

Chapter Two

Avoid Procrastination

*Know the value of time;
snatch, seize, and enjoy every
moment of it.*

*No idleness; no laziness;
no procrastination;
never put off till tomorrow
what you can do today.*

- Lord Chesterfield

Procrastination does not mean you do nothing....it means you do low-priority actions or tasks rather than high-priority ones. This is a habit you must break! Everyone has some areas where they procrastinate. Things such as straightening our desk when we should be finishing our paperwork or communicating with a customer. Procrastination can potentially ruin our careers by rendering us ineffective.

What causes us to put things off? Delaying a decision until we have enough information is usually a smart move, but procrastination is needlessly postponing decisions because of laziness, fear or avoiding something, flat bad thinking.

The root problem for procrastination is
“Ineffective Thinking”!

When we think ineffectively
we do things to avoid discomfort,
or put things off because it's a *habit*
and much easier to deal with later
...or so we think!

This type of thinking is ineffective when it comes to succeeding. Success begins NOW!

Let's address thinking and how it affects procrastination.

Causes and Costs

- *I don't have time*
- *It's a little project and I'll have plenty of time later*
- *I've accomplished enough today....let's go home*
- *I can do it tomorrow*
- *I already know what the outcome is*
- *I don't know how to do this*
- *I work better under pressure*

We are all creatures of *habit*. For most of us, it's easier to continue to procrastinate than it is to make an effort to change. Habits are many times much harder to identify because we do them so effortlessly, so naturally.

When we delay our actions, there are costs that are not necessarily immediate, but they do, however, still cost us.

Let's look at some examples where delays are costly:

- Delay answering an inquiry and you may lose a sale or a customer.
- Delay service to your equipment and you have potential costly breakdowns.
- Delay training and you decrease your quality and your standards.

By avoiding procrastination we give ourselves a head start...a definite advantage...a psychological edge.

4 Core Reasons for Procrastination

Unpleasant Tasks. There is a paradox in postponing unpleasant tasks. We attempt to make life easier on one hand by avoiding unpleasantness, and on the other hand procrastinating the task actually increases unpleasantness since the job usually still has to be done.

Perfectionism. Some people will put off starting or completing any task until they feel they have enough information or expertise to be able to do it perfectly. They are afraid to start or complete, and will look for other projects where they have more expertise.

Difficult Tasks. Quite often we avoid difficult tasks because we simply don't think we know how. It is easy to get overwhelmed when a task seems to be so complex. If we can find ways to reduce the apparent complexity so that it no longer appears as difficult, we've won half the battle.

Bandits. Indecision and procrastination can surface as the results of time bandits as well. Bandits such as trying to do too much, lack of priorities,

disorganization, poor delegating, laziness, apathy, etc.

On the following pages, select the time-gaining events to help you break the habit of procrastination, AND enter the approximate amount of time you feel you will gain each day by successfully performing the selected events.

Procrastination Time Gainers

Event	Minutes Gained
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Getting up “X” amount of minutes earlier every day</u> can give you more productive time.	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> By identifying and <u>doing “little” things when you have open minutes waiting</u> , will gain you extra minutes later when they are already completed.	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Making “to-do” lists and marking items off</u> as they are accomplished gains you valuable time later as you gain confidence and satisfaction in seeing things accomplished. This reduces possible procrastination, and can actually allow you to think and perform faster.	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Identifying deadlines every morning</u> gains time and hinders procrastination.	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify frequent tasks that you have already procrastinated on and <u>perform them way out in advance</u> (i.e. load files with appropriate papers for future meetings.)	_____

Gain valuable minutes by starting the day's task quickly; do not ponder the difficulties of the day. Lay out your "1st job" the night before. _____

Break one big task for this week or month into smaller, manageable parts to help fight the tendency to procrastinate. _____

Stock up on all supplies; greeting cards, birthday cards, stamps, presents, etc. gains extra minutes by not having to go shopping for them, and stops procrastination of sending them. _____

Once an assignment has gotten to the "emergency" level, it has been procrastinated on. Identify future assignments and gain valuable time by listing the tasks needed to assure they won't become emergencies. _____

Pre-printing postcards and labels for repetitive correspondence gains critical time every time you send one. Think about using macros and form letters on your computer. _____

Total Time Gained _____

[Click Here to Order *Finding 100 Extra Minutes A Day*](#)