



HOW TO PREVENT PROCRASTINATION

“DON'T FOOL YOURSELF THAT IMPORTANT THINGS CAN BE PUT OFF UNTIL TOMORROW;
THEY CAN BE PUT OFF FOREVER, OR NOT AT ALL.” – MIGNON MCLAUGHLIN

START AT THE ROOT

- Recognize that procrastination stems from habit. New habits are necessary, and will take time and commitment to develop.
- Understand the cause for procrastination, then develop strategies to fix it.
- Recognize the difference between an appropriate decision to delay, and an irrational postponement without justification.

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIES

- Tailor your environment for work. Close your door, clean up the clutter on your desk.
- Remove distractions such as snacks and magazines.
- If you work at home, treat your office as an office. Don't grab lunch before lunchtime or watch television during work time.

TASK STRATEGIES

Unpleasant tasks- Unpleasant tasks rarely turn out to be as bad as you think.

- Complete these tasks first and reward yourself for doing them.

Complex Projects- The job seems too big or will take too long to do now, so you put it off.

- Break large jobs into smaller, more manageable tasks. Plan and complete a start-up task, no matter how small.

Indecision- People delay because they can't make up their minds.

- Determine a time for making a decision and the criteria for making it. Share your deadline with others.

Fear of failure- People don't want to face the consequences of failure, so they delay.

- Develop a clear mental picture of the completed task and how you will feel at that time. Maintain a focus on the end result, not just the process. Remind yourself how good you'll feel when you're finished.

Lack of interest- You are tired or lazy. You're just not very interested in the task.

- Reward yourself for accomplishments. Go out for special lunches when major projects are completed. If you don't earn the reward, don't take it.
- Schedule the task for when you will be at your peak.

Perfectionism- People delay because they want to get the project perfect.

- Set deadlines for yourself. Tell other people your deadlines and encourage them to check up on you.
- Maintain your high standards, but recognize that sometimes 80% for you may well be 100% for someone else. Don't spend hours conducting detailed breakdowns when rough estimates would suffice.

Hostility towards a boss- People delay because they don't like the person who assigned the task.

- Review with your boss what exactly is needed. Clarify the expectations.
- Make a game out of unpleasant tasks. Give yourself points, or do a running commentary on yourself as you do the task.

Distraction, lack of focus- Sometimes losing concentration causes delays.

- Create a to-do list with priorities and block your time for projects.

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