

KEVIN  
HOGAN

PROCRASTINATION TO  
PRODUCTIVITY



**A Guide to  
Increasing Your  
Everyday  
Productivity**

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*Design by Anne Rasschaert*

## Who is Kevin Hogan?

**Kevin Hogan** holds a doctorate in Psychology and is the author of fifteen books (and counting...). He is Body Language Expert and Unconscious Influence Expert to the BBC, the *New York Post* and dozens of popular magazines like *InTouch*, *First for Women*, *Success!*, and *Cosmopolitan*. He has become the go-to resource for analyzing key White House figures. Hogan has taught Persuasion and Influence at the University of St. Thomas Management Center and is a frequent media guest. Articles by and about him have appeared in *Success!*, *Redbook*, *Office Pro*, *Selling Power*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Maxim*, *Playboy* and numerous other publications. He was recently featured in a half dozen magazines (including *wProst*) in Poland after teaching persuasion and influence skills to that country's 350 leading sales managers.

Kevin Hogan is generally agreed to be the nation's leading body language expert. Kevin is a dynamic, well-known international public speaker, consultant and corporate trainer. He has trained persuasion, sales and marketing skills to leaders in the government of Poland, employees from Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks, Cargill, Pillsbury, Carlson Companies, Fortis Insurance, Great Clips, the State of Minnesota, 3M, The United States Postal Service and numerous other Fortune 500 companies. He recently spoke to The Inner Circle and at the Million Dollar Roundtable (MDRT) convention in Las Vegas.

His keynotes, seminars and workshops help companies sell, market and communicate more effectively. His cutting edge research into the mind and keen understanding of consumer behavior create a unique distillation of information never before released to the public. Each customized program he leads is fit specifically to the needs of the group or organization. Kevin will give your people new and easy to implement ideas to achieve excellence.

To make Kevin Hogan the dynamic speaker (read that as very dynamic, funny, informative and knock 'em dead!) for your next event, [e-mail kevin@kevinhogan.com](mailto:kevin@kevinhogan.com) with your event details and get a personal response.

Books by Kevin Hogan:

- ✓ 12 Factors of Business Success (Wiley Coming Fall 2008)
- ✓ The Secret Language of Business (Wiley 2008)
- ✓ Selling: Powerful New Strategies for Sales Success (Network 3000 Publishing 2007)
- ✓ Covert Persuasion (Wiley)
- ✓ The Science of Influence (Wiley)
- ✓ The Psychology of Persuasion: How to Persuade Others to Your Way of Thinking (Pelican Publishing)
- ✓ Talk Your Way to the Top: Communication Secrets that Will Change Your Life (Pelican Publishing)
- ✓ Selling Yourself to Others (Pelican Publishing)
- ✓ Can't Get Through: 8 Barriers to Communication (Pelican Publishing)
- ✓ The Gift: A Discovery of Love Happiness and Fulfillment (Network 3000 Publishing)
- ✓ Irresistible Attraction: Secrets of Personal Magnetism (Network 3000 Publishing)
- ✓ Covert Hypnosis: An Operator's Manual (Network 3000 Publishing)
- ✓ Tinnitus: Turning the Volume Down (Network 3000 Publishing)
- ✓ Through The Open Door: Secrets of Self Hypnosis (Pelican Publishing)
- ✓ The New Hypnotherapy Handbook: Hypnosis and Mindbody Healing (Network 3000 Publishing)

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## Chapter 1 The Anatomy of Procrastination: Why Do I Procrastinate?

If you want to understand why you procrastinate, you must first look beyond the ancient concept that laziness alone is the root of procrastination. If it were, procrastination would be easy to eliminate...but...of course...it's more complicated than that...

You are not **TRYING** to create a problem.

Your problem may be that you are afraid to take on that new project for fear of failure, or that you fear success and attention and feel you are not worthy of that attention, or that you feel you will not do a good job and everyone will judge you harshly.

At the nonconscious level, these drivers of procrastination are forms of self-sabotage, and I'll come back to that later. Fact is, there are many reasons why people procrastinate and those reasons may change depending on the person and the situation.

Sometimes it's hard to figure out WHY you are procrastinating.

BUT, if you just step back and start analyzing your procrastination, you'll find THAT is worthwhile, even if it is hard to come up with any answers in the beginning.

Eventually, this self-introspection and analysis will **pay off!**

**KEYPOINT:** Like so many other problems, procrastination is not THE problem but a response to other problems that creates a domino effect. When you procrastinate, you are trying to SOLVE another problem.

## Get to Know the Personality of Your Conscience

Ask yourself about “the personality of your conscience.” You know...the part of you that says, “don’t take that money out of the cash register, it isn’t yours.”

Exactly who are those little guys and girls who stand on your shoulder and remind you what you should be doing and judge you when you do NOT do what you should?

Here are a few possibilities:

### Carefree

This guy allows you to “be in the moment,” to feel carefree and to deny the reality of your procrastination, blaming it on others or telling you that it isn’t such a big deal to miss a deadline.

**KEY:** You must focus on the very real fact that your tendency to ignore projects and tasks and to seek pleasure instead, can only lead to failure.

If this is you, you aren’t likely to respond to the repeated signals to change, unless something really bad happens. You might fail a class or get fired, or lose a relationship because of your failure to fulfill promises and complete tasks.

Before this happens to you, you must find a way to put enough leverage on yourself and get your life in order!

Stop kidding yourself by thinking it is OK to blow off work or obligations and commitments just so you can have a good time. It’s OK to be in the moment; in fact it’s great to be in the moment. BUT, if you are there, making plans and decisions only as life happens you become a pleasure stimulus addict. (Take your pick: Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, whatever.)



Decide now: Take responsibility for your responsibilities and for your future, and focus on your long-term goals, or you will never achieve your potential and you are likely to lose friends, family, jobs and opportunities in the process.

Never give up enjoyable things but allow yourself to plan for more of those moments and do fewer in the moment so you can feed your kids...today and tomorrow!

### Critical

This voice can be cruel, mean-spirited and hypercritical, telling you that you will fail, that you are not capable of achieving your potential, and that you need to clean up your act, all at the same time.

Sending these mixed signals only results in one thing: you are frozen in place and do not start what you have to accomplish.

You may create your own life-obstacles by telling yourself that you will hate the task and you will be miserable while you are working on the task, or by saying that the task is stupid and you shouldn't have to do it, and feeling victimized.

Answer: Too bad. Too bad. File the lawsuit later.

OR, you may tell yourself that you will ONLY work on the task if you are guaranteed that the results will be perfect.

(Always try to avoid being God. He has no need for the company or competition. Do a good job. A really good job and get ON with it.)

OR perhaps you will stop a project because you think you are going to fail miserably – all the while telling yourself you really need to get this done and stop procrastinating!

Answer: **Don't LISTEN to your SELF.** Get the project done, **AND THEN listen to your SELF.**

You also need to look realistically at life and ask yourself why you think that everything you do must be fun and pleasant. It isn't...it isn't going to be and any hallucination pointed in this direction is a big self sabotage bomb waiting to go off...

Unless you are part of Generation X or Y, you can't possibly believe it is your right NEVER to do anything you find boring or unpleasant. True or true?

Ask yourself why you think a task is not worth doing unless you could be guaranteed that everyone would LOVE the outcome and it would be perfectly executed. STOP AND DO THIS.

### Chaotic

This voice really wants you to do your best and may try to help you achieve your goal, but it is disorganized and lacks the skill.

If you never learned how to organize and manage your time, you may find it hard to get things done, even if the voice on your shoulder is telling you that you should.

I watch people live in chaos. They have TONS of time but have no plan.

OR perhaps you were rewarded for putting things off in the past – maybe your parents always found an excuse for your behavior and told you it was OK, or someone picked up the task and completed it for you to cover for your failure.

If this is the case, you must start by learning some simple time management and organizational techniques.

You

**KEY:** First and foremost, you need to work on your **self-esteem** and **confidence**.

should also ask for help to stop the reward chain. Tell your friends and family not to cover for you or do your work for you. In fact, tell them what YOU are going to DO and to keep the pressure ON YOU until it's DONE.

Take total responsibility for the things you do not finish on time or the things you do that are not done well.

Everyone has his or her own method of escape. This method allows the procrastinator to justify and explain away the procrastination.

It may be fear, the need for excitement and entertainment, resentment over having to work on a task, manipulation or irrational expectations about how long something may take or how difficult it will be to accomplish.

What kind(s) of procrastinator are you?

1. Carefree
2. Critic
3. Chaotic
4. Mixture of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
5. Combination of all three

**Let's look at what happens when you procrastinate:**

1. Optimism about how long the project will take and how hard it will be to complete. It won't be hard, and it won't take that long so, therefore, I don't have to start NOW. (Say, "HA HA HA!")
2. Sudden panic as you realize that you are really behind schedule and you have to make up for lost time. (The Stress Response for being disorganized and having no plan or preparedness.)
3. Motivation to work on task at the last minute because you have been backed into a corner, all the while resenting your loss of freedom and the idea that you were forced to accomplish this project. (Get over this. College is over.)
4. The results may be OK (probably not up to your potential) and you may feel happy that you got it done, angry that you HAD to do it in the first place, perturbed that you didn't get the recognition you deserve, and/or superior that you were able to get the project done in so little time at the last minute, while others may have focused longer and harder on the project.

**KEYPOINT:** Most procrastinators can only continue to procrastinate if they spin the outcome of their procrastination in a positive light.

"I'm not going to stress out over X" (I'll let YOU stress out over X)

"There are things that are more important than X."

And, their willingness to make excuses, or to see the outcome as better than it was, or better than it MIGHT have been if they had really focused, is obviously not helping them at all!

As we said before, procrastination is a symptom of stuff that's more complex.

It doesn't matter whether your conscious voice is more like the Carefree conscience, or the Critic or the Chaotic profile.

**Procrastination comes from one or more of these issues:**

1. Motivation - You feel this project is irrelevant and has no meaning for you
2. Training - You feel you do not have the training or knowledge to accomplish this project, or you are uncertain about taking on something you have not done before
3. Standards - You are afraid you will not perform the task perfectly
4. Obligations - You may not be able to fulfill all of your obligations because you have so much to do
5. Assumptions - You believe that if you avoid or ignore the task it will evaporate. You assume that it will take less time or effort to accomplish
6. Fear - You are worried about how others may evaluate or judge you
7. Avoidance - You just hate doing this kind of thing.

