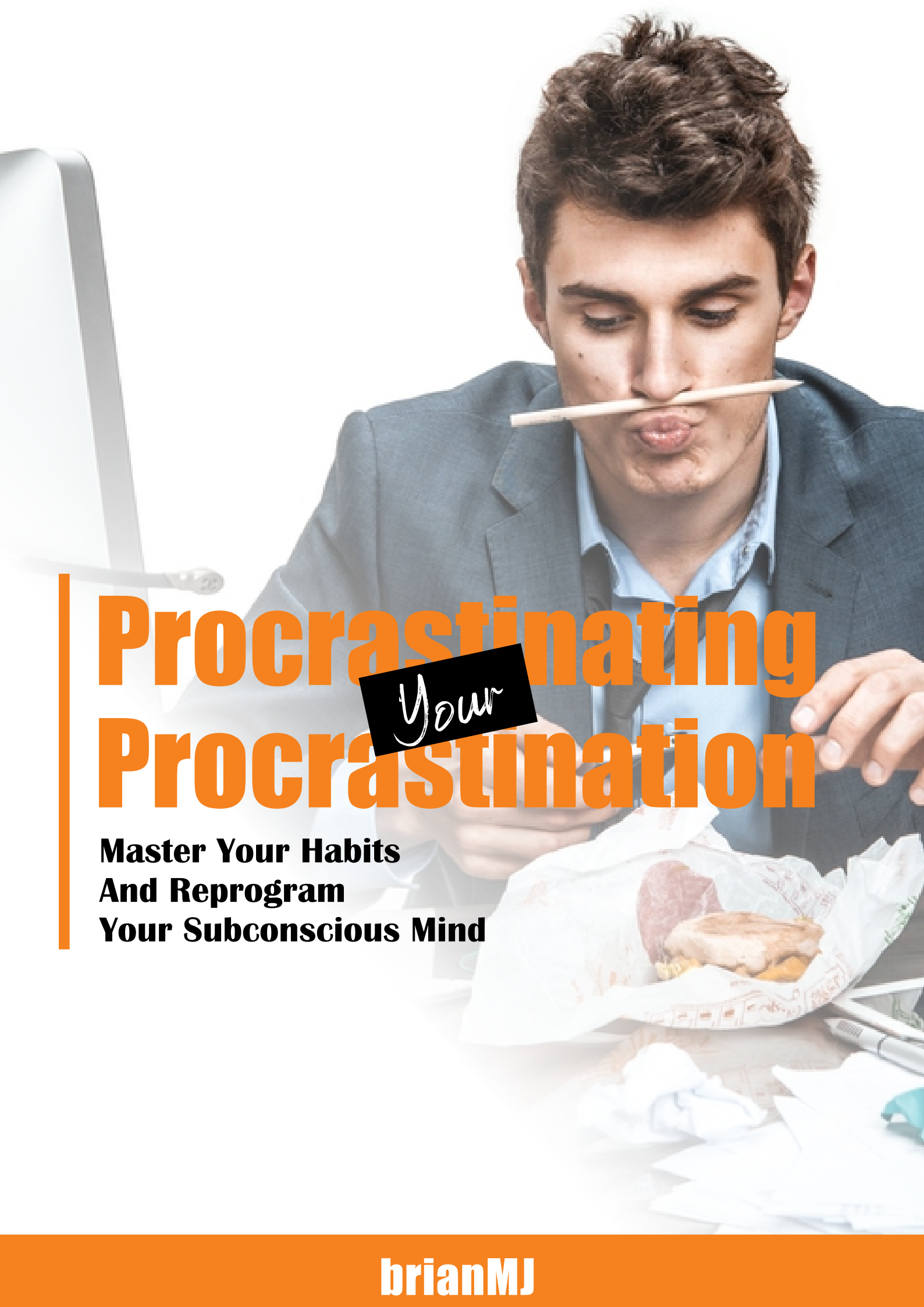




Procrastinating *Your* Procrastination

**Master Your Habits
And Reprogram
Your Subconscious Mind**

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Introduction

So here's what occurs: You've a plan – let's suppose, to awaken at 7; be washed and dressed to kill and breakfasted by 8; at your desk, easel or other workspace by 9; work 3 hours; exercise during your lunch; eat a salad at your desk; work 4 more hours; come home; eat supper with your mate; work a few more hours in the evening; and then curl up in bed with a great book. But you don't abide by the plan.

