



Allison Fisher
CHANGE COACH
in Life & Career



3 Powerful Steps to Get Anything Done

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Hello & Welcome



We ALL procrastinate at some time - procrastination is a normal part of our lives.

From everyday activities like gardening and clearing out the wardrobe to bigger stuff like finishing a significant work report or achieving a goal.

Procrastination can get in the way of our progress in creating the life we want.

Our first flush of enthusiasm for an idea or project is forgotten as we allow obstacles like doubt and fear to get in the way.

I've had my challenges with getting things done. These 3 powerful steps, which I am about to share with you, I've developed over my 20 years of coaching. Take your time as you read this information. I hope through this taster, you will glean something that will shift your ability to get things done and create less stress in your life.

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Do you wish you could make yourself get on with 'the thing' without all the mucking about and delaying?

Does fear stop you from creating your goals?

You say things to yourself like:

- I'll look up one more thing on Facebook, then I'll
- I should save for a house but.....
- That cupboard is so untidy that I can't find anything; but it's too overwhelming to face tidying it.

It's time to discover the 3 steps to getting things done:

Step 1 : The Clue

The clue to resolving avoidance is to Notice your thoughts and feelings when putting things off.

Step 2: The Why

Once you notice your thoughts and feelings, this will give you valuable information as to why you aren't doing something. For instance, if something just isn't important enough, fear is getting in the way, or you don't have belief, of course, it's going to be hard to get it done. So, that's the next step to working out the why.

Step 3: The Strategies

Once you know your why you can then find the strategies that are right for you to stop procrastinating or manage it each time it pops up.

When do I procrastinate?



Let's start by describing the times you put things off.
What are you doing and what is happening around you.

Step 1: The Clue

The clue is to NOTICE when you are avoiding or putting things off.
What do you take Notice of?
Your thoughts and feelings.



Unsettling thoughts and feelings in your mind and body trigger procrastination.

These create the behaviours of avoiding or putting off what you are about to do.

Sometimes, the thoughts and feelings are not significant, quite subtle, but sometimes they can be distracting, even painful.

And to get away from the pain, your mind chooses pleasure!

Noticing Thoughts and Feelings

Take notice of *thoughts* such as:

- I'll do it later
- It's too hard
- I'm not interested
- I can't do it
- I don't know how
- I will get it wrong
- She's better at it than me

“Your thoughts only have the power you give them.”

- Unknown

Take notice of *feelings*
such as:

- Frustration when not getting on with something
- Worrying about avoiding
- Boredom with work
- Feeling guilty not starting something
- Anxiety about missing a deadline

Take notice of *behaviours*
such as:

- Wringing hands
- Unable to sit still
- Stomach is flip-flopping
- Walking away from your desk
- Avoiding what you were supposed to be doing
- Using distractions - food, social media, phone, watching TV etc.



On the next page is a
useful tool for Noticing:

Tools for Noticing

Here's a process on how to Notice

Take Notice

Allow
Be curious and be gentle with yourself.

You're feeling stuck, out of sorts, anxious, a bit down, avoiding and procrastinating.

The moment thoughts or feelings distract or overwhelm you, the trick is to - Take Notice.

Notice Your Thoughts

- I can't seem to prioritise
- I'm not good enough to do this
- I'll get it wrong
- I can't be bothered
- I don't enjoy detail
- I won't make the deadline
- I've got too much to do etc

Notice Your Feelings

- I feel a bit down
- I feel annoyed
- I feel frustrated
- I feel sad
- I feel unsettled
- I feel anxious etc

Maybe even feelings of guilt or fear. That's all just notice.

AND ALLOW:

- Sit with it &
- Be in it

Let the thoughts and feelings you've noticed, simply be there. Allow them and accept them.

If they are painful, naturally, we want to get rid of them and push them away, but there is a gift in the allowing.

Be Curious

Be Gentle

Ask yourself questions:

I don't know how to do this spreadsheet
- ask yourself what can I do about that?
- what help do I need?

I'm feeling anxious about this project and avoiding getting on with it, ask yourself:

- What is this feeling about? Do I believe I can do it?
What am I worried about?

Notice if you're beating yourself up because you're avoiding or not getting on with something. Try instead Being Gentle and compassionate with yourself.

The Impact

Procrastination = Worry + Stress
Worry + Stress = Procrastination

Procrastination is a behaviour that can have many adverse effects on our lives. If not dealt with effectively, procrastination can damage your job, relationships, and physical or mental health.

The amount of worry or stress will depend on the issue's importance. If the fridge is messy or the car isn't washed, there is likely to be less impact. But if it's essential, for instance, delaying talking to customers or finishing a report which is already late, it can have a more significant effect.

Some examples:

- At work, stress can occur due to constant deadlines. If not met, we feel a failure and may not get that promotion we were aiming for, which means more stress.
- Delaying paying bills may mean paying a late fee - wasted money. And your other half blames you for wasting this money. More stress!
- Even though we 'should' go, putting off going to the doctor can result in greater difficulty treating the issue and more worry than needed. Plus, someone who cares for you might nag you to visit the doctor - an annoyance for both parties.
- If a partner is withdrawn and putting off communicating about an issue, resentment can grow until you burst! Naturally, this creates stress for yourself and your partner. But, of course, holding off speaking in the first place also causes worry.