We'll talk about how to address these issues later.

Think about the things that may be at the root of each of these issues. How many of these apply to you?

- **Self Esteem** – You struggle with feelings of incompetence, and poor self-esteem. (All but the narcissist do at some time or another.)

You insist on a high level of an extremely high standard of performance though you feel you are incapable of achieving this performance.

- **Pressure** – You use procrastination to deal with the pressure of daily life and all the competing obligations and tasks.

You know that if you get this project done, someone will just give you another project to do. And the gal in the cubicle next door gets paid the same to do less. (Welcome to government mentality.)

- **Control** – You use procrastination as a means of control.

You don't like to be pushed around and you feel that you should decide what to do and when to perform the task. You'll do what you want to, when you want to.

- **Justification** – You feel that others do not understand how busy you are and how complicated your life is.

It isn't that you procrastinate – it's just that others don't understand your problems.

You often feel like a victim and you are frustrated that others don't see how unfair it is.

The more often you procrastinate, the more you reinforce the behavior, and the harder it is to interrupt the cycle. You screw yourself in and get in so tight you can't get out...

**For every project on which you procrastinate, you reinforce:**

Inaction.... instead of... Action

Avoidance... instead of... Proactive Participation

Current State... instead of... Improved Condition

Fear... instead of... Confidence

Consider these examples of classic procrastination:

**John** – John is a very bright man who by rights should be in a management position in a research firm.

His skill and intellect is well respected and yet he cannot get out of the lower level research levels.

**Why?**

Because he can never meet a deadline. In spite of numerous chances and understanding managers, John is hopefully frozen in time.

He makes grand plans to finish his book and to document the research plan he wants to get approved, but he never finishes anything.

His family and wife have lost patience with what they perceive as apathy when, in fact, John is very frustrated.

He says he would change the situation if he could!

**Danielle** – Danielle is trying to complete her doctorate and has postponed it several times because she just can't seem to get the work done. She says that she works better under pressure, but when she waits until the last minute to do the work, she is unhappy with the results.

She often gets sick just at the wrong time, when something is due and again she misses a deadline.

She finds it hard to concentrate and is prone to insomnia when the pressure is on, but still she cannot change her ways.

For both of these people, habitual procrastination has become a nightmare that affects their health, their relationships and their success.

Yet, neither John nor Danielle knows how to change their situation. Does this sound familiar to you?

If so, you'll be pleased to know that I am going to give you some techniques and options you can use to stop procrastination and start achieving!

### ***Stop Procrastinating***

By analyzing your own style and reasons for procrastination, you can choose the techniques you feel will work best in your situation.

Remember, the list I showed you above for the possible issues at the heart of your procrastination?

Let's start by looking at some of the ways you can address these issues:

#### **Issue: Motivation**

**Problem:** You feel this project is irrelevant and has no meaning for you.

**Solution:** Find a way to make this project more interesting, delegate it to someone else if that is appropriate OR negotiate a reward or result with the person who assigned the task.

#### **Issue: Training**

**Problem:** You feel you do not have the training or knowledge to accomplish this project, or you are uncertain about taking on something you have not done before.

**Solution:** Be sure you fully understand the outcome everyone expects. If you need help, get support, advice, guidance or training from someone who is expert or better educated in this area.



**Issue: Standards**

**Problem:** You are afraid you will not perform on the project perfectly.

**Solution:** Analyze just how important the project is and determine how critical it is to strive for perfection. Consider what you would expect of a friend, or co-worker if they were performing on the project. Is perfection necessary, or even possible?

**Issue: Obligations**

**Problem:** You may not be able to fulfill all of your obligations because you have so much to do.

**Solution:** Try to renegotiate deadlines or schedules so that you can prioritize your tasks and get everything done on time.

**Issue: Assumptions**

**Problem:** You believe that if you avoid or ignore the project it will evaporate. You assume that it will take less time or effort to accomplish.

**Solution:** Accept that the project must be accomplished and establish a written plan to 'chunk' the items into smaller pieces with milestones to progress toward the end goal. Put reasonable times to each of these milestones and then reevaluate the timeline for completing the entire task.

**Issue: Fear**

**Problem:** You are worried about how others may evaluate or judge you.

**Solution:** Consider the true impact on your life. Will this task really be so important that others will scrutinize the outcome and are they really likely to care all that much about the results and judge you harshly?

### Issue: Avoidance

**Problem:** You just hate doing this kind of stuff.

**Solution:** Can you find a way to make it tolerable or give yourself a reward when you have completed the task to give you something to which you can look forward? Do it before anything else and just get it out of the way.

Circle the issues you feel apply to you and use them later for your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination!

Next, go back to the previous section of this ebook, and look at the items you identified as the 'root' of your issues:

**Self Worth** - If you constantly downplay your skills and knowledge and doubt your own ability you will feel like your success (when it happens) is just a factor of luck.

You may find it hard to accept a compliment on your work because you really don't feel you deserve it.

You may demand perfection from yourself even though you feel you can never achieve that perfection. [Lifestorms](http://www.store.kevinhogan.com) is a CD Program I developed to deal with this kind of life challenge. See the <http://www.store.kevinhogan.com>

You need to step back and put things in perspective and realize that not everything is critical enough to strive for perfection and that perfection is impossible, in any case.

Do the best you can but get the task done. Start it with plenty of time to allow yourself the focus and dedication to do a job of which you will be proud.

When someone compliments you, practice saying 'thank you' and moving on. Don't downplay your effort or display false modesty. Just accept the praise! Say, "Thank you, I appreciate that."

It may be hard at first, but it will get easier as you practice.

**Pressure** – If you find it hard to get a project or task started because you are swamped with other things, you may feel that nothing will get you out of this hole.

You tell yourself that even if you work really hard to accomplish this task, the only thing that will come of it is MORE WORK. So why bother?

To relieve the pressure, you need to have a plan for how to prioritize the items you must accomplish and what the steps are to see each task through to completion.

Start by looking at what you have to do and be honest about how important each project is.

Determine new deadlines if you need more time to get certain things done, or if something else must be completed before you can start on a particular project.

If **YOU** are setting the deadlines, you can determine how critical each item is by asking yourself what will happen if you don't get a particular task done by a certain date?

Will some catastrophe come down on you or someone else? Will you lose your job or a promotion? Will you fail a class or disappoint someone you have promised to help? (Why not assume, "yes," and then prepare for that possible reality!?)

Once you have your priorities in order and all your deadlines on the calendar, start to detail the tasks that you will need to accomplish to finish each 'phase' of the task.

In this way, you can set smaller milestones and you will **KNOW** you are accomplishing something along the way and feel better about the fact that you are making progress.

Pressure comes from feeling like you have **TOO MUCH TO DO** and you are making **NO PROGRESS** to complete **ANY OF THE THINGS** on your list!

## Control

If you are easily overwhelmed, or hate feeling controlled, you may feel that your situation is unfair.

Instead of getting frustrated and putting off the task to show others that you will not be pushed around, you should consider the things in your life over which you DO have control.

One of those things is the ability to give yourself a reward.

Plan a reward to enjoy yourself after you have completed the task and remind yourself that you DO have control over this task.

It is YOUR choice whether to do this task and you have chosen TO DO IT!

## Justification

If you are unhappy with someone or something, you may not try as hard as you would otherwise.

Get out of this mindset by telling yourself that it is YOU that is upset (not anyone else) and that your feelings of revenge or anger will only come back to hurt you in the long run.

Don't let the person, or situation, that has you upset, get in the way of your goals or success.

Do you remember what kind of "voice" you "hear"? Was it the Carefree voice, the Critical voice or the Chaotic voice?

Let's go back to these voices for a moment and see how we can quiet and manage these voices.

The trick is to understand why the voices say what they say and what issues you have that are influenced by the voice you hear.

**THEN**, diffuse the voice – silence it by changing your mindset.

The way you think and the things you tell yourself will, over time, have a positive effect on old habits.

## Carefree

The carefree voice is the voice of a child who wants only to do what THEY want to do and insists on distracting you from other tasks by thinking of things to do that are more pleasant.

This voice will tell you that there is no real problem with putting off the task. It will get done – all in good time!

The carefree voice is easy to listen to because it allows you to avoid the things you really don't feel like doing, or the things about which you are uncertain, or the things you don't LIKE to do.

You can diffuse this voice by telling yourself that you will have plenty of time to enjoy what you want to do.

You can even PLAN an event to take place after the completion date of the task to reward yourself.

Don't forget to remind yourself that there is a different kind of satisfaction in achieving a goal, even if the work itself is not engaging or fun.

You may be making someone else happy, or advancing yourself toward a longer-term goal, which will make you VERY happy when you get there.

Small milestones will give you more confidence and remind you that you are achieving something, and it will keep the carefree voice quiet.

## Critical

The critical voice finds you inferior in every way. If you DO accomplish a task, this critic will tell you that if it isn't perfect, it isn't good enough.

If you DON'T accomplish a task, the critic will tell you that you never get anything done and that you really need to get yourself together!

You can silence this voice by setting near-term goals and congratulating yourself and recognizing your achievements as you accomplish your milestones. AND, you can quiet that critic by reminding yourself that everything does not have to be perfect to be 'well done' and that trying your best is all you can do.

**KEY:** This voice speaks to your low self-worth and your uncertainty. It makes you wonder if you CAN accomplish the thing you are trying to make yourself do and pretty soon you are frozen and cannot move!

You should also remind yourself (and your critic) that you don't have to think so far out into the future to imagine the worst.

Instead, all you have to do is to START the task and keep going, one step at a time. The future will take care of itself!

Fend off the voice of doom by keeping tasks and outcomes in perspective. Remind yourself that even if the task isn't a complete success, it will be better than total failure or not even TRYING to do it and you will learn from the experience.

Focus on your strengths and skills and silence the critic!

### Chaotic

If this is the only voice you hear, you are in luck.

This type of procrastination is rooted mostly in the absence of organizational skills, which can easily be learned by taking a class, reading a book or watching a video.

Of course you'll have to practice, and it will take time to break the bad habits, but you can accomplish this with a little effort.

