Procrastination

“Procrastination,” avoiding or putting off things that you need to do, is one of the major factors that can mean a person’s success or failure. The more a person procrastinates the greater their level of stress, the less productive they are, the less they achieve and the less successful they become. Beating procrastination is an absolute must if you ever want to be as successful and fulfilled as you would like to be.

Identify the procrastination. Before you can address the issue of procrastination, you first have to recognize and acknowledge that you do it and identify how you procrastinate. Ask yourself these questions:

* Do you go extremely slowly in doing tasks?
* Do you defer or put off doing what you need to do until a later time?
* Do you avoid doing what you need to do altogether?
* Do you forget to do the things you need to do?
* Do you engage in other activities instead of doing the things you need to do?

Evaluate the reasons for the procrastination. It’s just that a person procrastinates, but it’s often important to understand why a person procrastinates. The following are some potential reasons underlying procrastination, but it’s important that you give some real thought as to why you procrastinate:

* You truly dislike the task
* You dislike or have a problem with the person for whom or with whom you are doing the task
* You find the task difficult
* You’re lazy
* You’d rather be doing something else
* You tell yourself that you like to wait until the last minute because you “work better under pressure”

You truly dislike the task. This is understandable. Not everything we have to do is fun, exciting or even interesting. That being said, you still have to get the task done. Brace yourself, dig in your heels and get that thing done as quickly as you can so you can get it out of your life!

You dislike the person for whom or with whom you’re doing the task. This is also understandable. We don’t always “click” with the higher ups at work or with coworkers. Not everyone is trying to be friends and some are actually difficult people to be around or deal with. The best strategy for this is to get done as quickly as possible whatever tasks you have to do for or with them. By doing this, you will have been productive because you have completed the necessary task and the added benefit is that you don’t have to be around that other person for a period of time.

You find the task difficult. Some tasks are more difficult than others. If the underlying cause of your procrastination is that the task is too difficult for you, find some help or some resources that can aid in your understanding of the task and then find some resources to help you complete the task. Once you have tried this strategy, not only will you have completed the task, which increases your productivity, you will also have learned how to do that task, so it’s less likely that you’ll procrastinate with it again because you don’t understand how to do it.

You’re lazy. Let’s face it; some people lack ambition and some people are simply lazy. If you fall into either of these categories, you have plenty of company. Lots of people lack ambition, but the fact of the matter is the task still needs to get done. As with anything that one finds distasteful, the quicker you get it done and over with the better. Procrastination, in this case, just prolongs that thing that you hate doing, which prolongs your stress and anxiety about it. Get it done, lower your stress, get rid of something you dislike and then move on to something that you do enjoy doing.

You’d rather be doing something else. The strategy for this category is the same as the “lazy” category: get it over with so you can move on to whatever things you actually want to do.

“I work better under pressure.” This is the great rationalization! It’s mostly a justification for procrastination. It may have been learned earlier in your life when you did something at the last minute but it actually worked out well for you. This “success” contributed to you thinking you can always pull off the same trick with everything. While you might want to believe that procrastination works in your favor in this case, it really doesn’t because waiting until the last minute tends to increase stress and anxiety; the later you wait, if something unforeseen comes up, you have no recourse or “cushion” to accommodate it. Get the task done earlier than the last minute and give yourself some room for things like revisions, corrections or sudden illness.