“If it weren't for the last minute, nothing would get done.”

– Rita Mae Brown

Impact of Procrastination

Tick the ones below which impact you.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wasting time | <input type="checkbox"/> | Creates negative feelings like frustration; anger; disappointment, especially with self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack of sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> | Creates a gap between where 'I am and where I want to be' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Feeling disillusioned | <input type="checkbox"/> | Annoyance that goals aren't achieved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Just giving up | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blaming self for not getting on with things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tension in the home or workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dissatisfaction with life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Time is taken up with 'resisting' doing something | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disturbed sleep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Focus is on the past, thinking of 'things I should have done yesterday' | | |

What is the impact when you procrastinate?



On your daily life...



On your goals and dreams...



Step 2: The Why

We must understand why we put things off and procrastinate. Otherwise, we will never resolve this behaviour and keep repeating the same patterns.

So, when we notice our thoughts and feelings, these will provide information about the reasons why we put things off.

Here are some reasons:

- The task isn't interesting
- Just don't like doing it
- Not sure how to do it
- Unsure where to start
- Too tired
- Stressed
- Frustrated
- Low self-confidence
- Lack of planning
- The reason isn't strong enough
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear it won't be right
- Fear of failure
- Fear of success

When any of these reasons occur, it's painful. So, to escape these thoughts and feelings, we choose pleasure!

We flick into something nice, comfortable, and enjoyable—such as Facebook, eating, shopping, and calling a friend.

From the list, which two reasons are the most common for YOU?

Or is there some other reason?

Which reason do you think is the most common for many people?

The Answer: For most people, it is FEAR!

Fear causes us to avoid finishing a task or avoid even starting a task in the first place. Fear makes us feel useless, unconfident, and anxious when we don't get on with the job at hand.

Why do we procrastinate

Think of a recent time you procrastinated at home or work.
Which of these were your thoughts or feelings?

	YES	NO		YES	NO
I didn't enjoy doing it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My confidence was low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wasn't sure how to do it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feared getting it wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I didn't know where to start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I felt fear of.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I didn't want to do it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I felt stressed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



My thoughts...



Can you think of other reasons of why you procrastinate at any time?



Step 2: The Why cont'd

Yes, Fear is a key reason we avoid achieving or getting things done, but there are two others that are also key.

The first one is Belief. If we are telling ourselves messages like I don't believe I can do this or I'm not good enough, it's unsurprising that we avoid it even when it is something we truly want.

Negative beliefs are just beliefs; you can allow them to take over or choose to change them. The trick is catching them!

You know already that your thoughts and feelings will give you important messages.

Examples of negative messages that create avoidance:

- Roger wants to find more meaning in his life but feels stuck. He believes he can't find the purpose and meaning he is seeking.
- Sheree wants to ask her boss for a pay rise, but she believes her boss won't give it to her. Her feeling is one of fear – she's even anxious to ask. She believes that she isn't worthy of a pay rise.
- Frances loves to sing on stage but fears what people might think. She believes she isn't good enough.
- With loads of experience in IT, Logan believes he can't move on from his current job even though he is unhappy. Logan believes he doesn't have the right qualifications and is not good enough compared to others.



The second is the reason we have decided to do something.. The reason must be clear and important enough to achieve goals and dreams. Running a marathon because a mate is doing it might not be enough to motivate you to do all the required training. But doing it because you've always wanted to and you are inspired and excited by it feels a lot different, doesn't it?

Firstly, consider your work - is it enjoyable enough to keep doing it? Or is it just okay, and you're going through the motions?

What else in your life are you unsure why you are doing it? It could be a hobby, which used to be enjoyable, but now it isn't as much fun.

Reflect on something in the past, either work or personal, something quite major you chose not to pursue. Did beliefs get in the way, fear, or were you just not interested any more?

Once you have your reason why you put something off, then you can take some action and make some changes.

**Procrastination gets sorted when you know
the real cause.**



Step 3: The Strategies

On the following pages are strategies and tools to use every day to support you on your journey of achieving what you want and to stop avoiding.

Let's start with planning. By planning we prioritise what is important and keeps us focused.

How do you stop avoiding the everyday chores in day-to-day life?

How do you prioritise what is important?

How do you prevent overwhelm?

The key to these questions is to lay a foundation so that the everyday stuff is planned, including self-care, and then you have time to focus on what's important. We have so many roles to fulfil in a day: work colleague, boss, spouse, partner, mother and father (to children and pets), grocery shopper, house organiser, and so on—no wonder we get over-committed!

The critical questions are:

"What do I need to do & when do I need to do it?"

Here are some ways to plan:

- Plan each week your personal and work priorities
- From the weekly list, plan priorities for the day
- Take one small step at a time

Reduce your priorities by half each day. Often, we overcommit and then don't get anything done or can't be bothered completing the list. Give yourself a break and make your priorities achievable.

