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## Why do we procrastinate?

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*A 'later' note attached to a clock.*

Have you ever told yourself “I’ll do this tomorrow” and when the next day rolls around, you tell yourself the same thing again? Don’t worry if that is you, the majority of people are in the same boat. According to a study done by Darius Foroux, out of 2,219 people surveyed, around 88% of people he surveyed admitted to procrastination. So, why do we procrastinate and what steps could we do to prevent procrastination?

Procrastination is a widespread issue but why is it? One reason could be having too many distractions that shift your focus from one thing to another constantly. Furthermore, with the Internet at your disposal and technologies like your smartphone, there are many different things that grab your attention all the time. Another possible reason you could be procrastinating is due to the fact that you worry about failing a specific task. In other words, you believe you are not as

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capable as you want to perform that task and so you decide to push it off to a later date. In fact, based on a 2011 study, researchers found out that “most reasons [for procrastination] were related to fear of failure in relation to performance, anxiety, perfectionism, and lack of self-confidence”. In the end, people can blame procrastination on technologies, everyday tasks, or being overwhelmed, but what is the solution?

To stop procrastinating, you want to begin with the smaller steps which will compound up and eventually create a more productive lifestyle for you. First of all, have the right attitude toward the task you need to do. In other words, understand you can do the task and the task is in your control. Furthermore, if the task is overwhelming, break it into manageable parts in which you can work with. For example, if you want to clean the house during the weekend, you might want to break down the task into smaller parts like organizing the living room at 10:00 am, cleaning the kitchen at 11:00 am, etc. Now, once you organize the task into manageable parts, you want something to motivate you to act upon the task. This could be done by adding a reward to the end when you finish the task. Finally, once you add the reward in, you have something you are motivated to work for and you will feel eager to act upon it. This strategy in psychology is called operant conditioning in which you give a reward for performing a desired behavior. The same strategy could be implemented to destroy bad behavior via punishment. Nevertheless, since there is a reward to work for and you are not intimidated to do so, try to limit your distractions beforehand so you could have a productive interval of time to do that task fully.

In summary, procrastination is a constant struggle felt by most people and for many people, there are countless reasons for them to procrastinate. But, with the help of limiting distractions, breaking the task down, having the right attitude, and implementing a reward system, you could successfully break apart from the procrastination struggles.

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