Maybe you awaken late at 8, or 9, or...noon! The plan is trashed before you even get moving. Or, perhaps, it takes you not one, but 3 hours to make it to your desk. And then, when you're there, you drop an hour or three reading the paper, net surfing, and making personal calls. Or, perhaps when lunch comes around you don't exercise and rather than a salad you eat a mammoth sandwich and then spend the rest of the afternoon feeling slow and don't get much done. Etc.

Procrastination is when you get bumped off the “course” you set for yourself for the day. The challenge of outfoxing procrastination is the challenge of resisting the itch to leave your course. This is likewise the challenge of beating blocks, since a block is truly an ongoing procrastination issue that lasts weeks, months, years or decades.

This book will help you work out what is causing you to leave your daily course, and what you may do to stay dedicated and finally live the productive and happy life you've always wished-for.

Procrastinating Your Procrastination

Developing The Important 'NOW' Habit And Strategies That Will Help You To Take The First Step Quickly!



1

MATTERS THAT THROW US OFF OUR COURSE

Let's suppose you planned to be at your PC, working at a project, at 10 a.m. on a Monday morning, but you're not. How come? The answer may be one or more of the accompanying.

The Enemies

- Woke up late.
- Scrapped with your lover last night, and continue reliving the quarrel in your brain.
- Are too sapped – the coffee hasn't set in yet.
- Are overly hyper – drank too much coffee and can't sit motionless.
- Are disquieted by the weather – it's amazing out and you'd love to take a walk or bike ride.
- Are disquieted by the weather – it's atrocious and depressing.
- Got a telephone call (or e-mail or instant message) from a friend, who's depressed (though not in crisis) and asked to talk.
- Got a telephone call from a friend (or e-mail or instant message) that's happy and wished to share great news.

- Are reading the paper – every last word of it.
- Are net surfing or net shopping.
- Are playing Solitaire.
- Simply realized that it's highly crucial to work on another project.

Or, if you work in a home office:

- Switched on the television set for “a minute” and saw that one of your favorite actors was being interviewed, so you decide to view the interview.
- Simply realized that the laundry urgently needs to get done!

These are common things that may throw you off your course. It's only a partial list; naturally, you may likely add many other entries to it. There are likely 100s of potential “bumps” that may knock you off your course.

One crucial thing to point out is that, while a few of these bumps appear “good” or “worthwhile” (like commiserating with your unhappy acquaintance or doing the laundry), and some seem “foul” or “frivolous” (like playing Solitaire), they're all equally unacceptable from the viewpoint of beating your procrastination habit.

You'll need to learn to resist the urge to get absorbed into activities not on your schedule, regardless how crucial or virtuous they appear at the moment. The one exception, naturally, is emergencies, by which I mean actions that can't be put off without significant harm to yourself or other people. However even with an emergency, after you've handled it, ask yourself whether it may have been prevented by finer planning, or whether somebody else could have handled it. If you've got a challenging goal, it's really crucial to learn to minimize the number of preventable emergencies in your life, and to learn to delegate as much as conceivable.

If it appears like I'm taking a hard line, I am. I have to, as procrastinators are frequently adept at rationalizing their diversions. Obviously, if somebody is ill or otherwise incapacitated, we ought to help them, but to what degree? It's not always clear, and a lot of procrastinators misjudge, sacrificing too much of their own time to assist other people, even when those other people aren't particularly needy or when somebody else is available to help. This issue may be hard to identify, much less solve, as the (deservedly) good feeling one gets from assisting, frequently offsets the guilt that the procrastination commonly spawns.



2

VIEW YOUR COMMITMENTS DIFFERENTLY

When you begin viewing your commitments from the viewpoint of somebody who's determined to succeed at their challenging dream – meaning, somebody who must utilize their time optimally, fresh solutions to formerly “unresolvable” quandaries frequently present themselves. So, for example:

What's Crucial

- Your aged parents may likely find somebody else to mow their lawn and pick up the groceries like a different family member, or the high school youngster down the block who requires a few extra bucks. Or,
- Your mate and kids may likely survive on takeout (or cook their own food!) a couple of nights a week. Or,
- Your acquaintance who needs a lot of support may find other people or even professionals, like a therapist to help them.