The chaotic voice is trying very hard to help you start and finish projects but this voice just doesn't have the information you need to get the job done! The planning and time management processes you learn will give you the ability to establish a calendar with milestones.

You can organize your work in such a way that you create 'chunks' of tasks to accomplish; all focused toward meeting your longer-term goal.

A large part of these processes involves things like 'Action Lists', 'To Do Lists', and writing goals and objectives for longer-term things, like becoming President of a company, or completing your degree by a certain date.

Strengthen your attention span by starting a project and focusing on the task for a half an hour.

Then give yourself a 15-minute break.

When the 15 minutes is finished, go back to work. Keep doing this (you can set a timer or alarm if that helps) until you gradually extend your ability to concentrate on a project and stay on target for several hours, with a small break every 2 hrs or so.

The chaotic voice is often heard by that part of you that just doesn't know where to begin - the part that gets easily overwhelmed and frustrated.

If you have a plan for small steps, and if you prove to yourself that you can focus on structured tasks for a reasonable period of time, you will begin to quiet the voice of chaos.

Tell yourself (and the voice) that you are learning new management skills every day, and talking to others to find out what works for them to keep them on track (calendars on the wall, project plans, specific goals and 'to do' lists, etc).

Every time you cross an item off your list, you silence the chaotic voice and prove that you are capable of learning structure and time management, and you CAN achieve your goals.

Now that you have considered the issues, the root of these issues and the techniques you can use to silence the voice on your shoulder, you can begin to sketch out some detail, as a first step toward...

***Making your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination***

*Complete the information below. You will use it later for your Personal Plan!*

For the purpose of this exercise, choose ONE task or activity you are putting off and describe it.

List the reasons you believe you are delaying this task or activity.

1)



2)

3)

4)

5)

For each reason you are delaying the activity or task, come up with a solution (a reason you SHOULD work on the task that will silence the issues that have caused you to procrastinate)

1)

2)

3)

4)



5)

Create an action plan with the major steps and activities, and associated dates, to get you to your goal of completing the task (these don't have to be detailed, but they should contain enough information to remind you of what needs to be done in each step. Use a separate sheet of paper, if you need to list more activities/dates or details.

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 1:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 2:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 3:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 4:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 5:

Date\_\_\_\_\_

End Date\_\_\_\_\_

Use this ONE task and your plan to complete that task as a 'test plan'. As you pursue your goal, write down thoughts and issues you encounter, and figure out how you are going to address these obstacles or issues when you tackle the next task.

## Chapter 2 Procrastination: Getting to the Core of the Problem

Over several articles, I've written a lot about getting past putting the important things off.

I know so many people who know they will never earn more for their family than they are today but just can't pull the trigger at either:

- A) starting an easy home style business that would add significantly to their bottom line or
- B) finishing projects that they've started.

I can think of at least 30 people who have started books, put time into starting a website but they set it aside, "wondering if it would work."

It does **NOT** work.  
IT never does.

You and only you decide if IT **will work**.

The car does not go to a gas station by itself and fill up with gasoline. But EVERYTIME YOU go to the gas station you fill the car up with gasoline.

There is no "wondering" if IT will work.

Geez, if Kevin Hogan, who has no grammatical skills whatsoever (I know this is true because reviewers at Amazon remind me of this all the time) can write 15 books and earn a ridiculous amount of money, **ANYONE** can.

I don't know what a gerund is. I don't know what dangling participles do. I don't know what a direct object is. I know you aren't supposed to end sentences with the word "is," like the last sentence....or use lots of....pauses...

But I never wonder if "IT" (the book) will sell.

It won't.

IT never does.

Either I choose it to happen or I don't.

And that's just one glaring example.

Our Internet web site shouldn't make the kind of money "it" generates. I can tell you a dozen reasons why, but the fact is, that IT doesn't generate money. I decide if it will and I put my attention there and THEN it does.

There is no question about the result.

Most people who put things off don't get things done once they start them...most people are pretty honest with themselves and recognize it. But it can really be helpful to quantify a future-threatening problem like procrastination. That's the purpose of this questionnaire you get to take today.

A questionnaire is not a scientific instrument. (I wish...) What this questionnaire does is allow you to take a snapshot of yourself as far as putting important things off in life.

There is no personality disorder or disease that goes along with a high or low score. This simply helps you find where you can trigger more positive behaviors...and like all good questionnaires, there is a self-scoring tool that should be used as a guide.

If you find the guide conflicts with who you see yourself as, then start logging each day what you wanted to be doing when you made your plan for the day, and contrast it with what really happened.

If you want to cheat and get a “perfect score,” just check the right hand column all the way down. If you want to be a procrastination martyr just check all the things under “often!”

(Remember this isn’t a test. No one sees this. Honest self examination is free of charge and causes no pain you haven’t felt already.)

OK, let’s get to it.

### Procrastination Questionnaire

#	Question	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or Never
1	When I am working on a task, I start thinking about something else or I begin to daydream			
2	I tend to focus on instant gratification that satisfies me rather than my goals.			
3	When I anticipate the worst it stops me in the tracks, demotivating me.			
4	I sell or represent a product or company that is of questionable reputation...leaving me to wonder if what I’m selling is the right thing to do. [KEY]			
5	I find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time			
6	I do things that I think need to be done whether they are the things that I have been asked or told to do or not.			
7	If I have a problem that I can’t get out of my head, it distracts me from other tasks			
8	I put off things I really don’t feel like doing or things I think may be difficult			
9	I waste a lot of time			
10	I daydream about grand success, but I don’t see any progress			

11	I act without thinking when there is a crisis or problem			
12	I delay tasks until it is nearly too late to get them completed			
13	I miss deadlines and fail to get things done – even if they are important to my success			
14	I can't get interested in anything unless it is entertaining, exciting or enjoyable			
15	I put off tasks I don't like until my well being is threatened or damaged.			
16	I make no significant progress toward my goals on most days			
17	I find myself doing one thing when I know I should be concentrating on something else – but I can't help myself			
18	I am easily distracted by something I find entertaining or enjoyable.			
19	If I don't feel like doing something, I find an excuse not to do it.			
20	I get anxious if I feel something is risky and I find it hard to continue with the task			
21	I always think things will turn out badly or that I will fail and that stops me from going on.			
22	I prefer to accomplish smaller things that give me pleasure than to work on important goals that would improve my life but take time to achieve			
23	I become upset when I have to postpone things that give me pleasure.			
24	Even if something isn't that important, if it is bothering me, I can't ignore it and it distracts me from other, more important, things.			
25	I often find it hard to stay on track.			
26	I think of things that are not related to what I am supposed to be working on, and I suspend the task at hand to do something different.			
27	I know I am going to get into trouble by putting off an important task, but I do it anyway.			

28	I put off doing things I don't feel like doing			
29	I wait until the last minute to do even the most important things			
30	I find it hard to do much more than start new projects or tasks, and once I get them started, I suspend them without completing them.			
31	I think I should stop procrastinating but I repeat my mistakes without changing my behavior.			
32	I try to focus on the task at hand but I get distracted before I know it.			
33	I waste a lot of time			
34	Your other personal challenge goes here....			

OK, let's see what results you've discovered in a general form:

**If you answered 'yes' or 'sometimes' to 1-10 of these questions**, you are probably pretty average. Sometimes, you feel overwhelmed and find it hard to focus or start new tasks, even if they are important. But, most of the time you avoid procrastination. You're attaining your goals and desired outcomes in life as long as you are indeed setting those goals and desired outcomes!

**If you answered 'yes' or 'sometimes' to 11-20 of these questions**, you have a challenge, and you should look at the areas in your life where you most often procrastinate, or the types of things you tend to put off. Get to the root of the problem and use the ideas I gave you last week to eliminate procrastination.

**If you answered 'yes' or 'sometimes' to 21-34 of these questions**, you are a person who really cares about yourself! You took the time to take a hard look at yourself and honestly see what is up in your life. You spend a lot of your time trying to catch up, doing things at the last minute – and not very well – and explaining your way out of jams. You should seriously consider the things you find difficult to do and determine what is holding you back. Use this information to establish a personal plan to prevent procrastination.



It's easy to say that self-sabotage is at the root of most procrastination. Maybe all procrastination. But that is so ambiguous to a lot of people, that we can break it down in a slightly different way.

**Procrastination typically comes from one or more of these issues:**

Issue	Problem
Motivation	You feel this task is irrelevant and has little or no meaning for you
Knowledge	You feel you do not have the training, skills, or knowledge to accomplish this task, or you are uncertain about taking on something you have not done before.
Standards	You are afraid you will not perform the task well, or, perfectly
Obligations	You may not be able to fulfill all of your obligations because you have so much to do
Assumptions	You believe that if you avoid or ignore the task it will evaporate, or perhaps you assume that it will take less time or effort to accomplish
Fear	You are worried about how others may evaluate or judge you...or you may judge yourself because you sell something you know is not a great value to your customer's
Avoidance	You just hate doing this particular task.

Think about the things that may be at the root of each of these issues. How many of these apply to you?

- **Self Esteem** – You struggle with feelings of incompetence, and poor self worth.

Maybe you insist on an extremely high standard of performance though you feel you are incapable of achieving this performance. Or maybe the project is just outside your comfort zone and you don't believe there is any reason to even try and take it on.

(The fact is, there is very little reason most projects, tasks, jobs, careers ...won't "work" for you...that exist outside of you. There are exceptions, but not many!)

- **Pressure** – You use procrastination to deal with the pressure of daily life and all the competing obligations and tasks.

You know that if you get this task done, someone will just give you another task to perform. (You get paid the same no matter what!)

- **Control** – You use procrastination as a means of control.

You don't like to be pushed around and you feel that you should decide what to do and when to perform the task.

- **Justification** – You feel that others do not understand how busy you are and how complicated your life is.

Perhaps it isn't so much that you procrastinate – it's just that others don't understand your problems.

Maybe, you often feel like a victim and you are frustrated that others don't see how unfair it is.

The more often you put important things off...things that could give you a great future, the more you reinforce the behavior, and the harder it is to interrupt the cycle.

For every task on which you procrastinate, you reinforce:

Inaction ..... instead of... Action
Avoidance... instead of... Proactive Participation
Current State instead of Improved Life and Meaning
Fear... instead of... Confidence

By doing some self analysis as to your own style and "reasons" (conscious or unconscious) for procrastination, you can choose the techniques you feel will work best in your situation.

