

So in college, I was a government major, which means I had to write a lot of papers. Now, when a normal student writes a paper, they might spread the work out a little like this. So, you know --

上大学那会儿，我是学政务专业的，意味着我得写很多论文。当一名普通的学生写论文时，他们也许会像这样，把任务分摊开。所以，你明白

(Laughter)

(笑声)

you get started maybe a little slowly, but you get enough done in the first week that, with some heavier days later on, everything gets done, things stay civil.

开始可能有点慢，但是一个星期过后已经写了不少，接下来有时写的更多一些，最后一切搞定，事情不会搞砸。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And I would want to do that like that. That would be the plan. I would have it all ready to go, but then, actually, the paper would come along, and then I would kind of do this.

我也想这样。至少我的计划是这样。我准备好开始，然而，事实上，到写论文的时候，我是这么做的。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And that would happen every single paper.

而且每次写论文都这样。

But then came my 90-page senior thesis, a paper you're supposed to spend a year on. And I knew for a paper like that, my normal work flow was not an option. It was way too big a project. So I planned things out, and I decided I kind of had to go something like this. This is how the year would go. So I'd start off light, and I'd bump it up in the middle months, and then at the end, I would kick it up into high gear just like a little staircase. How hard could it be to walk up the stairs? No big deal, right?

最后到了写90页毕业论文的时候，本应该花一年时间去写的论文。我知道对于这样一篇论文来说，我平常的做法行不通。毕业论文是个大项目。于是我计划好，决定这么去做。一年的工作就这么安排。起初少干点儿，中间几个月持续干多一点儿，最后高速档全力以赴，就像小台阶一样。爬台阶能有多难？没什么大不了的，对吧？

But then, the funniest thing happened. Those first few months? They came and went, and I couldn't quite do stuff. So we had an awesome new revised plan.

但是接下来，有趣的事发生了。起初那几个月？来了又走，我基本没干什么。于是就有了这个很棒的修改计划。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And then --

再然后.....

(Laughter)

(笑声)

But then those middle months actually went by, and I didn't really write words, and so we were here. And then two months turned into one month, which turned into two weeks. And one day I woke up with three days until the deadline, still not having written a word, and

so I did the only thing I could: I wrote 90 pages over 72 hours, pulling not one but two all-nighters -- humans are not supposed to pull two all-nighters -- sprinted across campus, dove in slow motion, and got it in just at the deadline.

中间几个月竟然就这么过去了，我基本上没写几个字，所以变成了这样。然后从还有两个月到还有一个月，再到只剩两星期。然后有一天我突然意识到离截止期只剩三天了，而我还一个字都没写呢，于是我做了我唯一能做的事：我花了72小时写出90页，通宵整整两天赶工。人不应该连续熬两个通宵，全速穿过校园，慢动作潜入，赶在截止期之前交了论文。

I thought that was the end of everything. But a week later I get a call, and it's the school. And they say, "Is this Tim Urban?" And I say, "Yeah." And they say, "We need to talk about your thesis." And I say, "OK." And they say, "It's the best one we've ever seen."

我以为一切就这么结束了。结果一个星期之后我接到一通电话，是学校打来的。他们问：“你是蒂姆·尔班吗？”我说，“没错”。他们说：“我们得和你谈一下论文的事儿。”我回答，“好”。对方接着说，“这是我们看过最棒的一篇论文。”

(Laughter)

(笑声)

(Applause)

(鼓掌)

That did not happen.

那并未发生。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

It was a very, very bad thesis.

这篇论文写得非常非常烂。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

I just wanted to enjoy that one moment when all of you thought, "This guy is amazing!"

我只是想享受一下这个时刻，当你们全部以为，“这家伙太牛了！”

(Laughter)

(笑声)

No, no, it was very, very bad. Anyway, today I'm a writer-blogger guy. I write the blog Wait But Why. And a couple of years ago, I decided to write about procrastination. My behavior has always perplexed the non-procrastinators around me, and I wanted to explain to the non-procrastinators of the world what goes on in the heads of procrastinators, and why we are the way we are. Now, I had a hypothesis that the brains of procrastinators were actually different than the brains of other people. And to test this, I found an MRI lab that actually let me scan both my brain and the brain of a proven non-procrastinator, so I could compare them. I actually brought them here to show you today. I want you to take a look carefully to see if you can notice a difference. I know that if you're not a trained brain expert, it's not that obvious, but just take a look, OK? So here's the brain of a non-procrastinator.