If you didn't have a challenging dream that you were following on top of life's average demands, then perhaps you could get away with mowing the lawn, fixing all the meals, and talking for hours daily with your friend.

However, when you own up to your challenging dream, you're basically declaring that you'll be really particular and self-directed in how you spend your time, as you have to reserve as much time as possible for your aspiration. This is in direct contrast to most individuals, who let other people including family, friends, neighbors, colleagues and corporations control their time for them.

Nearly all ambitious dreamers, for example, have to reduce the time they spend on ho-hum household chores to as close as possible to zilch, so that they may utilize the reclaimed time and energy to work at their aspiration.

All right, if you like gardening and it feeds your soul, then don't quit. But washing? Yard work? Wiping up floors? Standing in line at the market? To the extent you're able to find somebody else to do it, send your wash out to be done, hire somebody to maintain the lawn (or get your mate or children to do it), purchase a floor mopping robot, and have your foodstuffs delivered.

If you feel peculiar doing any of that, get over it: cutting down your housework burden is an investment in yourself. Likewise, it's unrealistic to believe that you may spend your time the same way non-ambitious dreamers do, and yet achieve your challenging dream.

None of this ought to be taken to mean that you desert your loved ones or friends. It simply implies you invest your time judiciously. Even though you're not cutting your parents' lawn, for example, you may still be taking them to check-up appointments: that's a much higher value activity that's likely a far better utilization of your time.

And even though you're not fixing home cooked dinners nightly, you may still do it a few times a week. And even if you're not able to speak to your friend for hours daily, you may still be available to him/her in times of true need.

It may be scary to alter the terms of our interaction with somebody, particularly if we've been interacting with them in a particular way for years. (More so if we've been taught to subordinate our needs to other people).

Individuals frequently respond badly when we tell them we can't do as much for them or spend as much time with them as we have been. Frequently, however, if we take the time to share our state of affairs, aspirations and needs, they're surprisingly empathic and eager to help. So don't simply tell individuals you'll be less available, tell them why and invite their support and help.

If, after you share your story, a few individuals still aren't empathic, or are actively unfriendly, that's a sorry issue to have, but a typical one. That's why successful individuals learn to say "no", and also to distance themselves from unsupportive or toxic individuals, even if they happen to be related to them.

Whatever time you choose to spend helping other people you ought to build into your weekly or monthly schedule. You ought to likewise build in time both for your own relaxation and for unintentional events and emergencies.

Many individuals think time management is about attempting to stuff as much as possible into one's schedule, but it's not; it's regarding clearing as much as conceivable off your schedule so you may work, at a comfortable, non-stressful pace, on your crucial goals.

To summarize: whatever bumps you off your course that isn't an unpreventable emergency is procrastination, regardless how crucial it might seem at the time.



3

DESPERATION...AND PROMISE

Many procrastinators tell themselves stuff like: “I’m lazy. I’m undisciplined. I’m a failure. I’m hopeless. I’ve got no self-control. I’ll never win at anything.”

Many creative persons, activists, and other ambitious dreamers take the self-abuse a step farther, framing their procrastination as a moral defect: “I’m a sell out, unattached, shallow”.

A lot of procrastinators lead a double life, acting happy and productive while truly feeling hemmed in. Their boasts about their big workloads, power to work under pressure, and steady need to pull all-nighters are frequently just a cover for shame and despair; and frequently, when matters get really hot when they’re about to miss a serious deadline, thereby showing their real, “shameful” nature they cut and run, deserting a project, class, job, relationship or other commitment.”

Frequently, procrastinators become depressed almost as soon as they wake, as they recognize they’re destined to procrastinate that day. Procrastination may also feel really confusing.

The Feeling

At bedtime, you retrospect on the day and can’t figure out where your time went. You remember reading the headlines, drinking a cup of java with your officemates, watching some TV, and surfing the net, but those random activities couldn’t possibly have filled the whole day, could they? But, naturally, they did. Procrastination is, “the thief of time”. To a procrastinator, it truly does feel as if his or her time were somehow stolen.