Remember, the chart I showed you for the possible issues at the heart of your procrastination?

Let's start by looking at some of the ways you can address these issues:

Issue	Problem	Possible Solution
<b>Motivation</b>	You feel this task is irrelevant and has no meaning for you	Find a way to make this task more interesting, delegate it to someone else if that is appropriate OR negotiate a reward or result with the person who assigned the task. OR determine what the GREATER MEANING IS.
<b>Knowledge</b>	You feel you do not have the training or knowledge to accomplish this task, or you are uncertain about taking on something you have not done before	Be sure you fully understand the outcome everyone expects. If you need help, get support, advice, guidance or training from someone who is expert or better educated in this area. Realize that most things you think require a lot of knowledge are VERY DO-ABLE by very AVERAGE people after reading the "basic instructions" or manual. Do NOT be intimidated by things you "don't understand."
<b>Standards</b>	You are afraid you will not perform the task well or perfectly	Analyze the importance of the task and determine how critical it is to strive for perfection. If you were to do a GOOD job instead of a perfect job, would it pay off better than not doing it at all? Consider what you would expect of a friend, or co-worker if they were performing the task. Is perfection necessary, or even possible?
<b>Obligations</b>	You may not be able to fulfill all of your obligations because you have so much to do	Try to renegotiate deadlines or schedules so that you can prioritize your tasks and get everything done on time...especially things that will make your FUTURE bright.
<b>Assumptions</b>	You believe that if you avoid or ignore the task it will evaporate. You assume that it will	Accept that the task must be accomplished, just like going to the grocery store for food for your family, and establish a written plan to 'chunk' the

	take less time or effort to accomplish. Maybe it will go away.	items into smaller pieces with milestones to progress toward the end goal. Put reasonable times to each of these milestones and then reevaluate the timeline for completing the entire task.
<b>Fear</b>	You are worried about how others may evaluate or judge you	Consider the true impact on your life. Will this project really be so important that others will scrutinize the outcome and are they really likely to care all that much about the results and judge you harshly? And if it's about your fear of selling something that is a bad value, DO something about that.
<b>Avoidance</b>	You just hate doing this particular task	Can you find a way to make the task enjoyable or give yourself a reward when you have completed the task to give you something to which you can look forward? Is there MEANING in what you are doing beyond the fun-ness of the project? Do the task before anything else and just get it out of the way. You'll be glad you did!

Circle the issues you feel apply to you and use them later for your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination!

Next, go back and look at the items you checked as the 'root' of your issues:

- **Self Esteem** – If you constantly downplay your skills and knowledge and doubt your own ability you will feel like your success (when it happens) is just a factor of luck.

You may find it hard to accept a compliment on your work because you really don't feel you deserve it.

You may demand perfection from yourself even though, in your heart, you feel you can never achieve that perfection.

You may feel you don't have the knowledge, skills, or talent's do even to a mediocre job.

You need to step back and put things in perspective and realize that not everything is critical enough to strive for perfection and that perfection is impossible, in any case.

Do the best you can but get the project done. Start it with plenty of time to allow yourself the focus and dedication to do a job of which you will be proud.

When someone compliments you, practice saying 'thank you' and moving on.

Don't downplay your effort or display false modesty.

Just accept the praise!

"Thank you, I really appreciate that. It makes my day."

It may be hard at first, but it will get easier as you practice.

- **Pressure** – If you find it hard to get a project or task started because you are swamped with other things, you may feel that nothing will get you out of this hole.

You tell yourself that even if you work really hard to accomplish this task, the only thing that will come of it is MORE WORK. <> So why bother?

To relieve the pressure, you need to have a plan for how to prioritize the items you must accomplish and what the steps are to see each task through to completion.

Start by looking at what you have to do and be honest about the criticality (is that a word?) of each task. How important is it?! Negotiate new deadlines if you need more time to get certain things done, or if something else must be completed before you can start on a particular project.

If YOU are setting the deadlines, you can determine how critical each item is by asking yourself what will happen if you don't get a particular task done by a certain date?

Will some catastrophe befall you or someone else?

Will you lose your job or a promotion? Will you fail a class or disappoint someone you have promised to help?

Once you have your priorities in order and all your deadlines on the calendar, start to detail the tasks that you will need to accomplish to finish each 'phase' of the task.

In this way, you can set smaller milestones and shorter term goals, and you will KNOW you are accomplishing something along the way and feel better about the fact that you are making progress.

Pressure comes from feeling like you have TOO MUCH TO DO and you are making NO PROGRESS to complete ANY OF THE THINGS on your list!

- **Control** – If you are easily overwhelmed, or hate feeling controlled, you may feel that your situation is unfair.

Instead of getting frustrated and putting off the task to show others that you will not be pushed around, you should consider the things in your life over which you DO have control.

One of those things is the ability to give yourself a reward.

Plan a reward to enjoy yourself after you have completed the project and remind yourself that you DO have control over this project.

It is YOUR choice whether to do this task and you have chosen TO DO IT!

- **Justification** – If you are unhappy with someone or something, you may not try as hard as you would otherwise.

Get out of this mindset by telling yourself that it is YOU that is upset (not anyone else) and that your feelings of revenge or anger will only come back to hurt you in the long run.

I can tell you that many times I have done things that people I was upset with would benefit from. It stings at the time, but later you see yourself as someone who can “walk into the fire” and GET IT DONE under ANY circumstance.

Don't let the person, or situation, that has you upset, get in the way of your goals or success. And don't wait until you “feel better.” You may NEVER feel better about the person or whatever. Just get it done and do it now!

## Chapter 3 Procrastination or Productivity

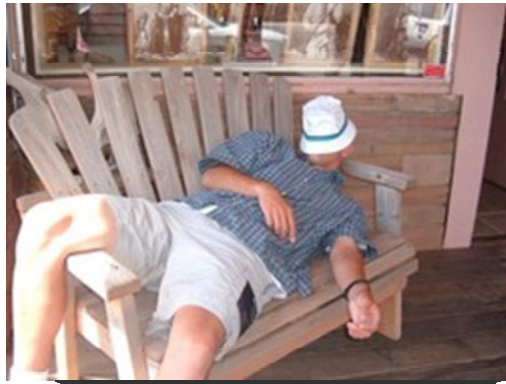
It usually happens to me in the summer.

My brain tells me it's fatigued.

It whines and grumbles when "it knows" full well that if it keeps spinning, it stays healthy. If it stops spinning...it probably won't get moving again.

So you crash for an hour and a half and then get back to working position (lying on the couch...oh, the poor brain has it soooooo tough) and you wake the brain up out of the hot and humid summer air doldrums.

There are basically two kinds of people in the world that we are living in - those that are productive, and those who procrastinate.



In the fast-paced world that we are living in, productivity can be achieved in the snap of a finger.

However, if you are slow even to bat an eyelid, someone may take away your golden opportunity to shine in life.

When opportunity comes along, it doesn't come looking JUST for you. It comes and you either seize it or someone else does.

It's as simple as that.

Procrastination is one of the most intense manifestations of self-sabotage that exists.

The time/money equation has never meant more than it does today.

In the U.S., people are getting laid off or fired every day because they aren't productive enough to justify their pay.



Businesses of all sizes are looking for good people who can maximize their time and produce results.

Entrepreneurs and salespeople are looking for those results from themselves of course, in addition to those who work with them.

In business, procrastinators are useless....and you do not let yourself ever fall victim to the whiney brain.

### What is Procrastination?

Procrastination, defined simply, is when an individual delays completing their tasks intentionally. Over time, this turns into a habit, as it is always easier to take the path with no resistance.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of habitual procrastination. The root causes vary from individual to individual.

**MESSAGE:** *You have chosen to not be in control of your life.*

The message of procrastination doesn't.

Forget the causes...that's the story that manifests...that everyone sees...that no one wants to hire, that no one wants to date...

While it should be easier to avoid these pitfalls if you are aware of them, more often than not we still commit the same mistakes. Procrastination is habit defeating choice...and you and I are fully aware of both the feeling of "whiney" and the rationale that go along with it, versus choosing to be valuable.

After all, I've only missed two weeks of *Coffee with Kevin Hogan* in the last year. That's better than the 5-7 I tell you I will take the week off.

I can RATIONALIZE the whininess (cool word huh?) and go to the lake.

It is merely human nature to try to cover up our life value by procrastinating away....

If we actually said, "Ugh, I'm whining, I want to kick back and just let it go," that would at least allow the recognition and validation of giving in to habit and inertia.

But instead people say, "I deserve..." and of course that is a schema of entitlement and that is danger sign 101.

Procrastination is a real life problem. It is a POWERFUL habit.

What's the first step in eradicating procrastination?

### What's the First Step in Eradicating Procrastination?

To overcome this devastating habit, people must first acknowledge the problem for what it is, instead of seeking the lay the blame somewhere else.

In other words, procrastination is a habit that can turn into an **ADDICTION**, for you to snowball your failure to accomplish, and a craving so intense that you will eventually crush yourself under the immense workload at the end of the day.

And that's what you remember when you go home.

Your brain conveniently shuts off the time you wasted Internet surfing, texting, talking, doodling and dreaming and hoping "The Secret" really will work.

Productive people on the other hand, are those who waste no time in completing their work as soon as possible. They know the power of focus and put their heart and soul into completing one tiny project after another, making them clear out before the end of the day so that they have time to watch Battlestar Galactica or go play ball or hang with the kids or whatever.

Productive people know how to handle their workload and also have time to do what is cool as well.

Productive people can sometimes do the same task in less time and with less effort than other people.

How?

Because they have experience and HABITS in place for getting stuff done.

No big revelation there.

The productive mind will accomplish project Z in 1/3 or 1/4 or 1/10 the time it takes the person who procrastinates.

Productive people typically "work" "hard" but they are sharp by nature of habit and tend to work very "smart," as well.

People who sit at the desk day after day in Nowhere Land making all their plans with Nobody...get laid off. They have let their habits turn into an addiction... as it FEELS oh so much better to not do anything and just relax....like hypnotizing your life away.

