

Beat Procrastination

Once and For All

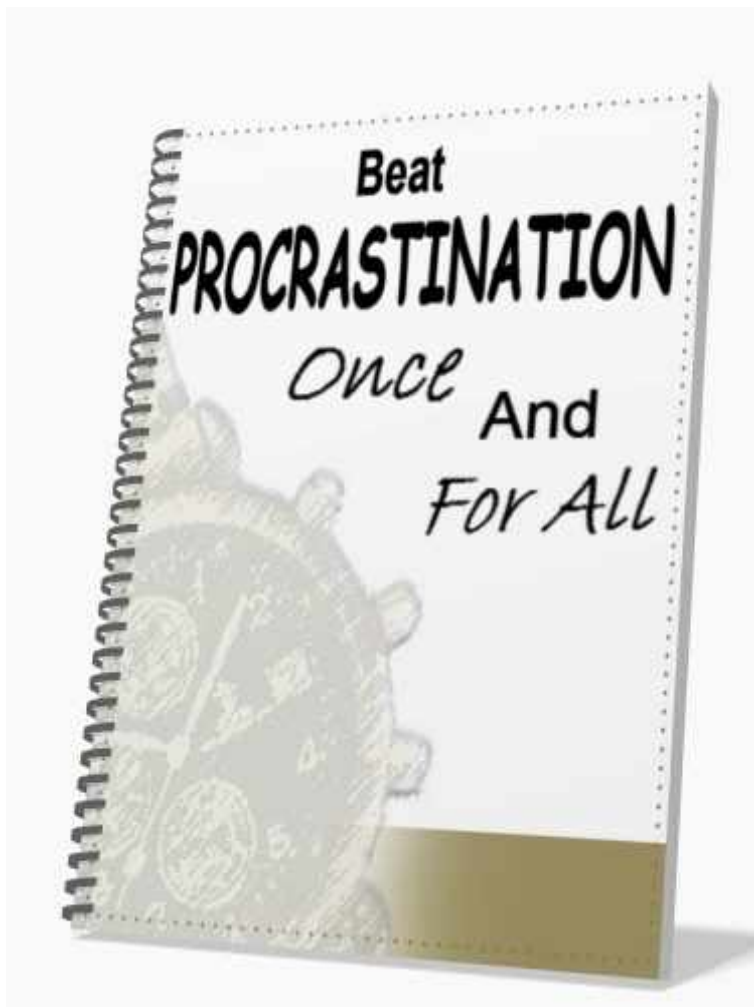


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CHAPTER 1 – What is Procrastination?

Everyone does it, including you. You have things to do, important things or mundane things, and you put off doing them until the last minute. If procrastination were an Olympic event you might be in the running for a gold medal, you're *that* good at it.

You make jokes about being a world class procrastinator with your friends, telling them that sure, you could finish that project right now if you wanted to, but (yawn) you're just going to do it tomorrow.

Procrastination is putting something off until later, either due to carelessness or habitual laziness. It's putting off till tomorrow what you just as easily could have finished up today. A procrastinator postpones or needlessly delays accomplishing something – just because.

Students are notorious for engaging in this behavior. Books have to be read, papers need to be written, and tests must be studied for, but none of this is done or even started until the very last minute. Students who procrastinate generally spend a great deal of time pulling all-nighters in order to catch up to where they need to be or to cram for the big test in the morning.

Procrastination goes beyond putting off chores and homework. A person who is habitually late, whether it is to a wedding or to a meeting, is someone who procrastinates getting ready to leave. Maybe they don't start getting ready until it's nearly time to leave or they move so slowly that by the time they should leave for the event, they're still way behind schedule.

Why do we let things slide until we're in a time crunch and the deadline is looming and we're not even close to being finished? Why do we procrastinate?

CHAPTER 2 – Why Do You Do It?

The behavior of procrastination affects almost everyone at one time or another in their life. For some, it is a continuous habit, part of who they are, a not-so-endearing character trait. For others, it may be a situational thing, which may not affect too many events in their life. In either case, there are many reasons why you put off doing the things you want and need to do.

Because You Are Afraid

No one likes to admit that they fear something, but fear might just be the reason you put off doing what you know you should do. Whether it's fear of failure or fear of success, it's still fear.

Fear is a paralyzing emotion. It has the ability to stop us in our tracks – literally. Some writers fear failure so they never write that epic novel they have churning around inside their head; some fear success and the result is the same.

If you procrastinate compulsively, and who doesn't, then you may be experiencing a degree of fear, which is keeping you from accomplishing the task at hand

Because You Don't Think the Task Is Important Enough

You don't place a high enough priority on the task at hand, it's not vital and so it's not worthy of you starting it.

You know the task needs to be done and you may already have decided that you're the one who must do it. However, there is always something else more important on your to-do list that keeps bumping that particular job back to the bottom.

Let's say you know that the dishes need to be removed from the dishwasher. Instead of simply taking the few minutes to take all the dishes from the washer and put them in the cupboard, you tell yourself you'll get to them later – after you go grocery shopping. You think to yourself grocery shopping is more important because if you don't have food, you'll starve to death. Besides, no one can see that the dishwasher is full of clean dishes.

After grocery shopping you need to eat because you're hungry. Besides, you can just take a plate out of the dishwasher and use that. That's *sort of* taking it out, isn't it? Emptying the dishwasher isn't a priority and that's why you procrastinate doing it.

You Don't Have Enough Knowledge to Do the Task

Another reason you may procrastinate beginning a project is because you simply don't know everything you need to know in order to start and complete the task. You may not have consciously admitted this to yourself, but deep down you realize you lack the necessary knowledge and this lack manifests itself as an aversion to starting the project.

You need to determine whether or not this is because you haven't collected all the information on what you have to do or simply because you want to stall for more time – usually out of fear.

Because You Are Too Busy

Life is demanding. We have jobs and commitments and sometimes, just sometimes, we can't get to a particular task because we've run out of time in our busy day to complete one more chore.

Because You Have Gotten Away With It Before

Unfortunately, procrastination can reinforce itself. If we avoid something we don't want to do, like cleaning out the gutters, by engaging in behavior that we *want* to engage in, like hanging out with friends, then we can say that putting it off wasn't that bad after all. And besides, we had fun while we procrastinated.