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HOW TO BEAT PROCRASTINATION

If you found yourself putting off important tasks over and over again, you are not alone. Everyone procrastinates sometimes, but some are so chronically affected by procrastination that it stops them fulfilling their dreams and disrupts their careers. So, what is procrastination? In a nutshell, you procrastinate when you put off things that you should be focusing on right now, usually in favor of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you are more comfortable doing. In fact, in any process of creation, procrastination is your greatest enemy [1].

What are the reasons for procrastination in our life? Arun Prabhu [2] specifies four unnecessary reasons for procrastination. He says that most people push things off because they are afraid of failing and not fulfilling expectations and standards set by their parents, friends and society. Furthermore, they are not only afraid of the task itself, but they are, also, frightened by the amount of work that should be done, and, as a result, they do not have enough courage to start. Another reason for procrastination is laziness. “When I get the feeling to do something, I lie down until the feeling goes away,” someone said, and it is true. Being lazy consumes a lot of energy after all, most of it needed for trying not to think about the work and doing something funny instead, or doing nothing at all. One more reason why people postpone doing things is that they have different addictions. Nowadays at the age of new technologies and innovations, modern person may be addicted not only to drinking and to drugs, but, also, to social networks, TV and Internet. Communicating in social networks and Internet surfing takes a lot of your productive time, therefore you never have enough time to get your tasks done. Moreover, lots of things can distract you from doing important work. For example, loud music, mess in your workspace, smell of hot coffee or a TV show can steal your attention, and make you feel unsuccessful and unproductive.

What should we do to fight procrastination? Brian Tracy [3], a millionaire and a famous business writer, says that if you want to beat procrastination in your life, *you have to eat your frog first thing in the morning*. Your *frog* is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to postpone during the day. Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is *to eat a live frog*, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that it is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you on that day. As a result, if you start your day by doing it, other tasks will be much easier for you to accomplish. You will feel more energetic and successful all day long.

Another way you can stop procrastinating is *to avoid sirens songs*. *Sirens songs* are everything that distract you from doing important tasks. Therefore, if you want to be more productive during your worktime, you have to create distraction free environment. One of the first things Steve Jobs [4] did in NeXT, the company he founded after his resignation from Apple, was painting everything white and removing all possible distractions. When he was asked: “Why everything is white? Why is

everything so perfect?” He answered: “Because I want to think clearly.” Thus, if you want to think clearly too, you should clean out all distractions, try to work alone as much as possible, and get rid of the clutter because mess creates stress and brings disorder to your mind.

You also can fight procrastination by *eating an elephant by pieces*. Your *elephant* is a big and complicated project that overwhelms and frightens you, therefore you have to divide this big *elephant* into small bite size manageable segments. Think about what is needed to be done and write down what you are going to do to tackle this project hour by hour, and make it specific. By breaking down this giant project into small tasks, this *elephant* will become a lot less daunting, and you will be less likely to procrastinate.

The last but not least thing you should do to kill your monster of procrastination is to make a declaration of your project’s deadline [5]. It is necessary to admit that declaring your project’s deadline is crucial, because if you do not have the deadline and nobody knows about the project you are working on, it does not matter whether you are procrastinating, and you will continue doing it forever. In a recent study, two groups of university students were assigned to write three papers in three weeks [6]. First group was given an opportunity to turn in all three papers at any point during those three weeks. Second group had strict weekly deadlines for each paper. Ultimately, the ones who did the best on the papers were the ones that were given strict deadlines, as for another group with the students who had to pick their own deadlines, they did poorly. Obviously, humans are not the best in regulating themselves that is why public declaration will motivate you to get everything done in time.

Overall, as technology keeps advancing, more and more ways to kill time are appearing. As a result, people are more likely to put off work. However, the work is still needed to be done, regardless of our views on it. Therefore, if you have procrastination problem, you should do just four things to overcome it. Firstly, you have to ***pick a frog and eat it first thing in the morning***. Take one big, dreaded task and get it over with. Relish in the accomplishment, and then tackle the little things. Secondly, you should *avoid sirens songs* during your work. Create distraction free environment that will allow you to think clearly. Thirdly, eat an *elephant by small pieces*. You should divide big projects into small specific tasks, and write the plan how you are going to reach your goal. Finally, make a *public declaration*. Let people know about your project and its deadline. To sum up, overcoming your procrastination habit will help you to become more productive, and will bring you to a new level of performance and lifestyle.

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