If a procrastination issue is severe enough, and lasts long enough, it's often called a "block", as in "writer's block". Anybody may be blocked, and many individuals, maybe most, are. Occasionally, blocks last for weeks or months, but oftentimes, tragically, they last for years, decades or even entire life spans. Being blocked is among the riskiest feelings in the world; it drives some individuals to absolute desperation.

But wait there's no need to feel ashamed or desperate! When someone confesses to a procrastination issue, I congratulate them. Yes, congratulate. Here's how come: Procrastination is an affliction of ambitious individuals. If you don't trust me, do a net search on procrastination: you'll acquire links to 100s of pages advising you on how not to procrastinate while writing your novel or thesis, following a fitness program, or seeking a new career. These are all challenging endeavors, and individuals who follow them ought to be admired even if they do procrastinate.

All procrastinators, regardless how baffled, may boast at least one accomplishment: they haven't quit on their dream. If they had, they wouldn't be concerned about procrastinating on it.

To hang onto a challenging dream despite one's fears, and likewise (frequently) despite disheartenment and disapproval from those around us and society itself, requires vision, dedication and bravery. So, rather than seeing your procrastination issue as a shameful defect, attempt viewing it instead as a symbol of something enigmatic inside you. Yeah, you've got a little work to do to recognize your full potential, like who hasn't? But at least you continue showing up and fighting the great fight.

A different reason not to feel bad about your procrastination issue is that pretty much everybody procrastinates.

Let's likewise not forget that ambitious dreamers choose to follow exceptionally hard goals, otherwise they'd be ambitionless dreamers, right? Average life is pretty complex stuff, but in addition to the complexities of average life, ambitious dreamers may expect to face financial risk if not likely impoverishment; emotional risk and rejection; lack of support from loved ones and/or society; and nerve-racking working conditions. And that doesn't even count the underlying difficulties of the goal itself i.e., the need of the person to perfect her craft and sell her work, or to finish a product.

A lot of individuals flee from these sorts of stresses, and I, for one, can't blame them. The issue, however, is that in doing so they likewise flee from their aspirations. Whenever I teach, I remind my pupils who are frequently deeply ashamed of their procrastination issue of the many individuals who have given up on their aspirations. We all share a minute of sadness for those individuals, and then I softly congratulate my pupils for persevering in their own aspirations despite all the difficulties and barriers.



4

RECOGNIZING THE ISSUE

Look, you're a smart individual. A creative individual. A dedicated individual. I'm pretty certain about all of that, or you wouldn't be an ambitious dreamer, or reading this book. So, how come you can't resolve a little procrastination issue?

If you're like a lot of people, that question has haunted you for a long time. Among the most frustrating things about procrastination is that it appears like it would be the simplest issue in the world to resolve. Actually, it's among the hardest. Really, that's not quite true. Any issue is difficult to solve, if you're not truly solving it.

I mean it: the only way to resolve an issue is to resolve it. If you attempt to resolve an issue utilizing actions designed to resolve some other issue, or actions designed to resolve no issue at all, but rather to maintain the status quo, then you're bound to bomb. You may try from here to the moon, reining in all the mental capacity, creativity and passion you may muster, and you'll still never resolve the issue.

The Problem

You likely believe the root issue causing your procrastination is laziness, lack of discipline, lack of self-control, immaturity, lack of commitment, or some similar character defect. But guess what? It's probably none of those.

Firstly, most procrastinators are not I repeat, not lazy, undisciplined, etc. As a matter of fact, most tend to be dynamos in areas other than the one they're procrastinating in. Among the peculiar agonies of procrastination, is that we're frequently productive in areas of our lives other than the one closest to our heart.

Secondly applying damaging labels like “lazy” or “undisciplined” to yourself is, from a problem-solving standpoint, worse than worthless. Not only do those labels misidentify the issue, they really make the situation worse by sabotaging your self-assurance and predisposing you to failure.

Moreover, people frequently live up or down to the labels; so that if somebody repeatedly calls you, or you repeatedly call yourself, lazy or uncommitted, you're likely to live “down” to that label.