If you can't stand planning, just do this at the end of each day:

Write 3 priorities for tomorrow.

Plan your way out of procrastination

How do I stop avoiding the everyday chores in my day-to-day life?
How do I prioritise what is important to me?
How do I prevent the overwhelm?

The key to these questions is to lay a foundation so that the everyday stuff is planned, self-care included, and then you have time to focus on what's important. We have so many roles to fulfil in a day: work colleague, boss, spouse, partner, mother and father (to children and pets), grocery shopper, house organiser, and so on - no wonder we get over-committed!

The critical questions are:
"What do I need to do & when do I need to do it?"

For someone who angsts about housework, a simple solution is to have a set day and time. Once committed to this plan, it takes away all the dithering and worries about when you will do it.

If it's every Saturday between 9am and 11am, then it's sorted! If you don't want to waste your weekend with housework, add one cleaning item every day to your Daily Do's list.

This could be dusting on Mondays, sweeping the floor on Tuesdays, etc. Then, the essential household cleaning items can be sorted for a small amount of extra time during the week.

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.”

- Peter F. Drucker

Tools for Avoidance

Five minute avoidance technique:

This tool allows you to avoid!

It's useful for small tasks. This avoidance technique is a bit like hitting the refresh button on the keyboard; the steps that follow freshen you up to return to what you were avoiding.

Step 1: Choose something easy and enjoyable	When you find you're procrastinating choose something else that is easy to do and won't take more than 5 minutes. Example: Trying to write a tricky email, choose to send a couple of quick easy emails. Only for 5 minutes mind!
Step 2: On task	At the end of 5 minutes, return to your procrastination item, and work on it for 5 minutes. Example: Return to your email
Step 3: Avoid	Switch again and do something else. Example: Stroll to the kitchen to get a glass of water.
Step 4: On task	Now back to your procrastination item. Continue this pattern until you have completed what you were avoiding, in this example, the tricky email. You may find you get so focused on the item you were avoiding that you don't need to continue with the avoidance activity!

Top Tips:

- For projects and more significant tasks, instead of 5 minutes, focus on your task for 20 minutes or longer. Then reward yourself with a decent break, at least 15 minutes, and then return to the task.
- For realistic expectations to complete tasks and projects – double the time you think it will take.

Tools for Getting Things Done

- Just one step

Lesson 3 Tool

Breaking a task into small steps is the key to feeling overwhelmed, unmotivated, or when it's just hard. Choose the first step, a tiny step, then the next, then the next. Use this process at work and home with any size project.

Example:

You've been avoiding tidying a cupboard.

Steps:

- Visualise the task when it is complete AND how you will feel
- Start with just one shelf
- Place the contents onto the floor
- Clean the shelf
- Make three piles. One pile to return to the cupboard, the second pile rubbish, third pile to give away
- Replace the selected contents onto the shelf
- Continue the same process with the other shelves

Break up these steps with time as well. Each step could take a day or a couple of steps a day. Once you get frustrated, annoyed, or bored, stop and return to it later or select another day.

More Solutions:

- Write down what you've been delaying
- Start with a small task you can do immediately
- Tackle the tricky bit first
- If your first way doesn't work, then try another
- Motivate yourself out of your comfy chair by counting down from five. Then at zero, leap out of the chair and move on with the task.

Top Tip:

Always have a place for everything. You know, that pile of stuff keeps getting bigger, and it's got a variety of things like photos, a treasured pen, and a leash from your dog that died.

You can choose a place for EVERYTHING in your house. For instance, all pens are in the kitchen top drawer, and all candles are in the laundry cupboard. Then it's much easier to find things without hesitation.



Top Tips for Getting Things Done

#1

Take notice of your thoughts and feelings as a clue

#2

Prioritise self-care to have the energy to live life fully
-if you put yourself first, you will find it is so much easier to get everything else done

#3

Plan your way out of Procrastination
-an easy task at the end of the day write the 3 priorities to get done the next day.

#4

Take Just One Step
-that's all just one at a time

#5

Fear can stop us taking action
-notice when fear gets in the way notice and move through it

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.”

- Peter F. Drucker

Your Homework

- #1 This week, notice the **impact** procrastination has on your daily life. What is the result of procrastinating, and how does this affect you and others?
- #2 Notice when you are avoiding something, whether it's doing some exercise or a big work project, notice the thoughts and feelings that are happening. What might be the real reason you are avoiding it?
- #3 Then ask yourself:
What stops me? What do I need? Do I need assistance?
- #4 Be gentle with yourself. **Notice** any blaming of self, the telling yourself off when you procrastinate. Turn it around and say something nice to yourself - "It's okay, Mabel. I will get this done - what's one thing I can do first?"
- #5 Consider whether you are doing too much and then get to the point where you can't be bothered doing anything.
- #6 What might you need to change in your life that you don't enjoy anymore?

From Allison: I hope these pages have provided insight into stopping procrastinating and getting things done. Be kind to yourself, start small, and gradually build on the information that you have just read.

If you would like to explore this further, the next page contains information about my course, Mastering Procrastination.

Go well

Allison