

Procrastination



Mon, 2010-04-19 02:23 — Rockhardington

I found these things helpful on procrastination. I need these reminders because finals are coming up and I have a tendency to procrastinate most around finals.

Procrastination and shame seem to be related, I was reading that surprisingly, shame is the source of procrastination for some. And, of course, procrastination leads to more shame. And perfectionism, and depression, etc. What a mess! There's more than one way to claw out of this pit.

"Benjamin Franklin advised that the optimal strategy for high productivity is to split your days into one third work, one third play, and one third rest. Once again the suggestion is to guarantee your leisure time. Hold your work time and your play time as equally important, so one doesn't encroach upon the other."

**"It is never too late to be who you might have been" -
George Eliot**

"A common source of procrastination is the idea that we have to wait until we have a big block of time before starting on a task - any task. One of my great frustrations in life is not being able to get done everything I need to get done even when I am trying. I think this is because I don't make good

use of the many small pockets of time that are available throughout a day.

People who don't procrastinate and are efficient about getting stuff done tend to use these small pockets of time. Making use of this time is one of the purposes of the Getting Things Done (GTD) strategy (author David Allen) of organizing a to-do list by where you are rather than by project. When you're home and you have 15 minutes, you look at your "at home" list. When you're waiting in a doctor's office, you look at your "anywhere" list, and do something on that.

The importance of using small pockets of time as a differentiator between procrastinators and people who get things done was established in controlled studies by Robert Boice. He worked with tenure-track professors on writing articles for publication. (It's publish or perish in academia.) The professors who used small pockets of time - 15 minutes between classes, etc. - were the ones who published. The professors who were always waiting for a free afternoon never got any articles written because they never had a free afternoon!

Modern life is full of demands and interruptions. If you are waiting for a large block of time before you start something, you likely will never start it because the large block of time will never come. Learning to use make good use of small blocks of time is a key to getting things done."

**Procrastinators Anonymous
Tools for Recovery**

1. Break It Down: Break down projects into specific action steps; include preparation tasks in the breakdown.

2. Visualization: Plan what to do, then imagine yourself doing it. The more specific and vivid your visualization, the better. See yourself doing the task, and doing it well.

4. Ask Yourself Why: While you are visualizing doing the task, see if you can detect what it is about the task that feels odious to you, what uncomfortable feeling you are avoiding. Knowing what's behind the avoidance can help you get past it - for example, address real problems or ignore irrational fears.

4. Focus on Long-Term Consequences: Procrastinators have a tendency to focus on short-term pleasure, and shut out awareness of long-term consequences. Remind yourself how panicked and awful you'll feel if the task isn't done, then imagine how good it will feel when the task is finished.

5. Avoid Time Bingeing: One reason procrastinators dread starting is that once they start they don't let themselves stop. Plan to work on a task for a defined period of time, then set a timer. When the timer goes off, you're done.

6. Use Small Blocks of Time: Procrastinators often have trouble doing tasks in incremental steps, and wait for big blocks of time that never come. When you have small blocks of time, use them to work on the task at hand.

7. Avoid Perfectionism: Procrastinators have a tendency to spend more time on a task than it warrants, so tasks that should be quick to do take an agonizingly long time. Notice

this tendency and stop yourself. Some things require completion, not perfection.

8. Keep a Time Log: Increase your awareness of time by logging what you are doing throughout the day. This is a great diagnostic tool for discovering where your time went, and an excellent way to become better at estimating how long tasks take.

9. Develop Routines: To help structure your day and make a habit of things you always need to do, develop routines for what you do when you wake up, regular tasks of your workday, and what you need to do before going to bed.

10. Bookend Tasks and Time: Use the Bookending board on the P.A. Web site to check in throughout the day, or at the beginning or end of specific tasks you are dreading. Details are at the top of the Bookending board (www.procrastinators-anonymous.org).

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- [Rockhardington's blog](#)
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Comments

Mon, 2010-04-19 02:55 — Seeker



[1. Break It Down: Break down](#)

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LOL I would just spending all my time trying to get everything just right. I would never get started

2. Visualization: Plan what to do, then imagine yourself doing it. The more specific and vivid your visualization, the better. See yourself doing the task, and doing it well.

I have real problems visualizing. I am not sure why I just do.

4. Ask Yourself Why: While you are visualizing doing the task, see if you can detect what it is about the task that feels odious to you, what uncomfortable feeling you are avoiding. Knowing what's behind the avoidance can help you get past it - for example, address real problems or ignore irrational fears.

Well @@#@ that is what is wrong with me. I should just ignore my irrational fears

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I do focus on long term consequences that is part of why I am so messed up. I let that eat at me so much.

5. Avoid Time Bingeing: One reason procrastinators dread starting is that once they start they don't let themselves stop.