More often than not, solving, or resolving, an issue is a rather trivial exercise when we understand what the problem is. Treating procrastination as a symptom of laziness or a lack of discipline doesn't work, as those are not the causes of procrastination. Instead, they're symptoms, just like procrastination itself is a symptom of a deeper issue. That issue is commonly either:

You were never taught the habits of productive work. As we live in a vacuum, this likely means you've rather learned the “default” habits of low productivity or non-productivity.

This results in what I call Behavior-Based Procrastination.

Or,

Fear: of change, success, failure, etc.

This results in what I call Dread-Based Procrastination.

Frequently, individuals suffer from both.

Behavior-Based Procrastination is a comparatively easy issue to define and solve.

Dread-Based Procrastination is more complex. Unlike Behavior-Based Procrastination, which is commonly caused by a lack of data or training, Dread-Based Procrastination is caused by, as its name implies, concern.

Dread is unfortunately a major force in a lot of people's lives: it's frequently a rational, if not optimal, reaction to the troubles and stresses of life, and an ambitious path.



5

SUCCESS OBSTACLES

Dread-Based Procrastination disguises itself by mimicking productivity. It does this, commonly, by generating one of four characteristic anti-productive behaviors: perfectionism, negativity, hypersensitivity and panic. Most procrastinators are prone to at least one of them, and some are prone to all four.

Panic deserves a special mention. It's not truly an obstacle in and of itself, but acts as an obstacle "amplifier", blowing your fears out of symmetry and increasing the odds that you'll move back into one of the anti-productive behaviors. The job of defeating Dread-Based Procrastination is basically the job of overcoming panic, so that when you experience an instance of dread, doubt or discomfort, you don't become overwhelmed by it and get bumped off your course."

What Holds You Back

There are likewise 2 other categories of obstacles that are not in themselves dread based, but that are frequently present:

The first are Logistic Obstacles, which are commonly caused by simple ignorance. For instance:

- Deficiency of a clearly outlined mission and/or path to success
- Deficiency of time management
- Deficiency of planning, skills, resources and/or facilities
- Deficiency of mentors or other support

Put differently, you either don't know what you're supposed to be doing or lack the skills or resources to do it. A typical individual suffering from a logistic obstacle would be a business owner who doesn't recognize that s/he ought to be spending at least half their time promoting and selling, and thus spends time on more insignificant jobs.

Basic resolutions to logistic obstacles include: doing mission management and time management, organizing your office, purchasing some new equipment, taking a course, and setting up regular consultations with mentors.

When you commit to overcoming a logistic obstacle, it's frequently not hard to do so. If you do have trouble overcoming yours if you appear to lack the "self-control" to make the resolution work or can't even find the time to consider the issue, then you likely also suffer from Dread-Based Procrastination. You'll likely have to deal with the dread first, before you may move on to the more superficial logistical fix.

There are likewise what I call Situation Obstacles, which involve others or additional conditions outside your full control. A hard day job, heavy family responsibilities, and an unsupportive mate are situation obstacles. So are a disability and serious ill health.

Situation obstacles are frequently the hardest to overcome. Their resolutions frequently involve major life changes like changing jobs, leaving relationships, changing life-styles, compromising on one's treasured goals, or committing to person or couple's therapy.

Like logistic obstacles, situation obstacles commonly occur alongside Dread-Based Procrastination, and so you'll first have to deal at least partly with your dreads before you may effectively begin changing your situation. But even once you work past the dread, you're still left having to deal with some really hard circumstances.

The most crucial thing you have to know about your obstacles is that all of them may be overpowered. It doesn't matter who you are, how you were raised, what race, religion, nationality or sex you are, or how much cash you have. All of your obstacles may be overpowered.

Overpowering an obstacle might not be simple. It might not be fun. It could take months, years or even decades. It might take time and cash. But it may be accomplished. By "overcome," I mean annihilated, minimized or compensated for.

You might have a disability that you have to live with or have experienced an awful loss from which the hurt will never entirely disappear. But you may still work to at least minimize the damaging effect of your ill luck on your future success.

Did I state that all of your obstacles may be overpowered? What I truly meant to state is that all of your obstacles have to be overpowered. As what other choice, truly, do you have? Failure to overcome your obstacles leads to a life of bitterness and diminished potential.

