



Guide FOR Procrastinators



WORKSTYLE-LIFESTYLE CONSULTING

Guide for Procrastinators

Lowell Ann Fuglsang

© Workstyle-Lifestyle Consulting
#215 – 1030 Pendergast St
Victoria, BC V8V 2X2
Phone 205.686-3640 •

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Procrastination:

- putting actions off until later
- delaying
- postponing until tomorrow

We All Do It!

As a coach, I have noticed that most people procrastinate over something. Of course the reasons are not the same for everybody, but when left unchecked, the affects are. Clients report that they feel anxious and start jumping from one thing to another. Their sense of purpose begins to disappear and everything feels out of control. This kind of stress has a very detrimental effect on our eating and sleeping habits and ultimately our overall health.

Causes

The causes of procrastination fall into several categories:

1. Personality Needs

- a. People who love new ideas, creativity, and excitement. They love to start things, but lack the energy/interest/focus to finish them and will procrastinate with the details. This is the typical adrenalin junkie.
- b. People who have a need for control. They will postpone tasks that someone else has decided upon, or tasks where the end result is questionable.
- c. People who need all the facts and details. They need time to mull things over and plan and will put things off until the last possible moment to be sure nothing is missed.
- d. People who want to ensure that everyone is content and happy. They will put off public presentations, and will postpone activities that have potential for conflict.

2. Attitude Related Factors

- a. Don't enjoy the work but haven't recognized or admitted that it's time for a change.
- b. Love the work so much that they take on more than they can handle;
- c. The work is repetitive, boring or of no interest;
- d. The love of bright and shiny new ideas, people and activities, make the usual a drudge;
- e. Addiction to adrenaline – makes one feel alive;
- f. Creative work is more highly valued than routine work;
- g. A means of checking out. An indirect way of saying "no". A desire for autonomy and independence.
- h. Pushing boundaries to find the limits;
- i. Fear of failure – Perfectionism- fear that it's not good enough;
- j. Fear of success – more responsibility or higher expectations come with success;
- k. The need for decisions that are uncomfortable to make;
- l. Feeling inadequate.

3. Knowledge Based Factors

- a. Inadequate information
- b. Haven't sorted out the real objectives and priorities;
- c. Don't understand or know the reasons for deadlines;
- d. Unclear about the time it takes to do the task;

e. Unaware of the possibilities

4. Environmental Conditions

a. Clutter

b. Noise

c. Disorganization

d. Unmanageable workload volume

e. Lack of process to follow

f. Diversions such as the Internet

g. Lack of tools

h. Interruptions by other people

5. Physical Barriers

a. Lack of energy

b. Lack of sleep

c. Burnout – need for a rejuvenating break

d. Depression

e. Illness

f. Attention Deficit Disorder

Strategies for Coping with Procrastination.

1. **Self-awareness.** Journal at the end of each day:
 - a. Did I procrastinate today? In what activity did I procrastinate?
 - b. What was it about the work that caused me to procrastinate? What excuses did I make about it? Make a list of them. (Yuen and Burka)
 - c. How long did I procrastinate? What was the impact?
 - d. What was the catalyst that stopped it?
 - e. How did I feel about procrastinating?
 - f. What were my thoughts when I finally completed the task?
2. **Self-monitor.** Notice when the excuses occur. Verbalize the excuses - hearing them has a way of weakening them.
3. **Affirmations.** Use phrases like "Do everything immediately", "Don't procrastinate", "Just do it!", "Perfection is impossible", "Just do the best that I can."□. Place them where you cannot avoid seeing them (screen saver, poster, etc.)
4. **Catch yourself.** When you catch yourself procrastinating, acknowledge it, and give yourself permission to do so in 15 minutes time, then work on the project till then.
5. **Commit to small chunks of time.** Instead of committing to completing the task, commit to five minutes only. Then decide if you want to do another five minutes, and so on.
6. **Swiss Cheese Approach.** Break the project down into small chunks that can be done in five minutes - instant

tasks. Pick the instant tasks off five minutes at a time. Poking holes in that huge chunk of work makes it seem less daunting. (Lakein)

7. **Project Approach.** Break the project down into sections and set mini-deadlines and milestones, leaving extra time at the end to let it sit for rumination time. If you love working on line, try [Trello](#)
8. **Reward Completions.** Do something you LOVE doing now.
9. **Don't Expect Miracles.** Procrastination is resistant to change. Research has shown that there are three phases to overcoming procrastination:(Yuen and Burka)
 - a. **Phase One** is optimism. You believe procrastination can be beat quickly, painlessly and forever.
 - b. **Phase Two** is despair. You get discouraged when lifelong habits don't change quickly.
 - c. **Phase Three** is insight. You gain insights about how long and what changes in self-talk are required to change perfectionism and your natural style.

Resources

An excellent way to ensure that you get a project completed that you have been putting off for some time is to have **An Integrity Day**. You connect with 2 to 4 others who have a project to complete as well. You agree on a day and start time that you will work on your project.

What you need: A telephone bridge line. I have had success with Mr. Conference www.EasyConference.com. There is no cost other than the long distance charges.

Another method is the Daisy Chain. If you all have the three way calling feature in your phone package, you follow this sequence: Caller # 1 calls #2 and #3. Then Caller #2 calls #4. Then Caller #3 calls #5. When you are done everyone is hooked into the same line without paying conference charges.

Google+ Hangouts and Skype are free and can accommodate up to ten people.

What happens: At the top of the meeting hour everyone calls in and each person states what their project for the day is and there is agreement on the time frame (what time will we finish?). Then each person says where they will begin and how much they plan to accomplish in the next hour.

Encouragements and laughs are exchanged - make it fun! At the top of the next hour everyone calls in again and this time reports what they achieved. Others make congratulatory noises. New goals are set for the next hour. This pattern is repeated until the finish hour when everyone celebrates their accomplishments.

If you would like some help organizing an Integrity Day, contact me at <mailto:coach@lowellann.com>.

Coaching Questions

1. Can you recall a project that you just dove into and completed with enthusiasm?
2. What kind of project was it? What was it about this project that made you enthusiastic?
3. Describe the environments (physical, relationships, ideas/information, intangibles, self, network, nature) that this project occurred in.
4. How could you apply these insights to future projects?

I hope you found this e-Book helpful. Please feel free to share it with your colleagues, friends and family.

Please visit my [website](#) where you will find details about my new **Solo Enterprise Program**.

Be sure to sign up to receive the [Being Your Own CEO](#) blog



Sincerely, *Lowell Ann*