不是这样的，那篇论文超级烂。不管怎么样，我现在是个博文作者。我为“打破砂锅问到底”写博文。几年前我决定写一篇关于拖延的文章。我的拖延行为总是让我身边那些不拖延的人感到困惑，所以我想向不拖延的人解释一下拖延者脑袋里到底是怎么想的，还有

为什么我们这些拖延者会这样。我的假设是 拖延者的大脑 和不拖延者的大脑是不同的。为了证明这一点， 我找到一个核磁共振实验室 让我可以扫描自己的大脑 和一个经证实不是拖延者的大脑， 然后我就可以对比这两种大脑。今天我把它们都带来了。我希望大家能认真比较 这二者之间是否有什么差别。我知道大家 不是受过训练的脑科专家， 看起来可能不明显， 但是让我们来看一下， 好吗？ 这是一个不拖延者的大脑。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Now ... here's my brain.

现在， 这是我的大脑。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

There is a difference. Both brains have a Rational Decision-Maker in them, but the procrastinator's brain also has an Instant Gratification Monkey. Now, what does this mean for the procrastinator? Well, it means everything's fine until this happens. 这二者之间有一个区别。 两种大脑里头 都有一个理性的决策制定者， 但是拖延者的大脑里， 还有一只叫即时满足的猴子。 对拖延者来说这意味着什么呢？ 它意味着在这件事 发生之前一切都挺好的。

[This is a perfect time to get some work done.] [Nope!]

[现在是开始干活的最佳时机.] [才不是呢!]

So the Rational Decision-Maker will make the rational decision to do something productive, but the Monkey doesn't like that plan, so he actually takes the wheel, and he says, "Actually, let's read the entire Wikipedia page of the Nancy Kerrigan/ Tonya Harding scandal, because I just remembered that that happened.

于是当理性的决策制定者 做出理性的决策， 想做一些富有成效的事时， 猴子不想这么做， 于是他开始掌控方向盘， 而且他说：“实际上， 让我们来读一下维基百科上关于 南茜·克里根/汤妮·雅哈丁 的丑闻案吧， 因为我刚想起来这件事。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Then --

然后

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Then we're going to go over to the fridge, to see if there's anything new in there since 10 minutes ago. After that, we're going to go on a YouTube spiral that starts with videos of Richard Feynman talking about magnets and ends much, much later with us watching interviews with Justin Bieber's mom.

然后让我们走到冰箱， 翻翻看这10分钟以来 有没什么新东西。 之后，让我们继续 在视频网站上浏览， 从理查德·费曼 谈磁性的视频开始看， 一直看到 对贾斯汀·比伯老妈的采访看到地老天荒。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

"All of that's going to take a while, so we're not going to really have room on the schedule for any work today. Sorry!"

“这一切都花时间，所以我们今天的日程安排 没办法抽空干活。 很抱歉！”

(Sigh)

(叹气)

Now, what is going on here? The Instant Gratification Monkey does not seem like a guy you want behind the wheel. He lives entirely in the present moment. He has no memory of the past, no knowledge of the future, and he only cares about two things: easy and fun.

这是怎么回事呢？即时满足猴子似乎不是那个 你想让他操控方向盘的人。他完全活在当下。他没有过去的记忆，没有对未来的认识，他只关心两件事：简单和快乐。

Now, in the animal world, that works fine. If you're a dog and you spend your whole life doing nothing other than easy and fun things, you're a huge success!