The procedure of overcoming your obstacles is the real essence of the human journey. If you've been procrastinating a while, you're likely demoralized and have lost sight of your strengths, gifts and virtues.

Once you quit running from your obstacles and begin working to overpower them, you'll reclaim those favorable qualities and likewise probably discover a few wonderful new ones. This procedure of reclamation and growth is among life's most amazing and joyful experiences.



6

3 PRODUCTIVITY ACTIONS

All productive work may be broken down into these 3 actions:

1. Arriving to work exactly when you're supposed to.
2. Directly beginning the work you're supposed to be doing.
3. Remaining centered on the work for 20 minutes or more.

These actions are the essence of productive work. They're likewise the points at which procrastination occurs, and, consequently, the points at which it may be attacked.

A Plan

In action #1, the word “exactly” means precisely. 8:00 a.m., not 8:01, 8:05, or even 8:00:10. You have to train yourself to be precisely where you're supposed to be not thinking of it, not on the way, not pouring a cup of coffee at the precise moment you're supposed to be there.

In action #2, the word “directly” means that, about a minute after your butt hits the chair, you start your work. “The work you're supposed to be doing” ought to be self-explanatory by now, but let's be extra heedful and remind ourselves that ad lib unscheduled calls (even “urgent” ones), coffee sipping, paper reading, net surfing, and additional activities are all procrastination, pure and simple.

So is doing other work even crucial, good feeling work that wasn't scheduled for this period. You may spend your complete life immersed in these activities and make little or no progress on your most crucial goals.

In action #3, the word “centered” means that you're flirting with your task, and only your task. Put differently, you're not thinking of other work you may be doing, or your worries regarding your task, or philosophical issues related to your task. And, naturally, you're not thinking of your personal life, last night's TV program, or the birds cheeping enticingly outside your window.

“20 minutes or more.” The amount of time one may, or should, remain centered on work differs from person to person. Most individuals, however, may train themselves to work in a centered manner for at least 20 minutes before having to get up and take a break.

After your break (and your breaks ought to be as long as you need them to be, particularly when you're 1st tackling your procrastination issue) you may return to work for another 20 minutes.

At first, however, working for 20 minutes might seem as unrealistic as flying to the moon. So begin with 10 minutes, or 5, or 2 if you have to. Then, take as long a break as you require, praise yourself for your accomplishment, and repeat.

As you become more and more comfortable with your work, you may build up to 10 minutes of sustained work, then 15, 20, 30, etc. The key is to be patient and not push it.



7

USING PRODUCTIVITY ACTIONS

Now that you comprehend the 3 productivity actions more fully, you may start practicing them. There are 5 keys to success:

1. Begin little, and aspire for tiny advances
2. Extravagantly reinforce each tiny success
3. Dismiss “failures” except to acquire knowledge out of them
4. Expect plateaus and lapsing
5. Stay at it!

Utilize It

Begin little and aspire for tiny advances.

“Begin little” stands for practicing the 3 productivity actions (a.k.a., “not procrastinating”) on no more than 2 or 3 tasks at a time and the tasks you practice on ought to be simple ones. Beginning with that novel you’ve been blocked on for 10 years, is likely an unsound idea.

Household chores are an excellent thing to start practice on, as we tend to procrastinate on them not out of dread, but merely because they’re ho-hum. So practice not procrastinating on washing up the dishes or laundry (or mowing the lawn, or taking the automobile in for an oil change, and so forth.), if those are jobs you routinely procrastinate on. (Practice actions #1 and #2 only, obviously you don’t wish to spend a lot of time doing chores.) Easy personal care tasks like flossing and taking vitamins are additional great candidates for practice.

If the tasks you're practicing on appear embarrassingly little or trivial, you're doing it precisely right! The key is to get used to the feeling of not procrastinating, and you'll only have the chance to do so if you at first practice on activities that offer a high chance of success. Likewise, pay attention to the (likely numerous) areas of your life where you don't procrastinate, and observe the feeling of sedate self-command you have while approaching those tasks.

It's that same feeling you're aiming to arouse around the tasks you're presently procrastinating on and are well on your way to resolving the issue. (Yes, you're aiming to produce particular feelings inside yourself. Successful individuals consciously work to accomplish particular moods, as opposed to passively accepting whatever emotions happen to grab them. A lot of unsuccessful individuals, in contrast, don't even recognize that that's even possible to accomplish.)

