

Human Conditions

Exploring the messy, contradictory, and dawdling side of creativity



Even writing an intro is hard.

I had to take a raspberry off my finger to start writing this. Before that, I folded one single bath towel and promptly walked away.

To an outsider, I probably seem at ease. A little quirky, maybe, with the raspberry of it all, but otherwise like any adult with a remote job, taking a brief pause to do what people assume remote workers have the luxury of doing.

What they wouldn't see is that I've been sweating for 10 minutes. There's an anxious fluttering in the middle of my chest. I'm procrastinating writing an ode to procrastination.

Article Group has spent the past few months fielding questions about AI narratives: where to begin, how to stand out, what customers actually want to hear. (Spoiler: we think many are getting it wrong.)

A lot of those narratives center around "giving people time back," but often fail to specify for what. And frankly, I'm not sure I even want them to. My job, my personality, my Lexapro dependency, and the lingering pressures of being labeled "Gifted & Talented" in the 90s, all keep me in a near-constant state of scanning for the next task.

But as the tide of recent tide of tech innovations promising to boost my productivity swells, I feel myself spiraling into rebellion against the sanctified expectations of adult responsibility, asking myself, *How much more fucking productive can I possibly be?*

Procrastination has become a villain in our output-obsessed culture. We've turned efficiency into an idol; rest has been rebranded as "self-care" and innocent hobbies as "side hustles." Thought you could just live your life? Nope. Time to hack it!

It's exhausting as a human being, but it's especially exhausting as a creative. We're asked to *Make it pop! Make it different!* for platforms ruled by opaque algorithms that demand we understand them to stand out. And with all our productivity tools at our fingertips, we usually have to get it done ASAP.

But here's the thing: In our rush to make every act efficient, we're losing some of the essential messiness of the human mind. Constantly scanning for the next task feels like a cycle that feeds and eats itself, and we risk losing the nonlinear marination that makes ideas rich and our work more effective.

In this way, procrastination is an essential act for creatives. Buckling down to produce a piece of art rarely has the intended effect, regardless of how many distraction-blocking apps I download to my phone. The tension between what we're supposed to be doing and what we *actually* do is where the real work begins. Ask Mrs. Dalloway. Or Hamlet. Or The Dude. And if you care about science, here's some: A study from the University of York and the University of Florida found more than 40% of our creative ideas come during breaks and downtime when our minds wander.

I just went back and folded another towel. If you tilt your head, procrastination can look a whole lot like a muse.

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