Plan to work on a task for a defined period of time, then set a timer. When the timer goes off, you're done.

I think my light OCD makes this near impossible. When I try this I just lose it and worry about what I stopped doing and do not get anything else done.

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As long as I can get the project done in the small block I should be ok. If not i would fall back to how I feel with number 5

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I have real trouble with this. It eats at me. I need to do it right or I just can not let it go.

8. Keep a Time Log: Increase your awareness of time by logging what you are doing throughout the day. This is a great diagnostic tool for discovering where your time went, and an excellent way to become better at estimating how long tasks take.

This would just make me feel like crap. I do so little. then the depression would just hurt more.

9. Develop Routines: To help structure your day and make a habit of things you always need to do, develop routines for what you do when you wake up, regular tasks of your workday, and what you need to do before going to bed.

well if I could do this I would not need 1 through 8. or even this list at all

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LOL if I started checking in throughout the day then I would live there like here and still get nothing done.

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Mon, 2010-04-19 08:04 — diamondsoul22



[omg we're all so much alike](#)

all of us who have issues with masturbation and porn all seem to have the same issues generally- ive never met people so similar to me before

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Mon, 2010-04-19 04:52 — Poet

[Procrastination is my issue too](#)

A strategy I am working on is taking a small break every hour for meditation/trance. I do an 8 minute trance to reset and get ready for the next burst of work. One issue with me is starting well in the morning, but deteriorating performance as the day goes on.

P.

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Mon, 2010-04-19 07:57 — diamondsoul22



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Sun,

these comments that i pasted here really struck me; its so true that i usually think i need big blocks of time to do something. Im constantly telling myself that "i cant do so and so task until i have the time to sit down for an extended period and really get into it."

Also, although I never saw the connection before reading this blog, I really am a time binger now that i think about it. I never connected my desire to procrastinate as linked to knowing that i wont stop once i start...but it is very true about me...that i cant seem to let a task go, or a certain aspect of a task go once i start...even if i find im not being productive; I tend to become obsessive compulsive about a task once i get into it. For example i have to give a presentation on narcotrafficking on wednesday that i havent even begun to organize (stood home from class today to get a project done for the same class on wed - when will i change) and i decided i wanted to start researching in a chronological fashion. so i begun searching for info about how drugs got started before the boom in narcotrafficking. im discovering that theres not to much info on this time period and everthing written tends to be about the 1970's onward, but nevertheless, my mind couldnt even fathom the thought of

skipping over the pre drug boom period to research more readily available info on 1970's forward and come back to it later.

Definitely a perfectionist omg i am such a perfectionist. there are times when ive chosen to not hand in a paper if i knew that i didn't have enough time to make it good quality. Ive been notorious throughout highschool and college for handing in my assignments late because i couldn't get them started on time or because i didnt think the quality was good enough (it shocks me that ive managed to get away with this in college to my luck)

Sometimes i really think i have a learning disorder. However, i cant also help but feel like my study behaviors and habits are really influenced by the limbic brain/dopamine/reward center (i tend to get these confused im not sure what makes them distinct) becuae when i think about it, im always extremely hot or cold with school. Its like my brain sees the activity of pursuing my studies from the perspective of reward/pleasure, or no reward/pleasure. For example, isnt studying compulsivly even when your not getting anything productive done the product of the brain seeing or feeling the particular study activity as a stimulliss, or that your brain is locking on to this particular activity in a compulsive manner because its trying to replicate the same experience that you once felt when you engaged in a compulsive activity that actually gave you a dopamine release. I start studying and I wont let go until i find the exact peice of information that im searching for whether its

important or not because my brain associates it with a release of dopamine. Does this make any sense??

Its kinda like what Marnia has said that when dopamine is in fluctuation its going to color the way you percieve all your experiences; Your going to percieve every experince through the lense of reward and pleasure. If im not motivated to carry out an assignment is it becuase i dont think it will give me a boost of dopamine - never mind whethe my grades are at stake- and when i do somehow find the will power to push myself into an assgnent, i still wont carry it out in a productive manner; im automatically going carry out in a compulsive manner becasue my limbic brain rationalizes that if im doing anything, it must give me some kind of lift here and now. Sorry for blabbering on all.....this topic really has me going. Im even the same way with cleaning my house. If im gonna clean, i have to go all out...its gotta be spring cleaning...ill let my house get really messy and disorganized until the point where i feel uterly depressed because i cant bear the mess anymore. Then ill spend hours on end cleaning until it looks so great that im feeling like "ahhh theres no place like home"