### Is the Procrastinator Happy?

Unfortunately the procrastinator isn't happy. They fall victim to their procrastination time and again.

They are late on their payments, they didn't expect to get laid off, they didn't think the partner would split, they didn't think to check their stock portfolio....

It's an addiction...a powerful one...that has glaring effects to everyone.

### Causes and Effects of Procrastination

Procrastination is a bad habit and you are definitely not alone if you procrastinate. Many people are procrastinators, and over time, it can cause severe damage to your life and your overall mental well being. You may find yourself feeling depressed, guilty or suffer from high levels of stress due to work piling up.

Even if someone is aware that they are avoiding, they are unable to pinpoint the exact reason why, and often "exist" in a "state of denial" (right next to Missouri), where we simply blame "our" procrastination on other things.

Procrastination is the habit of intentionally avoiding and delaying effective and valuable action, and it is very easy to get into this bad habit.

I look at people who procrastinate as having a life disease, which can be wiped out or spread.

More often than not, by the time a case of procrastination is identified, the individual has already suffered huge blows to their self-esteem and confidence, and are likely to be depressed, guilty or suffer from anxiety disorders, among others.

It's time to do some personal repair work.

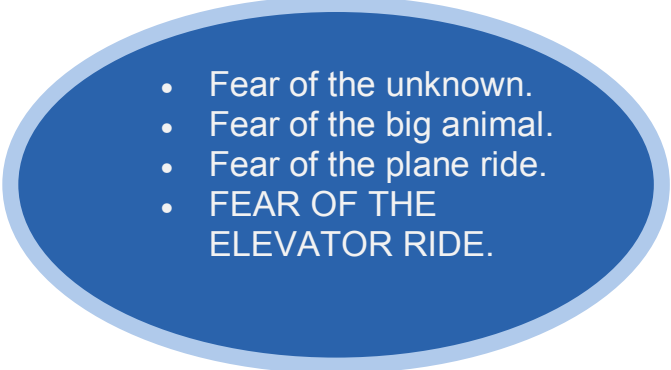
There are many causes of procrastination, and it certainly is different from individual to individual. It could be due to the person's character, or even be rooted in an event that was traumatizing on some level...or the simple habit(s)...the repetitive act of pushing off doing stuff over time, which develops into procrastination.

And it can really pay off big time, to go back and unearth the initial cause that sparked off this bad habit. Insight doesn't always heal but it's always...insightful!

Below is a list of possible causes of procrastination, and by running through these you can possibly identify similar causes in yourself.

### 1) Fear

Fear is one of the three driving and motivating life forces.

- 
- Fear of the unknown.
  - Fear of the big animal.
  - Fear of the plane ride.
  - FEAR OF THE ELEVATOR RIDE.

\*\*\*The fear of failure or success.

People who are afraid to fail, are fearful of putting in effort or to even try to attempt something.

It is much easier to blame failure on their neglecting to complete the task, than on incompetence on their part to do so.

Make sense?

Fear of success might seem far-fetched, but there are those that fear change.

And "success" and "change" are often interchangeable terms.

They are "happy" where they are, and while they know that they are capable of building a life, they fear the change in types of work or scope of work that comes with their improved and new capabilities. Hence, they would rather hide behind their apparent level of competence rather than put in the effort and ultimately succeed, as they fear being unable to cope with the new workload and expectations.

It would be...hard.

## 2) Overload and Inability to Prioritize

It is very common for all of us to be swamped with work.

It is the nature of life that there is stuff to do and it takes significant effort and significant actions to accomplish.

The to-do list can feel never ending, and the tasks seem to not stop.

The individual fears ever being able to complete anything, if not everything, and is unable to decide which task to start doing. This is similar to an inability to prioritize between the urgent and important, and what is less so.

Also, in high-stress and fast-paced jobs, all the tasks may be urgent and important, and that makes it more difficult because the individual does not know where to start. The person might be scared off into not doing anything.

We'll talk more about this later.

## 3) Poor Time Management

This occurs for two main reasons.

First, people far over-estimate what they can accomplish in a day. If a person is overconfident in his own abilities, he may risk putting off an important or difficult task to a later date because he believes that with his capabilities, he will be able to finish it in time.

This is a common disaster scenario for a lot of people.

What happens in real life is there are lots of "emergency situations" that need to be handled, thus leaving little time to do what needs to be done.

Fact is that "emergencies" are something productive people PLAN ON.

Preparation meeting opportunity is luck.

Being prepared for the bad things happening is plain old smart.

Because they happen a lot...especially if others are dependent on you.

(If one person is dependent on you, you have twice the opportunity for an "emergency." 5 dependents? 5 times the opportunity...make sense?)

Another person might stretch the number of hours available in a day unconsciously. He may plan his time without taking into account fatigue, meals or short breaks needed to keep the mind in tip-top shape.

There are people who fail to prioritize their time effectively.

It is always easier to do the simple and unimportant tasks first, but this problem goes beyond that when the individual is unable to differentiate between what needs to be done first, and what is less important.

#### 4) Boredom

An individual may also choose to procrastinate because the task is not challenging enough and he feels bored. He finds it difficult to concentrate on the task, and would rather be engaged in alternative activities.

This is especially the case for jobs that are repetitive and lengthy, and require very little thought. Not all work is exciting and stimulating, and certain tasks that are repetitive and unchallenging can cause the individual to be less motivated to excel and be productive.

There's a lot of reasons people can be feel bored, it's the response to the boredom that matters when it comes to productivity or what I've come to call "practicing for death" (procrastination).

#### 5) Poor Self-Esteem

There are a lot of people who constantly harbor thoughts that they are not good enough, or that they always fail, and are probably just stupid and incapable. This kind of negative thinking makes it difficult for them to attempt projects, especially important ones, as they feel so inadequate that they should not even be doing a task of this magnitude or importance.

**The deal is this: People are as stupid as they want to be, RIGHT NOW. They are as EFFECTIVE as they want to be, RIGHT NOW.**

The root cause of this form of thinking could be previous failures, or abrasive and abusive comments from people around them, causing them to be labeled with their own inadequacies and perceived shortcomings.

When people have stereotyped you, **USE THAT AS LEVERAGE TO SHOW THEM THEY ARE WRONG.**

Showing people how good you are is fun, showing people they are idiots is ...well...intoxicating.

In the past, people have underestimated me.

"He'll never have a successful book...should get a 'real job'."

:-)

And then the warp drives kick in.

People who suffer from low self-esteem become unduly affected by people's comments putting them down. They genuinely believe that they are inferior and incapable of working well which is RARELY TRUE.

I meet VERY FEW people that can't achieve great things.

Unfortunately, believing prolonged condemnation from peers and the people around have caused them to firmly believe that failure is the only thing they can excel in.

It's time to CHANGE (Success) WHO YOU LISTEN TO, WHO YOU HANG OUT WITH and WHO YOU BELIEVE IN.

## 6) Perfectionism

Some people have unrealistically high standards and expectations, and this causes them to procrastinate as they feel that they do not have the skills and abilities that are needed to complete it satisfactorily. They are afraid of attempting it, and not doing it perfectly, hence they make excuses that *they need to acquire more knowledge before they can attempt it.*

Sound familiar?

The best way to break out of this cycle is to tell yourself that you can do it, and the task is easier than what you think it is. Or perhaps, you need to

speak to your supervisor at work to draw up an accurate and realistic level of expectation.

If you are a perfectionist, your boss will probably be thrilled to tell you they admire your good work and would rather have you accomplish 100 tasks very well vs. 1 task perfectly.

## 7) Anger

This occurs when you find yourself avoiding the task, or simply refusing to complete it. The cause of this could be an argument with your superior, or your teacher or project team. The feelings of anger and resentment against them can translate into an unwillingness to do what they have assigned you to.

Another common reason for procrastination could be the anger felt at having the task forced upon you, when you are either unwilling or uninterested in it, and have expressed so and been ignored. This would cause feelings of resentment and result in avoidance.

And the "list" goes on...

There are many different reasons why people tend to procrastinate, and this is a bad habit that many people participate in. ...that MOST PEOPLE...participate in...

### PLEASE NOTE:

*There is a difference between being momentarily lazy, and procrastinating as a habit. By identifying the reason for your procrastination, you will be able to turn things around and finally get to get stuff done, enhance your productivity and feel a new sense of accomplishment and self esteem.*

- 
1. Fear
  2. Overload & Inability to Prioritize
  3. Poor Time Management
  4. Boredom
  5. Poor Self-Esteem
  6. Perfectionism
  7. Anger



## Chapter 4 Productivity vs. Procrastination

Another reason or trigger for procrastination could be the anger felt at having a task forced upon you, when you are either unwilling or uninterested in it, and have expressed so and been ignored. This certainly could cause feelings of resentment and result in avoidance, yes?

Make sense?

So we've hit on seven causes or triggers of procrastination and there are plenty more, but all for next time.

It's obvious that there are many different reasons why people procrastinate, and this is a crummy habit that many people are consorting with daily.



Worthy of note, there is a difference between being momentarily lazy, and procrastination as habit. By identifying the reason/trigger for your procrastination, you will be able to challenge it and finally get your work done and in short order.

### Effects of Procrastination

People who procrastinate develop feelings of guilt and stress, as the work piles up and becomes urgent. Procrastination on its own is something I've called, Practicing for Death. Very little describes it better....

Others have said the procrastination is the grave of opportunity. Indeed, procrastinate today and you lose countless opportunities that could have blossomed had you not procrastinated.

Procrastination really is a mess, with a slew of negative effects on your job, relationships and mental health.

### 1) Disorganization

People who procrastinate tend to be disorganized, as they neglect the important or the urgent work in favor of simple and EZ tasks. This leads to a pile up of tasks that soon turn urgent even if they are not important.

This leads to the individual finding it difficult to cope and rushing to deliver the urgent tasks, with little time to properly consider or evaluate their jobs. He will soon find himself perpetually stressed and overwhelmed. All that stuff that runs parallel with feelings of guilt and self-blame trigger even more bad feelings when he realizes that he could have gotten these tasks done long before they became urgent.

### 2) Avoidance

Due to the fear of being unable to deliver their tasks by the deadlines, or the fear of the results of doing so, procrastinators tend to start avoiding the people they have to report to, or the location itself. For example, they may call in sick to avoid having to explain why they cannot submit their work. Oft times, people procrastinate because they feel that they cannot adequately handle or complete the task, and hence choose to avoid it altogether.

