

DOING IT NOW

Action, Not Excuses

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MAIN IDEA

Highly successful people never procrastinate - they always find a way to get the most important things done, and to do them now. Overcoming the tendency to procrastinate unlocks the potential in everyone's life and opens the door to a fuller, more satisfying and enjoyable life of achievement.

Procrastination can be a major business road block, but one which can be overcome with a realistic and systematic approach. The 12 steps to overcoming procrastination can be used to radically change your habits and behaviour for the better - allowing you to achieve more in less time than ever you thought possible.

12 STEPS TO CONQUERING PROCRASTINATION

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| Step 1. Attitude adjustment | The fact that procrastination is widespread should not be interpreted as a reason to accept it without argument. The life of every successful person demonstrates what can be done when procrastination is kept under control. |
| Step 2. Develop a game plan | There are at least 12 specific techniques for overcoming procrastination. Never give in to procrastination until you have first tried these techniques. |
| Step 3. Overcome fear of failure | More than any other emotion, fear in one form or another is responsible for the bulk of procrastination. If you can acknowledge and overcome your fears, you will be in a strong position to overcome the habit of procrastination. |
| Step 4. Overcome fear of success | Sometimes, people procrastinate because they are subconsciously uncomfortable with the implications of success. They fear that success would be a burden rather than an achievement. Overcome by becoming comfortable with the idea of being successful in whatever you set out to do. |
| Step 5. Raise your energy level | Physical exhaustion or fatigue is one of the most commonly used justifications for procrastination. Overcome by making a conscious and consistent effort to act enthusiastically. |
| Step 6. Get tough with yourself | Demand more of yourself and it may surprise you just how much you can achieve if you really put your mind to the task at hand. |
| Step 7. Establish an action environment | Your physical work environment has a significant impact on any tendency to procrastinate. It either encourages or discourages action to some degree. |
| Step 8. Use the reinforcement principle | Take a positive and proactive stance towards overcoming procrastination. Whenever you do anything which you were tempted to put off, reward yourself in some small but meaningful manner. Keep on building on your small successes until you move on to achieve greatness. |
| Step 9. Consider deliberate delay | There are times when a "deliberate delay" is the best course of action. Note that a deliberate delay is taken as the result of judgment, not procrastination. |
| Step 10. Manage your time | While it's not possible to increase the number of hours in a day beyond 24, it is feasible to use the hours that are available as effectively as possible. That simply requires the establishment and nurture of time efficient practices and the elimination of tasks which add no value to our lives. |
| Step 11. Use visible reminders | Take a maxim which inspires you into action and put copies of it where you will see it many times every day. Commit yourself to living by that maxim. |
| Step 12. Learn to deal with the top 40 excuses | It's very easy to come up with reasons to procrastinate. You can always find an excuse for rationalizing your life away in mediocrity and non-achievement. Successful people, by contrast, recognize these excuses for what they are and use them as a call to action and achievement. |

INTRODUCTION

Main Idea

Procrastination can be a major stumbling block.

The average person accepts procrastination as a part of human nature and leaves it at that. Successful people and high achievers realize that procrastination prevents success, and develop viable and systematic techniques for overcoming procrastination.

Conquering procrastination is based on the concept that life is a process rather than a situation, and that every person has the innate ability to shape their own destiny and build their own future in a proactive rather than a reactive manner.

Supporting Ideas

Take a piece of paper and make four written lists:

1. List all tasks, large and small, that you have been putting off doing at work. Write down every single thing that you have planned to get around to at some stage but haven't yet found the time.
2. Next, make another list of all the small jobs you have been meaning to do around your house or property. You might even compile this list while you walk around the house so it will jog your memory.
3. Now put together a list of everything you have been meaning to do on a personal level. Are there personal relationships you have been meaning to dedicate more time and effort to? Are there family events you'd like to organize when you get around to. Are there letters to write or family members to contact again?
4. Finally, put together a list of everything you've been meaning to do for yourself someday. Are there any educational courses you'd like to take, vacation sights or foreign lands to see, major events to experience or things you'd like to learn? Write them all down on this list.

Keep these four lists close at hand and look at them carefully as you consider the 12 steps which follow. Relate these principles to your actual situation, not to a hypothetical or theoretical scenario.

Don't let procrastination prevent you from achieving everything you'd like to achieve.

Key Thoughts

*"Some men die by shrapnel
And some go down in flames,
But most men perish inch by inch
In play at little games."*

– Robert Abrahams

STEP 1: ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Main Idea

The fact that procrastination is widespread should not be interpreted as a reason to accept it without argument.

The life of every successful person demonstrates what can be done when procrastination is kept under control. Freedom from procrastination can produce a business career of distinction and a happier, healthier and more productive lifestyle.

Supporting Ideas

Generally speaking, the causes of procrastination can be grouped into four categories:

1. Attitudinal factors
The mental reasoning by which we approach the problem or challenge at hand can have a large impact on whether or not we procrastinate.
2. Cognitive blocks
Insufficient information and indecision or uncertainty can also lead directly to a tendency for procrastination.
3. Environmental conditions
Sometimes, external factors such as a lack of the proper tools or the existence of diversionary alternatives impact on our actions.
4. Physiological barriers
Fatigue, stress and illness also play a role in whether or not we procrastinate excessively.

Quite often, pinning down the cause of your procrastination is a major step towards overcoming it.

Key Thoughts

"The longer I live, the more importance I attach to a man's ability to manage and discipline himself. The man with the capacity for self-discipline can tell himself to do the truly important things first. Therefore, if there is not enough time to go around and something must be neglected, it will be the less essential task. Here is the most interesting thing about the capacity for self-discipline. He who wants it may have it! The one ingredient we most need for success is ours for the asking, for the wanting, if we only want it enough!"

– Ray Kroc, Founder, McDonalds

"Some people may have greatness thrust upon them. Very few have excellence thrust upon them. They achieve it. They do not achieve it unwittingly, by "doin' what comes naturally"; and they don't stumble into it in the course of amusing themselves. All excellence involves discipline and tenacity of purpose."

– John Gardiner

"The greatest victory is victory over self; to be conquered by self is of all things the most shameful and vile."

– Publius Syrus, Roman Poet

"Attitudes are more important than facts."

– Dr. Karl Menninger

"Everyone knows that on any given day there are energies slumbering in him which the excitements of that day do not call forth. Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources."

– William James

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