在动物世界里，这样没问题。如果你是一条狗，你简单、快乐地度过这一生，就已经是巨大的成功！

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And to the Monkey, humans are just another animal species. You have to keep well-slept, well-fed and propagating into the next generation, which in tribal times might have worked OK. But, if you haven't noticed, now we're not in tribal times. We're in an advanced civilization, and the Monkey does not know what that is. Which is why we have another guy in our brain, the Rational Decision-Maker, who gives us the ability to do things no other animal can do. We can visualize the future. We can see the big picture. We can make long-term plans. And he wants to take all of that into account. And he wants to just have us do whatever makes sense to be doing right now. Now, sometimes it makes sense to be doing things that are easy and fun, like when you're having dinner or going to bed or enjoying well-earned leisure time. That's why there's an overlap. Sometimes they agree. But other times, it makes much more sense to be doing things that are harder and less pleasant, for the sake of the big picture. And that's when we have a conflict. And for the procrastinator, that conflict tends to end a certain way every time, leaving him spending a lot of time in this orange zone, an easy and fun place that's entirely out of the Makes Sense circle. I call it the Dark Playground.

而对于猴子来说，人类是另外一种动物。你睡好、吃饱、繁殖下一代，这么做在部落时代或许没问题。但是，假如你还没注意到，我们现在不是生活在部落时代。我们处于一个先进的文明，而猴子根本不懂那是什么。这就是为什么我们脑袋里还有另外一个家伙，理性的决策制定者，他让我们有能力去做其他动物无法做到的事情。我们可以预见未来。我们可以顾全大局。我们可以做长期打算。而且他想把这些都考虑进去。他想让我们做任何值得现在去做的事儿。有时做简单快乐的事是有意义的，比如吃饭、睡觉或者享受应得的休闲时光。这就是为什么即时满足猴子和理性的决策制定者之间有重合。有时他们意见一致。但是有时，更有意义的是去做那些比较难而且不那么让人享受的事情，这是出于全局的考虑。此时二者之间会产生冲突。对于拖延者来说，每次冲突都以这种方式结束，就是他在橙色区域花费了大量时间，这是那个简单又快乐，但是又没有意义的那个区域。我把这片区域称为黑暗的操场。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Now, the Dark Playground is a place that all of you procrastinators out there know very well. It's where leisure activities happen at times when leisure activities are not supposed to be happening. The fun you have in the Dark Playground isn't actually fun, because it's

completely unearned, and the air is filled with guilt, dread, anxiety, self-hatred -- all of those good procrastinator feelings. And the question is, in this situation, with the Monkey behind the wheel, how does the procrastinator ever get himself over here to this blue zone, a less pleasant place, but where really important things happen?

黑暗的操场是一个 所有拖延者都很了解的地方。 这里是在本来不应该休闲的时候 的休闲娱乐的活动场所。 在黑暗的操场得到的快乐 其实并不是快乐， 因为它完全是不劳而获的， 这会带来内疚、恐惧、 焦虑、自我憎恨 这是所有拖延者的感受。 而且问题是，在这种情况下， 由猴子掌控着方向盘， 怎么能让拖延者把自己 带去蓝色区域那边呢， 那边虽然没那么舒适， 但是有很多重要的事情要做。

Well, turns out the procrastinator has a guardian angel, someone who's always looking down on him and watching over him in his darkest moments -- someone called the Panic Monster.

其实拖延者有个守护天使， 总是看不起他并且看守着他， 在那些最黑暗的时刻 它被称为恐慌怪兽。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Now, the Panic Monster is dormant most of the time, but he suddenly wakes up anytime a deadline gets too close or there's danger of public embarrassment, a career disaster or some other scary consequence. And importantly, he's the only thing the Monkey is terrified of. Now, he became very relevant in my life pretty recently, because the people of TED reached out to me about six months ago and invited me to do a TED Talk.

恐慌怪兽大部分时间都在冬眠， 但是截止期很靠近的时候 或者处于在公众面前出丑的危险中时， 或面临事业灾难时， 或有其他可怕的后果时， 它就会突然醒来。 而且重要的是， 他是猴子唯一害怕的东西。 最近在我的生活里， 恐慌怪兽变得相当重要， 因为TED的工作人员 6个月之前联络过我， 邀请我做一次演讲。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

Now, of course, I said yes. It's always been a dream of mine to have done a TED Talk in the past.