### 3) Lost Opportunities

Whether at work or in school for your kids...pushing off the work that should have been done today causes you to lose out on opportunities that could get you ahead...way ahead... in life. A piece of work consistently well done, and a reputation for being stable and dependable could well get you the promotion that you have been eyeing.

A few ounces of procrastination can make all that disappear. Likewise, an individual who always hands in work late or incomplete and below the expected standards will not make it far in life, assuming he can keep his job in the first place.

#### 4) Your Relationships

A chronic procrastinator soon finds himself procrastinating even the simplest things that he has promised, simply because he did not mean to or sincerely want to finish the task.

You can find yourself promising your wife to fix up the shelves that she needs in the pantry, or to do your share of household chores. And yet you procrastinate till she has to call someone in to fix it, or do it herself. She gets upset, and so do you.

....all because of this stupid thing people are so good at....

**Procrastination** can wreck havoc on your relationships. Not just your wife, but also your children and your friends.

Promised your kids you will teach them to play baseball? ...or your friends that contact for a job interview, and never got round to doing it?

You will soon find yourself earning the irritation of the people around you.

All because of perpetual delay....

#### *A Few Ideas to Reduce Procrastination*

Procrastination is a bad habit that can turn into a rapidly downward spiraling journey. It starts off innocently as an avoidance of tasks and responsibilities that need to be fulfilled, but if allowed to develop, can turn into a nasty habit.

There are a lot of negative and harmful effects of procrastination. It is so important that you learn to recognize the signs and take action to stop procrastinating...now.

My best encouragement is to not think in terms of just doing little things to feel "success", but to attack BIG PROJECTS and do them to completion TODAY.

If you have acknowledged that you have a problem, it's time you sat up and did something about it. DON'T go to Procrastinators Anonymous! That's doing the same thing.

Don't let procrastination ruin your life, relationships and job.

Try one or more of these....

### **#1: Get It Done Thinking**

Your responsibilities can be done; no matter how daunting and challenging they may seem initially. Tell yourself that you WILL do it, and that you choose to do so. Recognize the fact that procrastinating is deadly, and that you choose to overcome it, either by speaking to someone you trust to guide you, or by buckling down and making stuff happen.

The key here is that you want to overcome your habit of procrastinating, and that you choose to MOVE on what has to be done.

### **#2: Be Well Equipped**

Part of getting any task done is having the right tools to do it. Make sure that you are well equipped mentally as well as physically. If it is an assignment that is due, make sure that you have done your research, or spoken to the clients, supervisors, tutors or superiors that you should have spoken to. Draw up a schedule to help you plan out what needs to be done, and what you have to do to accomplish your task.

### **#3: Be Realistic**

It is impossible to suddenly stop procrastinating. Understand that it is as much a bad habit similar to smoking or drugs, and you need consistent protracted effort to overcome this problem. Set yourself realistic goals, and draw up a chart to show yourself improving.

Give yourself rewards for finishing IMPORTANT tasks on time and before deadlines. With regards to your responsibilities, make realistic plans on how to go about doing them. Do not expect yourself to finish a 10,000-word project in a day. Space out your preparation and actual work over a reasonable amount of time.

#### #4: Prioritize

You have a dozen tasks to complete, but you need to pick one.

I've learned that when 20 things need to be done and you feel overwhelmed, the answer is to GRAB ONE and DO IT NOW.

Just don't pick some wimpy and EZ-to-do project. GET SOMETHING DONE THAT MATTERS.

Draw up a GET DONE TODAY list, and mark each item as A/B/C/D. Do the A/B tasks that are most important first. Plan your time wisely and allow for short coffee breaks, which are just as important for you to unwind and relax your mind so that you don't get too stressed.

I like 15-minute pillow stops every few hours.

I can pound out a lot of words or stuff in a half day but my brain can become mush easily. When it does, I get up and find my pillow and bury my face in it for 15 minutes, then get back to what's at hand.

There is everything good about taking 10 when you need it.

#### #5 Take Action and Set Big BUT DOABLE Targets

It is one thing to acknowledge a problem, and quite another to be willing to stand up and take control of your life.

There's no point in saying, "Yes I have a problem", and not taking any action to curb it or cure the problem.

It is simply a matter of having a positive and a **"DO IT UNTIL IT IS DONE"** attitude.

Don't think in terms of procrastinating; think in terms of getting **STUFF DONE NOW.**

## Chapter 5 Productivity vs. Procrastination

Picking up right where we left off in Chapter 4...

Let's begin our look at the entrepreneur (that includes salespeople) and his or her time-scheduling...their prioritization for optimization.

It is not just the basis of good work-flow, but it will also be the way to get this business from small to medium and then to large, if you like. This will happen as you get your time priorities right.

### A) Your first priority is sufficient sleep.

Sure, you'll pull an occasional all-nighter, especially early in your entrepreneurial ventures. There was a time I pulled a couple of all nighters per month.



But that's fine, as long as sleep matters.

Most adults need, and I mean *need*, 7 hours of sleep each night.

I'm not going to stay on this forever, but sleep is crucial to creativity, productivity, clear thinking and good decision-making.

You can only go so long with a screwed up sleep schedule before your work suffers.

I generally don't sleep but a max of six hours each night, but I often can get a nap in half-way through my day where I can get some REM sleep.

And it does matter.

Even for people who are getting seven hours each night, a 15-minute break every ninety minutes or so can be a good idea.

### How do you know when to break?

You break when you have read the same paragraph five times and you don't remember what it said in any of them.

Your brain is full, memory loaded and you are in need of a memory dump into your pillow, rebooting the system and coming back with nothing in your cache.

(I think we nailed that metaphor, eh?)

So, let's just say 7 hours of sleep each day or night, or whatever. But don't be running around sleep deprived for a week or your productivity will stop as if you were simply being inert again.

Simply put, everyone needs sleep but yes, you can have the occasional skipping of 2-3 hours of your sleep but if you turn that into a habit, your lack of sleep will eventually catch up with you and you will find that you no longer are operating at your optimal performance. And no matter how much harder you work, there is a cap to the quality of your work performance.

With this said, I am not enforcing the doctor's prescription of 8 hours of sleep daily with no interruptions and variation of sleeping patterns, rather, it is about knowing what your sleep patterns are.

Some people need that solid 8 hours of sleep before they can perform optimally in work the next day, whereas for others, they can do the same with just 6 hours of sleep. Others prefer to spread their naptime throughout the day, taking short naps now and then.

The late nights/early mornings may be due to business meetings, product completions or functions or whatever, be it personal or for your business, but you have to remember that health comes first.

### B) Handle your own tasks and be you

What attracts people to run their own business is that they have the flexibility to do whatever they want and whenever they want. For example, even during work, they can take a break and head down to Barnes and Noble to look around and see what is new on the shelves...or simply put on

a pair of shoes and go put some pavement under your feet for 20 minutes (sometimes the rough equivalent of a nap for me.)

Entrepreneurs also enjoy a lifestyle where they can get to a doc for a check up without getting a permission slip from some idiot in a corner office.

And maybe the biggest draw of being independent of cubicles is that you can actually get far more done than anyone residing in a cubicle could ever do.

The only time I have a "desk" is when I'm on the road and I have to sit at desk in the Suite. I don't like it. It is like a work-stop sign to me.

I simply can't be productive sitting at something that feels like an obligation.

Give me a pillow, a couch and the laptop and I'm good to go....so to speak...

Working how you WANT to work is really important in producing a lot of material.

If I'm lying down and typing away, I usually don't feel like I'm working as MUCH.

The other thing is that for some period of time, it's good for you to do your own thing. Outsourcing is great if you have great people to outsource to. And in that case, go for it.

I could outsource cutting the lawn, but that's exercise for me and time to clear the mind or think about an upcoming project that I wouldn't get done at the keyboard.

Last year I broke down and got housekeepers. I always thought, "I am NOT too 'good' to avoid cleaning the house."

And I'm not. I still do, again, activity that accomplishes trains behavior, BUT when you have too much to do, it's time to call the professionals. I haven't regretted it.

Ultimately, the entrepreneur needs help with the biz. You won't be able to run the whole show yourself for long. But two or three people can go a remarkably long way *if* they are the right people.



## YOU need to be doing the stuff that DRIVES YOUR BUSINESS.

Whether you are in sales or are responsible for the whole show, you need to be doing the things that others around you can't.

Obviously, as biz grows all this gets adjusted, but at first, until you're taking home, say, 250,000 per year the above is a good general outline.

In the case where your business is expanding faster than you thought it would, do not be afraid to approach others for help. It may be in the form of hiring workers to work for you and by this way you can delegate work and free up some of your time also for those things that are within your domain.

### C) Master the art of delegation

The art of delegation, it can be both a boon and a bane. There are people who use it as an excuse to slack off and eventually push away all responsibilities from their shoulders to those whom they delegate tasks to. If you do not take notice, this may eventually happen to you as well. The temptation of shrugging off the responsibilities you are required to carry out may be great, but remember, it is still your business and your family and your life at stake here.

Don't be stupid.

Delegate wisely.

If done correctly, it can greatly help you to free up your time and also optimize your time and capacity. Furthermore, one of the positive things about delegation is that *there may be other people who are better at doing certain things than you.*

In fact...there ARE!

For example, when you delegate jobs to people who work for you, it is evident you would be finding people that are competent in that particular area that you want to delegate to him or her. This way, you not only can free up your time for other things, you also ensure that whatever was delegated is placed into good hands.

Doing otherwise is a big fat headache producer.

Which Brings us to:

***D) You are human and remember - they are, too!***

- People you delegate to will make mistakes.
- Stupid mistakes.
- And often it will be your own fault.
- You weren't great at training or management.

It's often hard to accept that fact, but it is very real. Accept that mistakes will happen and do everything possible to ensure that things get back on track and fixed *fast*.

In managing your time, there is one specific necessity....

**E) Maintain a GET STUFF DONE list**

Maintaining a 'GET STUFF DONE' list is essential for every successful, productive person. You need to write this stuff down and you need to line it out when you complete a project, task or appointment. The process keeps you on track and acts as a bit of a reward system as well.