Go on practicing the 3 productivity actions on easy stuff, and you'll by nature get better at not procrastinating. You'll then become less afraid, ambivalent and conflicted, and begin to make the essential shift from viewing procrastination as an inherent character defect, to seeing it as a behavioral issue you may resolve. In the meantime, getting the dishes done, flossing regularly, and so forth, will themselves have a beneficent outcome on your mood, and likewise empower you to arrive at more changes.

Only after you've gotten good at not procrastinating on the trivial junk should you start practicing it on your other ambitious endeavor. Now, it's doubly crucial for you to begin small. If you're a writer, don't set out to put down an entire chapter, but only a page or paragraph. Or, if you're an entrepreneur, don't aim to spend the whole morning doing sales calls, but only 10 minutes.

Put differently, when operating in the scary realm, begin very small. And merely after you've gotten great at not procrastinating at tiny tasks, do you take on the greater ones. And only after you've gotten great at doing the actions for 10 minutes (or 5, or 2, or whatever works for you at first), do you begin practicing action #3, slowly working up your endurance so that you may do your scary work for 15, 20, 30, etc., minutes at a time.

If you abide by my advice to "begin little", you'll have many successes, by which I mean cases when you were able to reject procrastinating and get right to work. It's crucial, in those cases, to celebrate your accomplishment! Pat yourself on the back, indulge in a treat, and broadly make a fuss over yourself. This sort of positive reinforcement not only advances your confidence and betters your mood, but helps imprint your accomplishment in your memory so that you may call on it when required. It doesn't matter how little the accomplishment is.

Even if it's something as easy as taking your vitamins precisely when planned or taking them at all. Don't neglect to give yourself at least a mental pat on the back. For greater accomplishments, make certain to make a huge fuss and give yourself some sort of tangible reward.

When a youngster fails to meet a goal, the mean parent tends to criticize and blame, while the good, effective parent provides compassion and understanding. The good parent likewise helps the youngster keep the failure in perspective, reminding s/he that the “failure” likely isn't as dreadful as s/he thinks it is, and that there are plenty of other things s/he has succeeded at. With the good parent's help, the youngster grows up to be a resilient grownup that is not so afraid of failure, that s/he procrastinates.

You have to be your own good parent, which means that whenever you bomb at not procrastinating or another goal, you shouldn't criticize or blame yourself, but rather respond with compassionate objectivity. Critique, depletes your self-regard, sabotages your self-assurance, mischaracterizes the issue, and only makes things worse. Rather, be a compassionate observer and analyst of your situation, holding in mind that there are frequently perfectly great reasons behind procrastination, even if the procrastination reaction itself isn't optimal. The proper reaction to failure is to ponder it just long enough to come up with a resolution so that the same thing doesn't occur again.

A plateau is when you stay stuck at a level of accomplishment in spite of repeated attempts to move ahead. Lapsing is when you really lose ground and get less effective. Both are discouraging, and yet both are an inevitable piece of any personal growth process. If you've an “off” day, week, month or year, don't pick apart, or shame or blame yourself: simply accept it for what it is, and hope to do better shortly.

Plateaus and lapsing frequently indicate that you're setting too ambitious goals. If that's indeed the case, the resolution is to go back to a prior level of achievement you're comfortable with and remain there for a while till you find your confidence. Then, remember to set humbler and attainable goals in the future.

Plateaus and lapsing may likewise indicate that you're experiencing personal or other issues that are interfering with your ability to do your work. Most of us may tackle only one major issue at a time and, let's face it, a lot of issues, including sickness or a financial crisis, may take precedence even over making progress on our earnest dream. If something does pull you away from your aspiration, just do what you have to do without shame or remorse or regret. Finally, you'll be able to return to your work, quite possibly bringing to it a richer perspective as a result of your “sabbatical”.

Those who succeed are forever those who hang in. Occasionally, they have to temporarily put their challenging dream aside while they work at other priorities. But they forever come back to it. They never quit and neither should you.



8

5 SUCCESS HINTS

Tips to get you moving down the road to beat procrastination.

