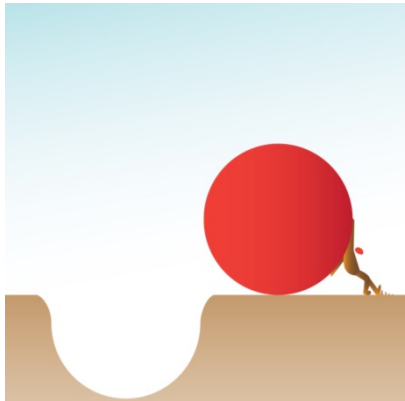


Procrastination makes easy things hard and hard things harder.

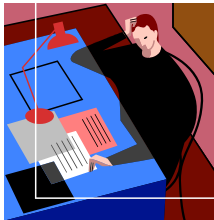
Mason Cooley

Module Three: Overcoming Procrastination (II)



Procrastination can happen at any time. It is not enough to identify that you are avoiding a project. You need to take active steps to remove the temptation to procrastinate. By taking control of your schedule and work environment, you will be able to reduce the amount of time that you spend procrastinating each day. In turn, you will be able to improve your productivity and accomplish your goals.

Remove Distractions



We are bombarded with distractions every day. These distractions are temptations to procrastinate. By removing as many distractions as possible, you will be on track to overcoming procrastination.

Distractions to Avoid:

- **Office clutter:** Clean up your space at the end of each day, both at home and in the office. This will help to keep you focused, and you will not be tempted to clean during a project.
- **Email notification:** Establish specific times to check email. Automatic notifications are distracting and cut into the time you spend on each project.
- **Telephone calls:** Do not take all calls. Choose a time to return calls and texts.
- **Environment:** Remove distractions such as books, magazines, etc., from your workstation.

Start Small and Build



A habit of procrastination does not happen overnight. Equally, it is not possible to stop procrastinating overnight. Expecting an immediate change will only lead to disappointment. You need to start small and build in order to end procrastination once and for all. Begin by creating a daily “to do list” for your personal life. Include the daily tasks that you have trouble completing such as laundry or cleaning the kitchen. When you have stability in your personal schedule, it will be easier to

address procrastination at work.

Create a daily schedule for work once you have broken down your larger tasks into smaller ones. As your productivity increases, you will be able to build upon your schedule. You will soon find that you are finishing tasks ahead of schedule.

Reward Yourself



People tend to procrastinate because they do not find certain tasks to be pleasant. Procrastination becomes its own reward. Overcoming procrastination requires that you implement a reward system for completing tasks. Otherwise, you will revert to bad habits. Rewards should match the tasks completed. For example, taking 10 minutes on Facebook could be a reward for returning your phone calls. Similarly, going to a movie could be a reward for completing a report on time. When choosing

rewards, you need to stay away from anything that you already have planned. For example, if you already have plans to go out with friends on a weekend, the outing will not serve as a reward. Using the appropriate rewards will improve motivation and help prevent procrastination.

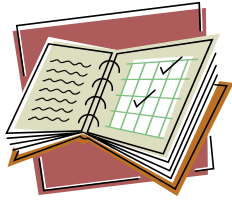
Set Realistic Deadlines



Schedules and deadlines will help you stay focused and avoid procrastination. When setting deadlines, however, you must be realistic. Deadlines that are not realistic will actually contribute to procrastination. If you do not have a chance of completing a task on time, you will avoid it. If you are creating your own deadline, you should consider how long similar tasks have taken. Be honest, and allow time for interruptions and emergencies. Do not create a schedule based on the best-case scenario. You are setting yourself up for failure. If you are assigned a deadline,

determine if it is realistic. If the deadline is not realistic, you should attempt to negotiate a more realistic date. This negotiation should be done as quickly as possible to prevent complications later.

Case Study



Alice was determined to conquer her problem with procrastination and improve her productivity. She broke down her tasks and created a schedule that she hoped would work. She tried to keep up with her daily schedule, but she was always running behind. After a week, she was stressed out and unable to completely anything on time. She was frustrated and tired. A week later, she began to procrastinate again. She continued to create schedules, but she never believed that she would finish her tasks. Finally, Alice decided to stop pretending that she could finish her tasks and quit making schedules.