

SIX STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH PROCRASTINATION

We all have tasks that we know we should do now or at least do sooner than later, that we just don't seem to find the time, the will, or interest in doing. These are the things we find a way to place into the realm of "someday," or at least "not right now." If these tasks happen to be the things you should be doing, then you just might be procrastinating.

1. Be Honest

If you are putting off tasks that you know you shouldn't, be truthful and acknowledge this. We often tell ourselves half-truths that keep us from looking at our lack of initiative. The fact is, it is on our plate and we are not getting it done.

- *I'm just too swamped.*
- ☒ *My boss gave me the task last minute.*
- *I'll get to it later.*

2. Keep Emotions Out of It

Procrastination can be understood as the natural act of deferring a negative experience for that of a more pleasurable one. Believing that we will feel like it later is delusional. If it is a task we don't like, we may never feel like it. Productivity is not always about feeling like it, it is about doing it. We all have particular thoughts that keep us from being effective in our personal and professional lives.

- *I'm not up to it right now.*
- ☒ *I work best under pressure.*
- ☒ *Someone else would do a better job.*

3. Know Your Distractions

Procrastination is the act of exchanging high-priority actions for those of lower importance. When we define procrastination this way, we see that we may be getting some things done. But if we are working on less important tasks that are keeping us from those of higher priority, then these lower priority tasks might be our distraction.

- ☒ Daydreaming
- ☒ Email
- ☒ Conversations with co-workers
- ☒ The bathroom

4. Count the Cost

Procrastination wastes time. Time is spent, but not invested. It is easy to procrastinate – we all do it – but when it is a consistent pattern the costs are high. Our lack of productivity affects others. They may have to pick up the slack and work at the last minute to get things done. Procrastination may also cause us to sacrifice on high quality work as we race to finish a job.

- Tangible – diminished quality
- Intangible – feeling overwhelmed

5. Know What Is and Is Not Procrastination

Putting off certain tasks might be good prioritizing. Being productive is not just about doing; it is about doing the right things at the right time. Are you giving your time to what matters most? Are you keeping a clear sight of where you are heading? If you can answer yes, then you may not be doing particular tasks, but you might be keeping focused on the big picture. And that is a good thing.

6. Just Do It

Decide on one thing to do or change and then it is no longer up for deliberation. Choose carefully. It may be small, in fact it is often the smallest changes, if consistently followed, that have potential for large impact. Maybe you are even bold enough to write it down or tell someone. No one can overcome procrastination for you. You are the only one who can make the change and overcome procrastination. So the next time you feel like putting something off, even if it is *just* till tomorrow – don't.