



Procrastination: THE Results Killer!

By Tony Jeary

Anyone interested in getting better results, becoming more productive and ultimately more successful should probably take an honest look at the issue of procrastination. Most people think procrastination is just an issue that involves putting things off that can be taken care of later without much of a penalty. That idea just scratches the surface of the procrastination problem and it is indicative of the denial people have about it. Truthfully, procrastination is like an addiction because it is the symptom of a thinking problem and like any other addiction, it's difficult to break! The reality is that nothing marginalizes results more than procrastination.

Being productive and getting superior results is about completing tasks and projects in reduced time frames. Obviously, if you can get more work done in less time, you will see results much faster. We are all guilty of procrastination to some extent, and there are two kinds:

1. **Positive Procrastination.** This is when you legitimately need some "mental percolation" time to gather your thoughts and get clear on what you need to do.
2. **Negative Procrastination.** This is based on some pretty flimsy excuses to avoid doing something, which will ultimately affect your results in negative ways.

Whereas Positive Procrastination can be beneficial, Negative Procrastination is something you need to overcome in order to be more effective and finish things faster. You can't produce results until you start doing something. If you do nothing, that is exactly what you will get -- nothing!

If you want to accelerate results, there is no room in your life or your business for Negative Procrastination. Show me a person who consistently fails to get superior results, and I'll show you a person who procrastinates. However, they probably won't *think* of themselves as procrastinators because they have lots of seemingly good reasons for not doing things TODAY.

You may find some of the following statements familiar. You have probably either heard them from other people, or you may have even believed one or more of them yourself. If you feel a personal kinship with these statements, I suggest that you give serious thought to the possibility that there might be a touch of procrastination in your own life. Consider the following statements:

1. ***"I can do it tomorrow."*** This may be the most popular and frequently used justification for procrastination. The reason it's so popular is because tomorrow sounds so close to today. Waiting until tomorrow just doesn't seem like that big a deal. Just waiting one more day won't upset too many people, and there are surely many good reasons that can be created to justify the delay.
2. ***"I don't have everything I need, so I'll wait."*** This is a very popular statement used to justify inaction and waiting. It is most often an excuse that salespeople use to avoid making telephone calls to prospects. The truth is that you can always take *some* kind of action, regardless of the list of the things you think you need before you can start. All you have to do is be honest about it and look for what is possible to do today. Do not wait until you have everything you think you need before you start doing things.
3. ***"I can't do it perfectly, so I'll wait."*** This excuse doesn't make much sense if you ask yourself the question: Can we ever do *anything* perfectly? I think not. How do you feel about this one? Do you feel as though you have to be able to perform perfectly before you can be willing to act? If you do have this attitude, you are in serious trouble, because you will NEVER be able to do anything perfectly.
4. ***"I don't have time right now."*** Why and how do we get the idea that we have to be able to *finish* something before we can work on it? Let me use a book-writing example to show you what I mean by this. A non-fiction book is a collection of chapters. Each chapter is a collection of ideas about a specific topic. Each idea may have many sub-points. When I begin a book project, how many books would I complete if I believed I had to finish the entire book in one, continuous work session? The answer is that I would *never* complete any book project if I believed this was necessary. The correct approach is to do what you can, when you can!
5. ***"Someone else can do it better."*** This excuse is a silent one that people make to themselves privately. Some authors and psychologists say that procrastination is rooted in the fear of success. I'm not a psychologist, but I think it's more likely people fear *failure* more than they fear success. Let's face it – people don't want to look bad, and they are hesitant to put themselves in position where they might fail. Procrastination is a tool that many people use because they falsely believe it will save them from failure. The truth is that procrastination usually *guarantees* failure.

Procrastination may be many things, but mostly it's a bad habit. Someone once said, "Repetition strengthens and confirms." Simply put, this means that the more you do something, the easier it gets! I believe people learn how to procrastinate over a long period of time, and the more they do it, the easier it becomes. So, if you want better results and greater success, take a look at the issue of procrastination in your life. Sit down today and make a list of all the things you need to do that you have not completed. How many are the result of procrastination? You might be surprised.