After you have created your own lists and produced a time management plan, it is time for you to put them into action. Words or thoughts alone would not produce any significant changes into your current situation and only through acting on what you have planned out can you hope to see a better result in the future.

You do not have to wait for years to see the results, Just weeks or months will do and after which, you can tweak it slightly or modify it after reviewing its performance for that period of time. This way, you can come up with the best plan for yourself and maximize your time and productivity in everything you do.

Especially for businesses, DO NOT cast your plan into stone right after producing it, business markets are not fixed and are liable to change, and obviously your plan has to change with them! Be flexible when running your own business and you will enjoy your business and your life even more than before.

### Remember, Time is an Asset

People in the business world have a saying that ***time is both your greatest asset and your greatest liability***. With each tick and each tock, time passes by and you can never get it back. Time should not be wasted, it should be **OPTIMIZED**.

Make sure that you are able to plan out the best action plan for yourself, and also produce optimally.

- Get your rest
- Take breaks when needed
- Take a walk every day
- Get focused on WHAT MATTERS in your business as far as PROFITABILITY.
- Spend time with the people you choose inside and outside of work

You do that - and you'll not only be productive, but you'll have a good life, too!

## Chapter 6 Winning Over Procrastination: Ten Steps to Stop Procrastination

Someone once said that, "Procrastination is like practicing for death," was a bit of a strong statement on my part.

I'm not so sure. Conquering procrastination is so unbelievably important to achieving anything in life.

People need to break the habit of procrastination if they are going to live any kind of a life. Procrastination is the thief of living. It's something that needs to be overcome.

I could show you lots of "ways" to stop procrastinating but then you'd have to choose one and procrastinators tend to ...procrastinate choosing, so instead I'm picking one "way" and giving you a useful process!

### Your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination

Your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination may include more complex strategies, and some simpler ones, that you find helpful in beating procrastination when the old habits emerge again.

**1) Think:** This is not a task I *\*must\** do, it is a task I *\*choose\** to do!

Make the conscious choice to DO IT and you will feel in control and "positive" about the project.

**2) Conclude** that, "I don't have to *\*complete\** the project today, I just have to *\*start\** the project today. (At least in most cases this is true.)

Understand that there is no need to be overwhelmed by thoughts of the final outcome or whether you will succeed. Just get moving on the task and execute your plan one step at a time.

**3) Think:** "Everything I do does not have to be perfect (nor can it be), I only have to do a very good job!

There is no such thing as perfect, and even if there were, you would not be able to achieve it every time you took on a task whether that task was critical or unimportant.

Remember, despite your desires to the contrary....You are human!

**4) By taking on this task think to yourself,** "I am not depriving myself of fun, but rather ENSURING that I will have fun when I do the project."

You can schedule a fun event to celebrate completion of your task, AND you can schedule free time and recreation during the time you are working on the task. This break from the task is healthy because it may give you more perspective on a problem you are trying to solve.

....And, it will certainly help you relax and clear your head. Just be sure you get back to work when it is time! Be hard on yourself until THIS BEHAVIOR becomes a habit.

**5) Think this metaphor:** I don't have to eat the entire meal all at one time. I can take small bites!

Break the project up into small pieces and look at the achievement of each milestone as a goal in and of itself. Small goals are more likely to be achieved than large goals and it's simple science and good sense to set goals you will achieve early in your process of developing self-discipline (the arguable opposite of procrastination).

Early on, reward yourself at the end of each task and look forward to completing the entire task successfully.

**6) Think to yourself,** "I don't have to pay attention, I CHOOSE to pay attention."

Much of the process of changing your habit of procrastination is based on changing your mind set. Prove to yourself that you WANT to do better by sweeping the cobwebs out of the corners.

Reorganize your workspace so that you limit distractions from noise, people and interruptions. Do NOT answer the stupid phone, especially your cell phone while working on projects.

Go through your files and papers and organize them into logical categories so you can find things easily and quickly.

**7) Think to yourself,** "my personal goal is to succeed and this task will help me succeed."

Look at every project, no matter how big or how small, as another opportunity to prove to your self, that YOU achieve your goals. Once setting/reaching outcomes becomes as simple as deciding to go to the store or the bathroom (sorry but you get the point), it REALLY does become that easy.

The way you approach even the smallest project tells others how dedicated and conscientious you are and what they can expect from you on the more critical projects.

**8) Think to yourself:** "I will give this project the attention and time it deserves, no more, no less."

Don't delay the really critical things you have to do by attending to those less important tasks you may find more enjoyable. This will end you up back in the procrastination dumper....

Be honest about priorities and always have a written list of priorities so that you don't get off track.

If you don't KNOW or you AREN'T SURE of your priorities, get help by asking someone who knows.

You shouldn't be saying, "I didn't know it was so important" when the task is not finished and your teacher, boss or friend has already been disappointed by your failure to complete the task.

**9) Think,** "I don't anticipate failure but I am prepared for it. I anticipate success but don't judge myself by the outcome as long as I ULTIMATELY succeed."

It is important to stay focused. Don't take a self-defeating attitude from the outset or you will be doomed. It's OK to think you might fail in fact, you NEED to consider that because you have to have a contingency plan. BUT once prepared for failure you get moving with the outcome of succeeding.

Understand that if you plan accordingly and spend the appropriate time on the project, and if you get help when you need it, you WILL ULTIMATELY succeed.

The success you achieve by completing the project will be better than not doing, it or doing it at the last minute so that it fails.

**10) If necessary**, think, "I will get help if this is a two or twenty person project. I lift what I can, then some, then ask for help."

**KEYPOINT:** Compliment yourself and celebrate when you succeed!  
(Especially if no one else does!)

Use friends, co-workers, and family to get a little cheerleading when you need it and to get advice, support or just a friendly ear to vent when you need to do so.

Ask your support network to help you stay on track by asking about the task and inquiring how it is going, etc.

If you can focus on this simple thought process when you begin to feel yourself sliding into procrastination, you will overcome many of the issues and habits that lead you to procrastinate.

As you establish your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination, remember that it will take time for you to change your bad habits.

So, give yourself time to change and anticipate some slips into bad habits occasionally. Eventually, your new habits will take hold and you will not procrastinate anymore. You're doing simple self-retraining!

In the meantime, keep your perspective, and be kind enough to forgive yourself when you slip. It normally doesn't make much difference (unless you are the mechanic on the airplane...).

### ...Establishing New Habits

If you want to break your OLD habits, you must establish NEW HABITS to take their place.

After you implement these new habits, time will pass, and THESE HABITS will become more familiar, and more dependable.

Focus on these new habits when you work on your Personal Plan to Prevent Procrastination.

See if you can come up with some of your own!

**KEYPOINT:**

Establish a plan that will help you achieve your goal.

**Plan Your Tasks**

PLAN may be a four-letter word, but it is the GOOD kind that you don't get in trouble saying in public...

Whenever you have a large task, or even a smaller project with a few components, you should plan how to attack the project.

If you have a plan of action, the voice of procrastination is not as likely to rear its horrifying head.

Start with a plan that includes the bare bones tasks you have to accomplish. Keep your plan simple.

Be sure that the projects you plan to accomplish will get you where you need to go.

Don't just write something down for the purpose of putting something on paper.

Before time gets away from you, do at least one of the things on the top of your list so that you feel more productive and accomplished.

Keep your tasks short (no more than 10-60 minutes in length). If they are longer tasks, break THOSE up into smaller tasks so that everything is bite-sized.

Be sure that each task has an associated time or date, as appropriate, by which you want to complete the project (a date for those things that will take more than one day to complete).

Be sure you include SHORT break time and time for other types of tasks so that you don't get bored or tired.

At the end of the day, take 10 minutes to cross off the things you completed.

**KEYPOINT:** Don't \*overplan\* or you will be inclined to procrastinate because the plan will seem so detailed and overwhelming.



Also take the time to jot down the things you want to get done the next day, or to change the plan you have already made for tomorrow, if that is appropriate.

The best business and time managers know that you shouldn't OVERDO! Do what is necessary to complete a task well and on time.

But, don't overdo it.

Think about it.

You wouldn't call in Michelangelo to paint the walls of a four-bedroom apartment!

**KEYPOINT:** If you don't like the project, do it first and get it out of the way!

When you are given a task, step back and look at the importance of the project and decide whether you really have to worry about this task being perfect, or whether you should just do the best you can.

**Keypoint:** Good enough is good enough. Perfectionism is a four letter word in disguise!

In fact, as I've said before, there is no such thing as perfection. (Even Angelina Jolie has flaws in her appearance...I'm sure...)

But, if you always strive for perfection and you accept nothing less, there is a tendency for the procrastinator to just stop in his tracks.

He knows that he can't achieve the results he wants, so he does nothing until the last minute and then, when he finally starts and finishes the project (IF he does) he is even MORE dissatisfied with the results.

If you have a task to do and there are parts of the job that you really dislike, do those first and get them out of the way.

You will feel better that they are finished and will be revitalized to complete the entire project, knowing you do not have to look forward to this dismal activity.

If you have more than one task that you dislike, you can alternate tasks so that you are doing some of the things you DO like to do, among the tasks you DO NOT like to do.

This will be a kind of reward and yet, it will keep you going toward your goal.

Start with the task you dislike the most and then alternate enjoyable and miserable tasks until you finish the job!

....or do what I do, which is do the stuff you can't stand first and then finish with the good stuff!

**KEYPOINT:** Make your workspace productive.

If you have others working with you, see if you can delegate some of the projects you do not like.

If EVERYONE hates a project, this may not be a fair and equitable thing to do, but if you ask around, you may find that, some people don't mind doing the task you hate.

Set up your workspace so that you are not distracted.

Face your desk away from the door to your cubicle so that you aren't constantly distracted by people walking by or by things going on outside your workspace.

If you can plan to make phone calls during certain times of the day, do so, and for the rest of the day send your calls to voicemail and turn off your pager.

If you like to work with music in the background, bring a CD player to work.

If ambient noise distracts you in a library or at work, plug in to your headphones and listen to your favorite music (just make it productive music that isn't too loud or distracting).

Sip your favorite drink, and bring a healthy snack to munch on while you are working.

This will ensure that you are not tempted to take too many breaks and waste time or get into conversations with others when you should be working.