Follow This

⇒ Forever start Your Day with a Schedule

Scheduling is crucial, as vagueness opens the door to the sorts of fears and doubts that may lead to procrastination.

Ideally, you'll know how to produce a manageable schedule that reflects your core values. If not, at least come up with an easy schedule that states specifically what you're going to be doing or working on each hour of the day. Attempt to produce your schedule the night before, so that the act of scheduling itself doesn't itself become a sort of procrastination.

⇒ Be Prepared

The Boy Scouts got this one right. For the same reason as #1 above, to prevent confusion that may throw you off your course, you have to start your day with all the data, tools, and materials required to achieve your work right out there in front of you.

That signifies everything: books, paper files, PC files, phone numbers, writing implements, even paper clips. It ought to all be available, organized and in perfect working order. (Cellular phone charged? Pencils sharpened?)

Note: If, despite repeated tries, you're unable to show up for work scheduled and prepared, that might be a sign that you've a high level of dread that's causing you to procrastinate.

⇒ Approach Your Work Without Hesitation

Remember how productivity action #1 is showing up to work on time, and productivity action #2 is getting right to work on the right stuff?

While practicing those actions, attempt not to hesitate. Hesitation gives your thoughts time to wander, and if you've got a procrastination habit, they'll frequently wander directly towards your dreads. (Now you comprehend the meaning of the proverb "he who hesitates is lost.")

Rehearse gliding over to your desk and beginning your work with no hesitation.

⇒ Remain Calm

Strong emotions ricochet you off your course. They likewise make it harder for you to stay centered on the present so that you are able to practice the 3 productivity actions. Work, therefore, to stay calm as the clock ticks towards your start time. If you catch yourself feeling dread, anxiety or uncertainty, gently reassure yourself. (E.g., "I'm just going to write for 10 minutes – that's all. Then I may take a break.")

If necessary, put yourself in a little "trance" simply long enough for you to glide over to your desk and begin working, as our dreads are frequently strongest before we actually begin our work and disappear if we just persist for a couple of minutes.

⇒ Don't Make Your Work Harder Than It Is

Don't fall into the trap of presuming that procrastination is inevitable. Popular culture likes to portray the act of production as a sort of epic battle because it makes great drama, but that's the inappropriate model to follow. Rather, you ought to approach your work with a light touch, and the experience ought to be like play (simple, safe and fun).

If your project appears scarily huge or crucial, attempt breaking it down into small, tiny chunks and working on those one at a time, while brushing off, for the time being, the big picture. This sounds like petty advice, but it's essential and many successful ambitious dreamers have learned to do this mechanically.

(And don't forget to have fun!) Frequently, all the same, when our work isn't fun, it's because we're fearful or panicked, either about the work itself or something else in our life. As you now know, attempting to work past that dread is frequently futile, particularly if the effort is accompanied by self-criticism. Our only true course is to bravely face down and explore our dreads, and the conditions surrounding them.

Wrapping Up

Even in moments of non-motivation, act as if you're extremely motivated. This is because of a fantastic thing that behavioral scientists have discovered: that not only do our emotions order our actions, but our actions often order our emotions.

Research has demonstrated, for example, that we don't simply smile because we're pleased, we in reality get happier when we smile. That's because the smile originates a sequence of hormonal and additional events that relaxes us and makes us feel great.

Professional sales people, who have to be “on” close to a hundred percent of the time in order to make their quotas, are really familiar with this phenomenon: they're taught that their posture, expression and other physical attributes impact not only their mood but their customers'.

They're taught to grin even when talking over the phone, as although the client on the other end of the line can't see them do it, the salesperson's voice sounds much more forceful and dynamic when s/he grins. Try it.

A lot of sales people, performers, athletes and other peak performers formulate a personal collection of tricks, rituals, and physical and mental exercises to help themselves get and stay pumped for their workday. You ought to do the same thing.

And here's the frosting on the cake, the astonishing secret that empowered individuals in every field, eventually learn that: with enough practice mimicking peak performance, you'll actually begin experiencing the real thing more frequently.

Experts say that while we can't operate at peak all the time, we may likely do so much more frequently than we recognize. Merely by practicing at performing at peak, you are able to train yourself to enter into peak much more easily and often.

And that will be the most astonishing reward of all, for all of your hard work.