

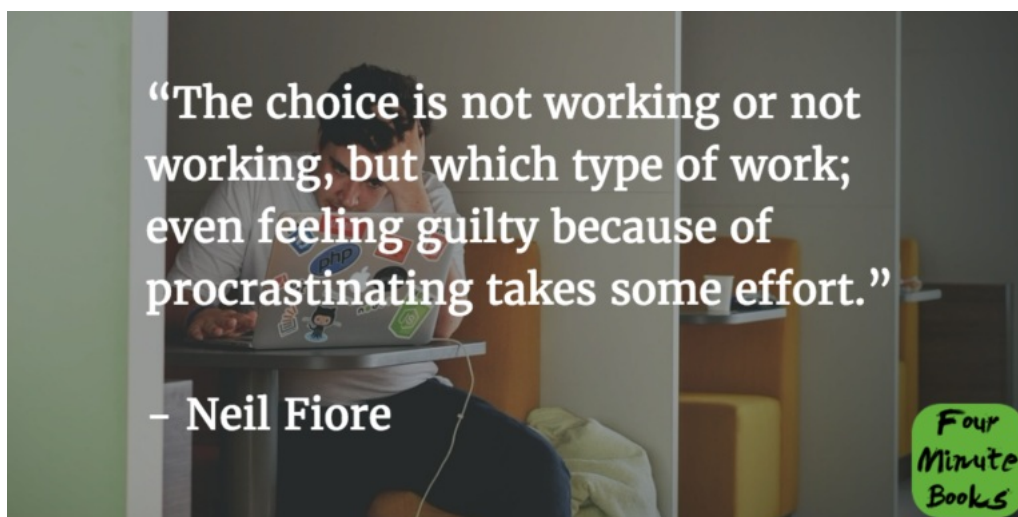
The Now Habit Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-now-habit-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Now Habit is a strategic program to help you eliminate procrastination from your life, bring fun and motivation back to your work and enjoy your well-earned spare time without feeling guilty.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



“The choice is not working or not working, but which type of work; even feeling guilty because of procrastinating takes some effort.”

– Neil Fiore

When I just learned how long *The Now Habit* has been around I was shocked. It combines so many now-common productivity practices that at first I thought it might have been an aggregation of a lot of them. In fact, it just might be the original source.

This book dates back to 1988. A crucial difference in how it tries to remove procrastination from your life is that it focuses on the potential upsides instead of obsessing over avoiding your distracting habits.

If you don't focus on what will make your life better, the best you can hope for is that your life won't get worse. So bringing back to your work the fun and drive you had as a kid is essential for this to work.

Dr. Neil Fiore has even developed his own program to help people implement the strategies from the book.

Here are 3 lessons to show you where procrastination comes from and how to deal with it:

1. Procrastination is trained into us.
2. Try to unschedule your life.
3. Record your distractions to block them.

I hope you've stretched your leg, because we're about to kick procrastination in the butt. Hi-yaaa!

Lesson 1: We're not innately lazy. Procrastination is trained into us as kids.

"Hasn't anyone ever taught this kid some discipline?" is probably in the top 10 sentences uttered by grandparents on a regular basis. Often shaped by wars and economic depression, older people often had no choice but to grow up fast and tighten their belts – habits they tend to keep.

Young parents are often worried about not teaching their kids as well as their parents did, so they're likely to listen to grandma and grandpa and bring out the good old reward and punishment.

"Do your homework or you won't get to watch any TV tonight!"

But that's exactly the wrong move. Children aren't innately lazy. No one is. Just because kids don't consider the things we call "work" to be fun doesn't mean they're not motivated to do anything.

Everyone has things they do without procrastinating. Kids never procrastinate on playing and they don't judge their "work."

Isn't it odd that around the time we enter school we first start to dislike things?

Procrastination isn't an innate character trait. It's trained into us. A learned behavior.

And we learn it in two ways:

1. **School teaches us that work isn't supposed to be fun.** It's the opposite of playing. "You HAVE to solve these math problems now."
2. **School teaches us that only the best is good enough.** If we're not the best, we need to try harder.

If work isn't fun and only being the best at work is worth something then that's the perfect setup for procrastination. No one can ever possibly fulfill their own expectations and no one wants to get started in the first place.

Lesson 2: Try to unschedule your life and build your work around your fun, not the other way around.

And that's exactly the typical scenario you're left with if you have to give a presentation to your boss. Creating the slides doesn't sound like fun (because people tell you it's not supposed to be) and boy, you better ace it, or you might not have to come back tomorrow.

So what do you do? You check Facebook. You open an empty Powerpoint file. Check Facebook again. Try to type a headline. Delete the headline. Then go to Youtube and watch Jamie Oliver make some delicious pasta, jump to a TED talk and whoops, time to go home!

But what if your schedule didn't show you all this work that's left to do? What if instead, it showed you that your life isn't just work? That there's plenty of fun to be had with some work in-between?

That's what unscheduling is about. Fiore suggests you throw out your old calendar and **schedule the pleasant things you want to do throughout the week**, like meeting a friend for lunch, going to the movies, riding your bike in the morning or taking a walk in the afternoon.

Then let work fill up the rest of your time. Break your work into little chunks and chip away at it in short, 30-minute Pomodoro blocks in the gaps between fun activities. You can then book these hours into a working hours account and feel good about yourself.

This technique has two major advantages: you show yourself that the focus is on the fun part of your life and the amount of time you have left to do work is limited, so you have to use it well.

Lesson 3: Note down your distractions to block them and evaluate their importance later.

If you've read *Getting Things Done*, then this will sound very familiar. Fiore says that we let little interruptions take over our attention and day because we deal with them instantly.

When you remember you have to buy paper towels, have a great idea you need to talk to a colleague about, or they remind you about a request, it seems to make sense to take care of it right away. In reality, this just distracts you from the important thing you're currently working on.

To take care of these things before your focus shifts, **keep a piece of paper or little notebook with you at all times and instantly note down potential distractors**. This resembles the collection bucket from GTD, but Fiore adds an important twist.

Not only will doing this allow you to stay focused, it also gives you a chance to evaluate these tasks again later. At the end of your day, take a look at that day's list and ask yourself for all items on it: is this really that important? Do I have to do this at all?

You'll often see things aren't nearly as urgent or important and save yourself a lot of time!

The Now Habit Review

The Now Habit doesn't seem like it at first, but I think it's secretly one of the pioneer productivity books. Old is gold and you can save yourself a lot of re-hashed reading by preferring this book over many other, newer productivity books.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- The three reasons we procrastinate
- Why procrastination helps us preserve our confidence and self-worth
- How you blow risks out of proportion and what your new anti-procrastination mantra should be
- What you can do to get two usually opposing horses in your head to pull in the same direction
- Why relaxation and play are crucial parts of being productive
- How to break down tasks into easily completable chunks

Who would I recommend The Now Habit summary to?

The 15 year old high schooler, who still has a chance at preserving her motivation and desire to learn, the 43 year old project manager, who can only accomplish big things by thinking in small parts, and anyone who doesn't keep a proper grocery shopping list.