Keep your desk and work space clean.

Buy a few folders or files and label your projects or topics. File them in a file drawer or desk so that they aren't all over your work surface.

### **FIND A PARTNER**

You can choose a friend who is also a procrastinator, or someone who is well organized and wants to help you establish good habits.

Meet or talk regularly about what you are working on and discuss the size of the project or task and the timetable.

Get suggestions on other ways to accomplish your goal or just vent to your partner and let them cheer you on with their support.

### **TREAT YOURSELF WELL**

Acknowledge that everyone needs a break. Taking a break will give you renewed mental clarity and dedication. Schedule your breaks and stick to the schedule.

When it is time to go back to work, GET BACK TO WORK.

When you complete a task or a project, reward and congratulate yourself. Be proud of your accomplishment and announce it to others.

They will share in your appreciation of your accomplishment and provide positive reinforcement to continue this new habit of GETTING THINGS DONE!

Rewarding your accomplishments encourages productivity.

### **USE YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK**

Studies reveal that those who ANNOUNCE their plans to accomplish a goal, whether it is losing 20 pounds, or getting a degree by a certain date, are less likely to procrastinate or abandon the goal.

Once you have shared your plans with others, you may find it embarrassing to have to explain why you failed to even START working toward your goal.

Surround yourself with positive role models who will help to keep you on track.

If you have friends or co-workers who will tempt you to go out and play when you have a critical project deadline, don't talk to them.

If you **MUST** or **WANT** to talk to them, be sure you have other, more rational voices, to counter their influence.

Find a mentor or other person to help you establish these new habits and provide advice and support, and talk to them often about your plans.

Ask for suggestions and recommendations when you need help.

If you are comfortable with a little nagging, ask one or two people to act as your conscience.

Ask them to remind you about tasks that have to be completed, or to ask you about your deadlines regularly, so that you don't allow yourself to ignore a task.

## ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Writers like Stephen King and other authors often talk about their routine. If you are working on a project alone, it is easy to lose steam and get entangled in other activities.

Especially if you hit a rough patch in the project and you don't want to face the problem.

Establish a routine to get you into the work mind set. Work at the same time of day, for the same number of hours.

Some people use the same music, or ritual to form a pattern that they brain instantly recognizes. This sends a signal to your brain that it is **TIME TO WORK**.

You are more likely to start and complete the task you want to accomplish when it is part of the routine of your day.

When you are used to going to the gym every day at 5:00 p.m., you will probably go, even if you are having one of those days where you don't **WANT** to go!

## Chapter 7 Overcoming Procrastination: The New Way...

If you want to change any behavior, especially something as sticky as overcoming procrastination, you must have new behaviors to take the place of old ones.

Lots of people try to just “get rid of bad habits,” but the brain doesn’t work that way.

**KEYPOINT:** After you implement new habits, time will pass, and \*the new chosen habits\* will become more familiar.

Creating a void does you little good. You need to clean out the old gunk and put in good stuff.

And as you know, FAMILIAR is the key.

Your brain has to become familiar with the new stuff. It has to be comfortable in the new behaviors. When you get “there” you have won.

### Plan your Projects...It starts here

To most people PLAN feels like a four letter word.

(You know, you stub your toe and yell, “Plan it!”)

Whenever you have a large project, or even a smaller project with a few components, you should plan like a good football coach.

If you have a plan of action, and you WORK your plan, procrastination will be pushed out of your Familiarity Zone. Then you literally find procrastinating hard to do. I know that I find it very, very hard to put off projects that have to be done.

Start with a plan that includes the most important stuff you have to accomplish.

Keep your plan simple.

Be sure that the tasks you plan to accomplish will get you where you need to go.

Most people spend 80% of the time doing the stuff that produces the proverbial 20% of the results. And they truly believe they are accomplishing something.

I don't know anything about building a house, so, let's say I want to build a house. I could choose to say start working on the door, the handle, the hinges. After all you need a door.

Or I could look at a house and go, "damn those are big things. Let's draw a picture of what the place is going to look like inside and out."

That seems a logical place to start. A simple plan. A blueprint.

**KEYPOINT:** Write down stuff that is the **BLUEPRINT** of your project. Establish a plan that will help you achieve your goal.

Then if you want a basement you start digging (after you know there are no electric/sewer lines below). You probably dig a few feet further down than you need to go.

I haven't even bought a door yet. But had I done so, it would have been a lot **EASIER** on my **THINKING** because it's pretty cut and dry what has to be done. There's nothing cut and dry about building a house in my mind.

So we pour cement or whatever and make sure it's got drainage and stuff, and then we put up basement walls and then build up with other walls, making sure there are holes and slots for wiring electricity and piping.

My brother is a carpenter so I don't want to embarrass myself here. The point is you get the big picture and do stuff that matters first. The darn door can go on later. It does no good to work on the door today.

Don't just write something down for the purpose of putting something on paper.

**Don't OVER PLAN** or you will be inclined to procrastinate because the plan will seem so detailed and overwhelming.

Some people never stop planning. That's called procrastination, which is the same as practicing for death. You have the blueprint, get to work.

**KEYPOINT:** You are teaching the brain that the plan = results...now and on all projects in the future.

While learning this process of kicking procrastination in the a\*\*, realize your brain will rebel. It has to. It's wired that way.

**THEREFORE:** Do tasks in chunks. (Say, no more than 10-60 minutes in length and \*check them OFF\*) You did it! You got something done that matters!

If they are longer tasks, break THOSE up into smaller tasks so that everything is bite-sized. You need to SEE that you have made progress not only on the house but on the blueprint as well. Blueprint = house.

Be sure that each task has a target date (or time) by which you WILL complete the task (a date for those things that will take more than one day to complete).

**KEYPOINT:** Before time "gets away from you," do at least one of the things on the top of your list so that you feel more productive and accomplished.

Be sure you include break time and time for other types of activities so that you don't get bored or tired.

**Example:** I just got back from a mile walk in the 43-degree air. It re-energized me after writing the first 1000 words of this chapter.

At the end of the day, take a minute to cross off the things you completed.

Also take the time to write down the things you want to get done the next day, or to change the plan you have already made for tomorrow, if that is appropriate. It's OK to adjust the plan. That's what a great football coach does.

### ***Procrastination and Perfection***

Unless you are my airplane's mechanic, perfection simply doesn't matter. Very little in life needs to be perfect.

People who are perfect don't make money or get anything done.

I was reading a review for Paul McCartney's latest album online. Some moron who knows too much about music is writing all of this, "his highs weren't like they used to be," and all kinds of similar critiques.

What an idiot.

Oh, his review had perfect grammar, punctuation and was paragraphed perfectly.

Yawn.

Perfection pretty much... gets you nothing.

The best business and time managers know that you shouldn't OVERDO! Do what is necessary to complete a task well and on time. And instead of overdoing, OVERDELIVER. Give people more value than they expect. Perfection does not equal value.

### **Think about it.**

As mentioned previously in this series, you wouldn't call in Michelangelo (you know the ceiling guy) to paint the walls of a four-bedroom apartment!

When you are given a task, step back and look at the importance of the task and decide whether you really have to worry about this task being perfect, or whether you should just do a great job.

If you always strive for perfection and you accept nothing less, there is a tendency for the procrastinator to just stop in his tracks.

He knows that he can't achieve the results he wants, so he does nothing until the last minute and then, when he finally starts and finishes the project (IF he does) he is even MORE dissatisfied with the results.

### ***Do the Stuff You Hate...FIRST***

If there is anything that has helped me be as productive as my reputation says, it's that I do stuff I don't like to do first. Then you always finish with stuff you LOVE. Your brain then associates project completion with love. Think about it. Who finishes projects when they save all the stuff they hate for last?

**Exactly.**



If you have a task to do and there are parts of the job that you really dislike, do those first and get them out of the way.

You will feel better that they are finished and will be revitalized to complete the entire project, knowing you do not have to look forward to this dismal activity.

If you have more than one task that you dislike, you can alternate tasks so that you are doing some of the things you DO like to do, among the tasks you DO NOT like to do.

THIS WORKS.

This will be a kind of reward and yet, it will keep you going toward your goal.

Start with the task you dislike the most and then alternate enjoyable and miserable tasks until you finish the job!

If you have others working with you, see if you can delegate some of the tasks you do not like. (There are people who enjoy doing stuff I can't stand!!)

If EVERYONE hates a task, this may not be a fair and equitable thing to do, but if you ask around, you may find that, some people don't mind doing the task you hate.

### ***Make Your Work "Space" More Productive***

Right now I'm watching a McCartney concert as I write this. It's from the tour I saw last year at the MGM in Vegas. It gives me energy, makes me feel good. Sometimes I take my eyes off Coffee for 30 seconds and my fingers keep typing. The better I feel the more I get done. The better the final product.

Now, if you find yourself going to the DVD for an hour, then you're going to have to set up your workspace so that you are not distracted.

If you work in a "cubicle" face your desk away from the door to your cubicle so that you aren't constantly distracted by people walking by or by things going on outside your workspace. Chitchat will steal time from you need to get stuff done. There are people who love you at home that want to see you. You can talk to them...or Mildred at the office.

**Take your pick.**

If you can plan to make phone calls during certain times of the day, do so, and for the rest of the day send your calls to voicemail and turn off your pager. I don't take or make phone calls except in rare cases. If you can avoid the same, do that.

If you like to work with music in the background, bring a CD player to work. Wear an iPod. If something gives you juice, turn it on! Chances are, your boss won't care if you make him more money.

If ambient noise distracts you in a library or at work, plug in to your headphones and listen to your favorite music (just make it productive music that isn't too loud or distracting).

Sip your favorite drink, and bring a healthy snack to munch on while you are working. This will ensure that you are not tempted to take too many breaks and waste time or get into conversations with others when you should be working.

Keep your desk and work space clean. Buy a few folders or files and label your projects or topics. File them in a file drawer or desk so that they aren't all over your work surface.

**Work Harder? Work Smarter? How About This: Produce the Time You Need to Have and Do All You Want**

Kevin has produced a Complete Time Production System that will help you gain control over every aspect of time. You produce a "Get-to-Do" list, not a "Have-to-Do" list!

[Time for Love, Time for Money: The Complete Time Production System. Six-CDs, Production System Workbook included](#)