I remember one semester -years ago -when i managed to get through with excellent grades....despite wanting to pull my hair out and more- and how the next semster i had made the decision to drop out of school. I didnt show up to my finals or anything. My friends all thought i went nuts. I remember one of them asking me what was it that i thought that allowed me to do well last semester, and the only thing that i could think of...the only connection that i could make was

that i didnt masturbate. Of course i didnt tell my friends this because they would have thought i was nuts, and i myself only half believed that this could be true; but at the time it seemed like the only explanation. Back then, i was completely unfamiliar with orgasm and its neurological effects. as a matter a fact, i had made the decision to not masturbate because of a christian book i read where sex was the main subject called "No more sheets". it actually adressess most of the same issues that where struggeling with - like fantasizing, masturbating, ect, but without the perspective of science thus it tends to have more moral undertones. ANyway back then in my christian past life, i just wanted to please God and be a good christian, so that was my motivation for staying away from these destructive behaviors. (hope im not offending anybodies religous views; i have nothing against christianity, its just not for me) ANy way, the next semester after my highly sucesfull semester, i began maturbating again pretty frequently- mostly due to alot of stress i think, and lo behold- I was ready to drop out becasue my lack of focus and motivation was so great, and i was just so highly frustrated at myself for not being a good student. To this day im still not sure if formal education is for me, but i guess i would really be cutting myself short if i didnt give myself a chance to take another semester of clases and try to abstain from maturbation at the same time givin the insight ive obtained since discovering this website.

ANyway, whoever read this post, thank you, i know they tend to be kinda repetitive...sorry.

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Mon, 2010-04-19 09:19 — Rockhardington



[We are very similar, no](#)

We are very similar, no doubt. Good insights on this, I cant believe half the stuff my brain does to undermine my efforts in school either. It really seems like school brings out the procrastinator in a lot of people.

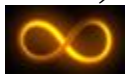
It seems that we can get a hit if we approach a task compulsively and that's what were after. Ive had my perfectionism work out well for a while too. At my peak, I was getting very good grades double majoring in two different difficult majors, plus honors classes, volunteering, etc. Thats also when I burnt out and went into an emotional meltdown and picked up my addiction and started having a hard time doing anything.

Courage is knowing what not to fear.

-Plato

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Mon, 2010-04-19 12:11 — Marnia



[Diamond,](#)

I think you really are unraveling your own mystery. We humans need ways of uncoiling our stress without blasting

our neural circuitry with too much of a good thing. It can really make our canoes tip wildly...and then it seems like everything else is The Problem.

Now that you see the problem, take heart.

I generally do NOT have a procrastination problem. Maybe for the same reason that addictions make me want my freedom back. That is, I don't like the discomfort...of withdrawal...or of having to rush something, as I never do my best work under pressure. On the other hand, my best friend is just the opposite, and one consequence is that she's much better "on her feet." She can fly by the seat of her pants, under pressure. I really admire that about her.

So you procrastinators may have other useful skills - now, or at the end of the day. Just a thought.

Thinking about why I don't usually have a procrastination problem.... One thing I do is to start with the part of the project that I think I'm going to like best...either because it's something I'm burning to write down or learn about, or because I think there's going to be lots of material readily available, so it will feel more effortless. In other words, I start out with something "rewarding." Like starting your sled on a steep part of the hill, to get some momentum. 😊 When I finish that I think, "Wow! I've already got a big chunk of this done. Now I just have to fill in the blanks." The whole thing seems more manageable somehow this way.

When I'm not feeling at all creative, I do something that requires mindless, piecemeal busywork...like digging up

images or filling in links. That would be a way I would use "little windows of time" productively.

Not sure any of this helps...because, deep down, I'm persuaded that the real answer is to keep my brain chemistry in balance. Not only does that make it easier to get my priorities straight. I think it also draws "smooth water" to my canoe trip. But each person can make their own determination about the latter.

Anyway, good luck with that presentation. 😊

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Mon, 2010-04-19 19:36 — Cole

[Procrastination?](#)

Aw, I'll deal with that tomorrow.

Sorry, couldn't resist. 🙄

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Mon, 2010-04-19 20:37 — diamondsoul22



[wow Sun, Sounds like you had](#)

wow Sun,
Sounds like you had your plate full. i was like that at one time too...trying to live up to the image of superwoman;

holding down a full time job and taking 4 classes...and masturbating regularly....that didnt work out to well.

Marnia, i agree that going with the easy tasks first is definitely the way to go. It tends to have the same kind of motivational effects on me that it does on you. Im also the sort of person that doesn't function well under pressure. I prefer to take my time. But on the overall, i agree that the strategies aren't as important as keeping the brain chemistry in balance like you say. my book shelf filled with books collecting dust, like "procrastination for dummies" and "study power" attest to this truth i think. Anyway, im hoping this presentation will go ok on wed. im working on it at this moment.

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