当然，我答应啦。 我以前一直梦想着 可以做一次TED演讲。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

(Applause) But in the middle of all this excitement, the Rational Decision-Maker seemed to have something else on his mind. He was saying, "Are we clear on what we just accepted? Do we get what's going to be now happening one day in the future? We need to sit down and work on this right now." And the Monkey said, "Totally agree, but let's just open Google Earth and zoom in to the bottom of India, like 200 feet above the ground, and scroll up for two and a half hours til we get to the top of the country, so we can get a better feel for India."

(鼓掌) 但是在这种兴奋中， 理性的决策制定者 似乎在想别的事。 他会说：“我们清楚刚才答应了什么吗？ 我们现在具有完成 将来那个任务所需的能力吗？ 我们得坐下来开始干活。” 而猴子说：“完全同意， 但是让我们打开谷歌地球 把镜头推进到印度地下200尺， 然后花两个半小时 向上滚动到这个国家的地表， 让我们更好地感受一下印度。”

(Laughter)

(笑声)

So that's what we did that day.

那天我就是这么做的。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

As six months turned into four and then two and then one, the people of TED decided to release the speakers. And I opened up the website, and there was my face staring right back at me. And guess who woke up?

当6个月变成4个月，然后2个月，然后1个月时，TED工作人员开始发布演讲者。我打开网站看到自己的脸 盯着自己看。你猜这个时候谁醒了？

(Laughter)

(笑声)

So the Panic Monster starts losing his mind, and a few seconds later, the whole system's in mayhem.

于是恐慌怪兽开始发疯，几秒钟之后，整个系统一片混乱。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And the Monkey -- remember, he's terrified of the Panic Monster -- boom, he's up the tree! And finally, finally, the Rational Decision-Maker can take the wheel and I can start working on the talk.

而猴子，还记得吗？他害怕恐慌怪兽 蹦的一声，他爬到树上去了！于是终于，理性的决策制定者 终于可以操控方向盘，我可以开始准备这次演讲。

Now, the Panic Monster explains all kinds of pretty insane procrastinator behavior, like how someone like me could spend two weeks unable to start the opening sentence of a paper, and then miraculously find the unbelievable work ethic to stay up all night and write eight pages. And this entire situation, with the three characters -- this is the procrastinator's system. It's not pretty, but in the end, it works. This is what I decided to write about on the blog a couple of years ago.

在恐慌怪兽看来 所有那些相当愚蠢的拖延行为 就比如我这样的人花了两个星期 还没办法开始写论文的开头语，然后奇迹般地又拥有了 令人难以置信的工作热情 整晚熬夜写了8页。这个情况，加上那三种角色 就是拖延者的系统。不美好，但是至少还有用。这是我几年前决定在博客写的东西。

When I did, I was amazed by the response. Literally thousands of emails came in, from all different kinds of people from all over the world, doing all different kinds of things. These are people who were nurses, bankers, painters, engineers and lots and lots of PhD students.

发布之后，收到的回应让我大吃一惊。我收到几千封邮件，来自世界各地不同地方的人，他们做着各种不同的事儿。有护士、银行家、画家、工程师 还有很多很多博士生。

(Laughter)

(笑声)

And they were all writing, saying the same thing: "I have this problem too." But what struck me was the contrast between the light tone of the post and the heaviness of these emails. These people were writing with intense frustration about what procrastination had done to their lives, about what this Monkey had done to them. And I thought about this, and I said, well, if the procrastinator's system

works, then what's going on? Why are all of these people in such a dark place?

内容基本上差不多：“我也有这个问题。”但是让我印象深刻的是那种反差，帖子的轻松口吻和那些邮件的沉重语气的反差。这些人有强烈的挫败感，因为拖延影响到他们的生活，因为猴子控制了他们的想法。思考之后，我的问题是：如果拖延者的系统可以运转，那么到底是怎么回事？为什么这些人都有一个如此黑暗的角落？

Well, it turns out that there's two kinds of procrastination. Everything I've talked about today, the examples I've given, they all have deadlines. And when there's deadlines, the effects of procrastination are contained to the short term because the Panic Monster gets involved. But there's a second kind of procrastination that happens in situations when there is no deadline. So if you wanted a career where you're a self-starter -- something in the arts, something entrepreneurial -- there's no deadlines on those things at first, because nothing's happening, not until you've gone out and done the hard work to get momentum, get things going. There's also all kinds of important things outside of your career that don't involve any deadlines, like seeing your family or exercising and taking care of your health, working on your relationship or getting out of a relationship that isn't working.

