

Why Do Today What You Can Put Off Until Tomorrow?



This is a philosophy that at some point or another, we've all followed. Procrastination, it seems, is part of human nature. But recently, I've been trying a different approach. Classic American radio host Bernard Meltzer once said, "Hard work is often the easy work you did not do at the proper time." He's right. Everything seems infinitely more difficult, not to mention stressful, when the deadline is rapidly approaching. But eventually, you will reach the light at the end of the tunnel. And who doesn't enjoy that huge wave of relief after finishing a tough project?

When I have a task left to finish – a report, an errand, maybe even a blog post, for example – I can always sense the clock ticking. Every so often, the voice in the back of my head goes "Hey, remember that task you didn't do?" I used to be motivated by that voice. I wouldn't get work done until I felt my life depended on it. This habit developed in high school, but it solidified in my undergraduate years. But when you're a small business owner with clients waiting on you, wasting time is not an option.

But there is hope, fellow procrastinators. The key to beating procrastination is knowing why you do it. **Look first for your excuses:** Maybe you're waiting for the right mood, or the right time of day. Sometimes, the task is too vague – if you don't know what to do, you'll just stop working. Don't! Make a decision and stick to it. Lack of confidence in your work can be your biggest enemy. Remember, your clients decided that your skills are worth spending their hard-earned money on, so have faith in your abilities. Once you've caught yourself making an excuse, get over it! Often you'll find that *you* are the only one stopping you from making progress.

Don't blow the task out of proportion. If you don't see the end in the near future, then at least start! Once you get some momentum, you'll realize that it's not as hard as you built it up to be. Sometimes the plan has to fall into place; it isn't always obvious right away. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

Besides, with technology as it is today, **the excuse of "being busy" is obsolete.** The modern business person has a smartphone loaded with all of the necessary applications to get work done. You can check your email, reply to a client, and even send invoices from anywhere – the courtroom, the restaurant, or even the bus/train. Increasing your efficiency can be done with the swipe of a finger.

Lastly, **treat yourself!** You deserve to be rewarded for your hard work. Setting goals and schedules is the key to time management. When I reach a goal I've been working at for a long time, I celebrate. Go out to dinner, grab a drink, or enjoy some relaxation.

By now, you're hopefully excited – you can't wait to get that project out of the way and be free to relax in the sunshine. The next time you have a task to accomplish, do it right away. You'll notice that feeling of achievement, and be inspired to do more. All of a sudden, the project is done, the client is happy, and your invoices are paid. It is *then* that you can give yourself a pat on the back.

Until then, this article is over. Don't you have work you should get back to?

If you have any tips or success stories about overcoming procrastination, we would love to hear from you. Feel free to share with our readers in the comments section below.