

## **Overcoming Procrastination through Organization**

Many people struggle with procrastination. *Procrastination* is the natural enemy of *organization*. Here are a few organizing strategies to help you slay the dragon.

### **See procrastination for what it is.**

Procrastination is a two-headed monster. The overt side is obvious and the covert side is cloaked. Neither side is pretty.

Everyone knows about *overt procrastination*. You ignore the task before you and go to the movies or read the latest magazine. Easy to identify!

*Covert procrastination* is tricky. A simple definition is this. You look at your to-do list and pick the lower priority, easy jobs and avoid the taxing, urgent and critical tasks. You fill your time with busy work. Because you are never idle, others are often fooled into thinking you are productive and you might even believe it yourself. Except at the end of the day when you realize that you have delayed the priority items.

When I discovered the principle of covert procrastination it literally changed my productivity overnight. I became more mindful. Why am I filing these papers when I have a deadline to meet? Why am I sharpening pencils and cleaning out my desk drawer when I have clients to call? Just realizing what I was doing could get me back on track.

### **Identify why.**

There are several reasons why people put things off or delay. Give some thought to why you are avoiding a project and then take the steps to change.

- If the task is too overwhelming, break it down. If it is still too overwhelming, break it down again.
- Be realistic. If an item keeps showing up on your to-do list and is repeatedly bumped to the next day, maybe it isn't that important to you.
- Ask yourself if it is really *your* goal. It could be someone else's goal, or their goal for you. Figure out if you want to do it *or* let it go.
- Do you feel under-qualified? Ask for help. Do some research. Take a class.
- Are you being distracted? Figure out why and make the necessary adjustments to eliminate the interruptions.
- Do you just hate the job? Try swapping with someone who is willing to do the job you hate, if you return the favor.

### **Maintain. Maintain!**

Stay on top of your day-to-day chores. If you keep up with simple chores they remain simple. If you let things pile up, it becomes overwhelming. So hang up the clothes, wash the dishes, sort the mail without delay! Maintenance works well for normal routines. But what if you have a big project at work or are faced with a task like Spring Cleaning, that is above and beyond your regular responsibilities?

**Break it down.**


Regardless of whether you are at home or at work, think of yourself as a Project Manager. Plan the project. Break it down into daily goals. Build it into your schedule. Keep yourself on a timetable to make sure you are making steady progress. Daily success can be a powerful motivator and can give you the momentum to succeed.

Let's use Spring Cleaning as an example. List the chores that need to be done. Washing windows, flipping mattresses, washing floors, cleaning in dark corners and so forth. Next decide how to break it down. Assign yourself one room a day. If that is too much, just wash the windows in one room every day. *We have 69 windows in our home, I couldn't do it any other way!* Decide if you want to push hard and finish cleaning in one week, or if you would be more comfortable stretching it to two or three weeks. Determine a deadline and don't forget to reward yourself when you are done.

There are benefits to overcoming procrastination. You will feel in control and won't have that feeling that things are hanging over your head. Working ahead on projects can actually give you a little wiggle room. Sometimes it is hard to do your best work when you are trying to beat a deadline. If you do it gradually you have time to let things rest and then take them up again. It helps you do your best work and it alleviates pressure.

Try a few of these techniques for a month and see if you can't slay Procrastination once and for all!

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