



PROCRASTINATION

Probably the biggest hurdle to clear on the path to becoming more productive and effective is to understand procrastination. It's more than a nasty word, full of accusation and negative connotations. In reality, procrastination can be both positive and negative.

Procrastination can be a helpful tool if used deliberately and sparingly. Deferring starting or completing a project can give you time to think it through, change or add to it, or even decide if you want to do it at all.

But procrastination works against you when you've haven't made the necessary decisions, or you have made them and don't advance toward what you've decided to do. Deferred tasks, though, require tracking and revisiting. That alone makes swift decisions desirable.

The first step in breaking through the procrastination habit is learning to recognize when it's controlling you instead of the other way around. Look for patterns in what you tend to procrastinate about.

Be aware of a feeling of unease as undone chores and papers pile up. Notice if you consistently pay late fees or hear yourself making excuses for uncompleted tasks. If someone challenges you with the observation that you are procrastinating realize there is probably at least a grain of truth in what they say. Instead of arguing the point, choose to invest time into figuring out why they see it that way. Your procrastination may be causing them pain, too.

The phrases people use to rationalize putting off doing something they need to do are varied, but they all point to an unresolved conflict between yourself and the task in front of you.

- Not having a clear direction or goal
- Desire to maintain control of a situation (You're forcing me to do this.)
- Self-protection—trying to avoid unpleasant situations (I hate doing this job.)
- Fear of failure
- Fear of success—and all its inherent demands
- The need to change a situation (dissatisfaction with a job or a relationship, for example)
- Perfectionism (It's not important to do an exemplary job each time.)
- Comfort—assuming you'll have more time and motivation later
- Underlying health issue (depression or tiredness for example)
- Overwhelm that comes from disorganization or a workload that's too heavy or in conflict with your strengths and capabilities

Identifying the underlying issues can help take the emotion out of the situation, allowing you to be more objective and concentrate on what it will take to accomplish what you want or need to do. It moves you from an emotional reaction to a more logical and strategic position of figuring out what to do about what's in front of you. It puts you in charge of you instead of you being pushed around by what's in front of you!

With practice you can become aware of your procrastination patterns and work toward changing them before major problems happen occur.

Take back control of yourself and your surroundings by recognizing and understanding the deeper reasons you're procrastinating. You'll be more productive, regain lost credibility and make better use of your finances, time and energy. That's Mastery.

Mastery Consulting focuses on helping people excel and companies succeed through coaching, consulting and presentations. Areas addressed include effective productivity and information management skills, improved leadership and communication abilities, all of which help clients to get more out of life personally and professionally.

Published, quoted or featured in many local and national publications, principal Leslie Robison has presented organizational and personal achievement topics to businesses, chambers of commerce and community groups.

A member of a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers since 1999, she has served on NAPO's Philadelphia chapter board as Professional Development Director. She also served on the board of the National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization (NSGCD).

Recognized through the NSGCD as a Certified Professional Organizer in Chronic Disorganization, Leslie has authored resource materials and presents teleclasses to both her peers, clients and the public. She is a member of Vistage, CHADD, ADDA, the Indian Valley Chamber of Commerce and Rotary.

With Leslie's help I've been able to really make some genuine changes in my life and career, things I've been thinking about, hoping to do something about and yet every year I was no closer to realizing. ~R. G.

Your presentation was interesting, helpful and fun and thanks to you I've found myself trying different methods to get organized. ~B. W.

Clients include individuals, small businesses, and corporate personnel.

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