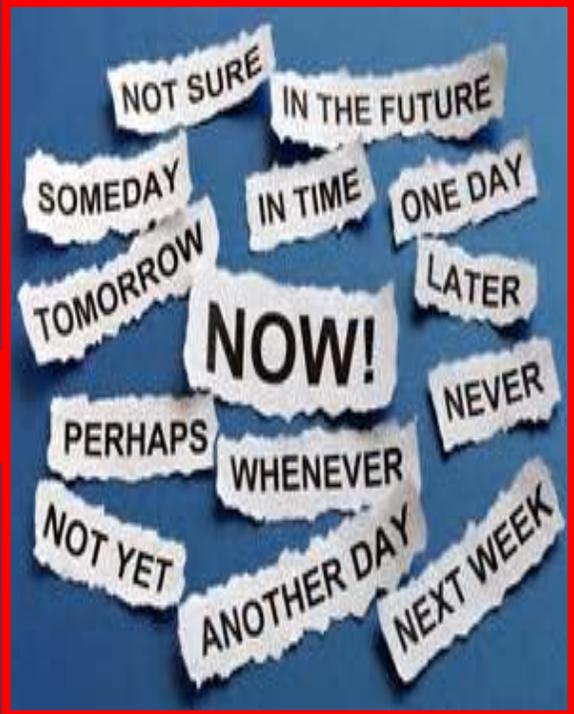


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Put off By Procrastination?



When the going gets tough, the tough put it off until tomorrow. Not surprisingly, people are more likely to put off unpleasant, difficult or overwhelming tasks than easy or enjoyable ones. Everyone does this sometimes. In fact, 20 percent of people identify themselves as chronic procrastinators. For them procrastination is a lifestyle; they put obstacles in their own path. They actually choose paths that hurt their performance. When procrastination becomes a habit, it can quickly put a dent in important relationships. It also can lower self-esteem, and cause feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

Why Do You Put Things off?

The first step in breaking the procrastination habit is to examine why you put off tasks. Consider these possible reasons:

- ♥ **Disorganization** - Studies show that many procrastinators have trouble prioritizing tasks and spend too much time on unimportant duties.
- ♥ **Fear or anxiety** - People who fear failure or rejection may be more likely to postpone a difficult task.
- ♥ **Not seeing a purpose in a task** This makes it easier to put off.

Strategies to Stop

The first step in breaking the procrastination habit is to examine why you put off tasks. Once some patterns begin to emerge as to why you procrastinate, you can identify how to counteract these negative behaviors. For instance, here are some potential strategies for addressing two of the three reasons cited above:

- ♥ **Disorganization** – Take a class or read a book on time management. But be careful not to spend so much time setting priorities that you put off the actual work that needs to be done.
- ♥ **Not seeing the purpose of a task** – Figure out what does matter in your life. Setting some life goals can give seemingly unimportant tasks more value. For instance, if one of your goals is to save enough to retire early, then you may suddenly see the value in balancing your checkbook. If a task still has no value to you after this exercise, consider dropping it or delegating it.

Sometimes the lure of technology is too much for even the sternest of taskmasters. If you get pulled away from tasks by every ding, whistle, and ring on your digital devices, then you are going to find your ability to get things done very limited. Try using your technology for good, not distraction. There are many applications and web sites you can use that can do things like disable the internet, block certain sites at certain times and even give you a report of all your online moves.