

Procrastinating Productively

By Sheila Hawkins

With the many demands on our time, it's no wonder that we procrastinate. Most of us procrastinate in a destructive manner. Research shows that people spend most of their time and effort working on activities that have nothing to do with the success of their projects. It's the biggest reason that people fail to reach their goals. In one survey, 40% of those surveyed said that procrastination cost them money.

There are ways to **use procrastination to your advantage to feed your flow of productivity**. Understand that I'm not saying that one should procrastinate destructively. Doing so can disable your level of productivity and keep you from reaching your goals. But there are ways to use it to reach your goals.

Let's look at your to-do list. There are probably some things there that don't need to be accomplished immediately and some might not ever need to be done although you might consider everything there to be important. Take a step back, relax, and look closer. What do you see? You might see your responsibilities as the important things, but what about the personal items on your to-do list? They can be important too. Look at the things that you've been procrastinating on. As you do, you might see things that aren't related to your values or intentions. There might be a better way for you to reach your intention. In this case, it's time to stop and think about other ways to reach your intention. This would be more productive than having something on your list that you are destructively procrastinating on. Here, you're **making a conscious choice to put something off to find a more suitable goal**. Doing so contributes to your productivity.

Continuing to look at the things you've been putting off, you might realize that there's something that you need clarity on, or maybe you need additional information. Take the steps necessary to get clear about the task. Consult the appropriate resources for the information that you need. If it's clarity that's missing for you, do what you need to do in order to get a clear picture. Try journaling, mind mapping or even creating a vision board. While you're waiting for clarity, focus on other goals and activities-there's always plenty to do. Doing so might still lead you to just the right solution; meeting the right person, coming across the right resource, being in the right place at the right time to hear something that you need to hear, seeing an idea, being at an event that stimulates you to move forward. This is not an effortless process as it can be hard to sustain the patience and to trust yourself.

You may look at your list and **realize that you aren't ready for something that you've been putting off**. Maybe the opportunity is just not right. Or perhaps you're struggling with things other than strategy, logistics, an action plan or timeline. You might just need to wait, which is truly opposite of what we've been taught to do, so you may not feel comfortable doing so. There's the illusion that we're doing something wrong if we don't do it yesterday; 24/7/365 productivity. It's possible that you may lose an opportunity. But you also have to realize that if we don't allow time for things to take root, you can end up being frustrated and wasting our time and energy and maybe even money. When we wait, our ideas can gel or things can be revealed or become more apparent to us. There is internal activity that we don't realize takes place when we do this. That activity is important to the task at hand.

Finally, we can do nothing. Yes, do nothing. Our tendency is to push ourselves hard. We don't slow down, so there's no down time. We need to be clear about what we want to accomplish and the strategy for doing so. To keep that clarity, we have to have down time. It could be a few minutes at a time, a few hours or you might need a weekend. Whatever the length of time, take it, and then go back to the task at hand. There has to be balance. This is definitely something that we are not used to doing, but something that is necessary for us to do to aid us in our productivity.

Remember, in these instances, you are making a conscious choice to put something off in order to positively impact your productivity. This is distinct from procrastinating in a destructive manner. Be clear about what you are doing and why and this will keep you on track with your goals.

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Services include home and office organizing, time management, productivity training and coaching, event planning and project management. Additionally, the company provides workshops for individuals, business owners and company work teams. Learn more about Third Eye Group by visiting www.thirdeyegroup.org or contact them via email at info@thirdeyegroup.org.