

Hack #1 - Do You Think You Are a Procrastinator?

***B**egin while others are procrastinating. Work while others are wishing.*

- William Arthur Ward

- I don't think that it's crucial right now; I'll get to it later
- I find it too complicated; let me do it the next week
- Right now, I'm not in the right mood to do this
- I know myself; I can work better under pressure

Sometimes you might be saying the above statements to your own self. Right?

What kind of statements are these?

These statements can come in various forms, but it has only one name - **Procrastination**. Usually known as a universal troublemaker and sometimes **the single biggest productivity killer!**

What is procrastination? Do you think you are struggling with it?

Let me take this opportunity to explain procrastination in detail in this chapter so that you clearly understand what it is and how it affects you. After finishing this chapter, you should be able

to clearly identify the procrastination factor that is not serving you well.

NOBODY HAS A PROCRASTINATION PROBLEM

As I explained the core meaning of procrastination in the previous chapter, now, if I ask you - do you have a procrastination problem? Are you a procrastinator?

What would be your answer?

Maybe, most of you will say YES, they do have a procrastination problem.

What if I say you DO NOT have this problem; you aren't a procrastinator; would you believe in me?

Maybe NOT!

But, believe me, you do not have any procrastination problems. In fact, nobody has a procrastination problem.

But how?

Wait, wait... I'll explain this in detail.

DOES PROCRASTINATION EQUATE TO LAZINESS?

Laziness and procrastination are sometimes confused, yet they are very distinct.

Procrastination typically entails putting off a difficult activity (but likely a more important task) in favor of something more enjoyable or simple. In procrastination, you avoid completing the

task you know you should be doing and actively opt to do something else. In contrast, laziness denotes apathy, inactivity, and a refusal to take action.

Let's first understand that procrastination is NOT a problem. It is always the symptom of a problem.

Yes, procrastination is a "symptom;" it's never a "problem."

Before understanding it well, I also thought that procrastination had to do something with the thing I was procrastinating around. I was also under the impression that procrastination had something to do with my work or job. If anytime I delayed my work, assignments, or meetings, I thought I was being a procrastinator.

But in actuality, it's not the case!

Let me explain that **procrastination has nothing to do with your job or work**. In my words, *procrastination is the most prominent form of stress relief!*

Do you want to know how? Here is the example -

Many of us get stressed out in our life many times a day. The stress may be caused due to several reasons like - if something is not working for you, you are having a big fight with your mom or dad, you are not good at health, financially you are going down or losing money in gambling, etc.

Suppose, at present, this big stress ball is subconsciously hanging over your head, and with this, you go to your workplace, where you find a lot of work waiting for you. You've got 17 phone

calls you need to call them back, 23 unread emails you need to reply and 3 meetings to attend with CEOs.

Initially, you start making easy calls, but you sit down and take a break when it comes to other higher priorities tasks. Immediately your brain realizes that you already have a load of stress hanging around your head, so it rejects to handle anything extra coming in. If you want to plan your meetings with CEOs or want to make a call to somebody that you are scared to make, immediately your brain says - *"absolutely not! I'm so stressed out right now! I will do it later on. Let me have a break and get a cup of coffee first."* You somehow try to avoid the current situation and get relief from your stress. And next thing you realize that an hour has gone by without doing anything productive. And then, of course, what do you do? You beat yourself up!

As you can see here that we simply procrastinate to get momentary stress relief. Of course, the consequences of procrastination might vary from situation to situation. Procrastination is not the problem; it's a problem of anxiety.

Now consider living a stress-free life, loving your relationships, accepting all the challenges as they come your way, being thankful for every moment, and doing something you enjoy. With this kind of lifestyle, would you prepone or postpone your responsibilities? Will you prepare yourself for the challenges or postpone them?

If you are in love with someone, will you prepone or postpone it?

I hope you have the answer.

Many researchers say that procrastination is a **form of self-regulation failure characterized by the unreasonable delay of activities** despite potentially adverse consequences.

Warren Munitz, a South African expert in neurolinguistic programming and the creator of *Integrative Coaching*, believes that procrastination is a tactic used to avoid situations we unconsciously find uncomfortable. He says - *"The human instinct to avoid pain is the strongest instinct we have because it is [subconsciously] connected to death. We avoid things because, unconsciously, we feel as though it is connected to pain and suffering, and we would rather seek pleasure."*

There is a term called **Chronic procrastination**, in which people consistently avoid or put off completing tasks and responsibilities, even when that might result in adverse outcomes. Although it is not a disorder but is associated with mental health conditions. And in one of the studies done by **Joseph Ferrari**, a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago, it was claimed that about 20% of US adults are going through Chronic procrastination.

Is it wise to live with this procrastination habit and allow it to destroy our potential and steal our future?

You've got this habit because you're afraid of what you're truly capable of achieving. **Marianne Williamson**, an American author, and spiritual leader, correctly wrote - *"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be?"*

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world."

The fear of realizing your full potential may cause you to stop the growth of your skills, abilities, and talents. So first, you must understand that **you're not a procrastinator; you have a habit of procrastinating.** There is a big difference. Because if it's a habit that is not helping you anymore, you can try to get rid of it. You can learn the science and art behind this habit.

There is good news also - **According to several studies, it is observed that, in most cases, procrastination is not a sign of a severe problem. It's a natural tendency that most people exhibit at some point.**

So, are you ready to deal with your procrastination habit, or do you allow it to keep you from leaving an impact on the world?

If you are ready to start working on this habit **"today"** without further procrastination, let's go deeper together to learn how to deal with it in a healthy way.

EXERCISE FOR YOU

Tony Stubblebine, a leadership coach, and CEO @ medium.com, shows a simple yet profound way to strengthen your focus. Before moving forward, I think you should practice this super simple meditation. You can do it any time during your day. **This will make you more calm, relaxed, and ready to handle your procrastination better.**

Here it is:

- Sit properly... Relax... And slowly close your eyes.
- Begin counting your breaths. 1... 2... 3..., so on... 50 breaths should be the target. This will take around 5–10 minutes.
- Your mind will fly. When it does, notice it and write down what you were actually thinking. This is crucial: Make a note of that as a whole, grammatically sound phrase that starts with *"I am aware that.. {fill in the blank}."* For example - *"I am aware that I am thinking about what to wear for the office today,"* or *"I am aware that I am going to meet my boss now and explain the sales numbers for this month."*
- Continue counting your breath from where you left off once you've finished noticing that distracting thought.

If you're wondering how something so obviously simple might be beneficial, Stubblebine explains:

Many of us are ruled by irrational fears and beliefs. When you express them in simple words using this meditation, it brings them to the surface, where they either lose their influence (if they are worthless) or may be addressed (if they are significant).

How profound it is!

Hack #2 - Procrastination Awareness at Its Core

Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.

- Earl Nightingale

Father: *Do you have an idea for your project yet?*

Son: *No, I'm waiting for inspiration. You can't just turn on creativity like a faucet. You have to be in the right "mood!"*

Father: *What "mood" is that?*

Son: *LAST-MINUTE PANIC.*

A SIGH OF RELIEF

Do you feel you are the only one on this planet who has the habit of procrastination?

Don't worry; you are not alone here. Even the most famous and great people sometimes struggle with this habit. **Leonardo da Vinci, Margaret Atwood, Victor Hugo, Bill Clinton, Douglas Adams, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mariah Carey, and Naomi Campbell** are all known for waiting until the last minute to do things. In fact, the world-famous **Fallingwater**, *a house designed by the architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1935 in the Laurel Highlands of southwest*