结果我发现原来有两种拖延。我今天谈到的，上面举过的例子都有截止期。有截止期的时候，拖延的影响被限制在一个较短的期限内，因为恐慌怪兽会介入。但是对于第二种拖延来说，它发生在没有截止期的情况下。比如你想自己创业，或者从事艺术类的工作，起初并没有截止期，因为在你还没有开始努力干活之前，不会有任何事情发生，没有产生推进力让事情继续进行。除了事业之外那些重要的事情也没有截止期，比如看望你的家庭，或者锻炼身体保持身体健康，努力改善恋人关系，或者离开一段不满意的关系。如果拖延者做这些困难的事，只有一种机制，即恐慌怪兽，那么问题来了，因为在这些没有截止期的情况下，恐慌怪兽根本不会出现。他没有需要醒来的时候，于是拖延的后果是不受限制的，他们只会无限延期。而这种长期的拖延，比起更有趣、更短期、基于截止期的那种拖延来说，不那么明显，也不经常被谈论。它通常是安静地、悄悄地影响我们。它可能是大量长期不快乐、内疚的来源。我觉得，这才是那些人发来邮件的原因，这才是他们处于如此糟糕状况的原因。不是因为他们为了某个项目狂赶，而是这种长期拖延使他们感觉在他们自己的生活中，有时好像只是一个旁观者。他们的沮丧不是因为无法实现自己的梦想；而是他们甚至无法开始去追逐自己的梦想。

Now if the procrastinator's only mechanism of doing these hard things is the Panic Monster, that's a problem, because in all of these non-deadline situations, the Panic Monster doesn't show up. He has nothing to wake up for, so the effects of procrastination, they're not contained; they just extend outward forever. And it's this long-term kind of procrastination that's much less visible and much less talked about than the funnier, short-term deadline-based kind. It's usually suffered quietly and privately. And it can be the source of a huge amount of long-term unhappiness, and regrets. And I thought, that's why those people are emailing, and that's why they're in such a bad place. It's not that they're cramming for some project. It's that long-term procrastination has made them feel like a spectator, at times, in their own lives. The frustration is not that they couldn't achieve their dreams; it's that they weren't even able to start chasing them.

所以读完这些邮件之后，我有一点领悟：我认为不存在不拖延的人。没错，我认为大家都是

拖延者。你也许并不是像我们这样，每方面都一团糟，

So I read these emails and I had a little bit of an epiphany -- that I don't think non-procrastinators exist. That's right -- I think all of you are procrastinators. Now, you might not all be a mess, like some of us,

(笑声)

(Laughter)

也许有些人可以很好的面对截止日期，但是请记住：猴子最卑鄙的伎俩在于没有截止日期的部分。

and some of you may have a healthy relationship with deadlines, but remember: the Monkey's sneakiest trick is when the deadlines aren't there.

现在我想给大家最后看一样东西。我把它叫做生命日历。假设一个人可以活到90岁，每个星期是一个格子。其实没多少格子，尤其是我们已经活了这么多年。我认为我们都需要花些时间，认真看一下这个生命日历。我们需要认真思考我们真正拖延的是什么，因为每个人都在拖延某件事。我们得时刻意识到即时满足这个猴子的存在。这是我们所有人都应该做的事儿。而且因为格子并不多，这项工作也许应该从今天就开始。

Now, I want to show you one last thing. I call this a Life Calendar. That's one box for every week of a 90-year life. That's not that many boxes, especially since we've already used a bunch of those. So I think we need to all take a long, hard look at that calendar. We need to think about what we're really procrastinating on, because everyone is procrastinating on something in life. We need to stay aware of the Instant Gratification Monkey. That's a job for all of us. And because there's not that many boxes on there, it's a job that should probably start today.

好吧，也许不是今天，但是...

Well, maybe not today, but ...

(笑声)

(Laughter)

你懂的。不久的将来。

You know. Sometime soon.

谢谢。

Thank you.

(鼓掌)