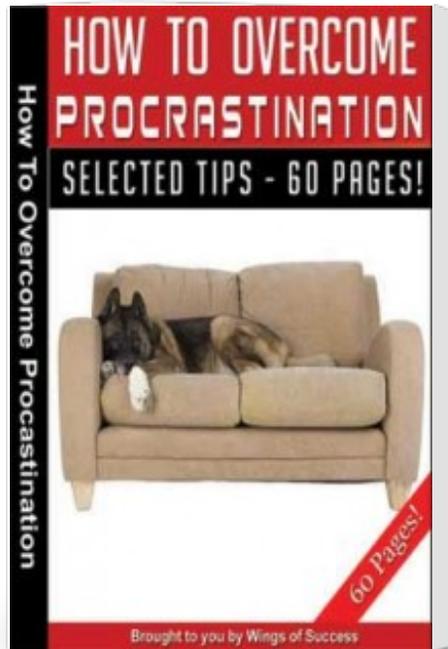
- All procrastination is the result of deluding ourselves. Procrastinators deny reality, refusing to accept responsibility for their lives. To defeat procrastination, we must stop playing games with ourselves. You can't overcome procrastination until you accept the fact that you are responsible for what you make of your life. That may be more honesty than many people are capable of, but there is no other way to achieve a fulfilling life.

We are not victims of our circumstances. You can do the things that need to be done. And you can learn to distinguish between the things that need to be done now and the things that can wait.

1. Have you written a list of your life's goals?

2. Have you have written a list of short-term goals (3-6 months)?

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