

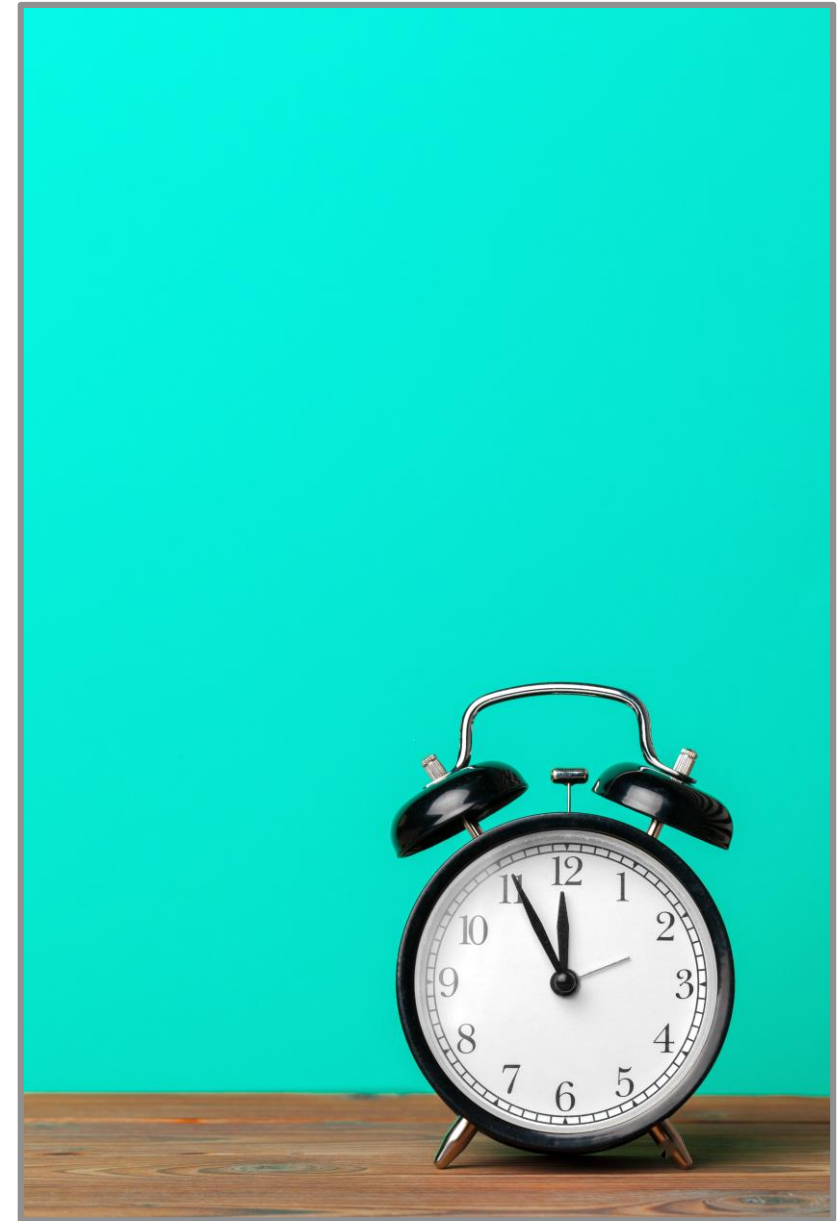


Procrastination happens, but it's not inevitable. We likely have **all** had **some** experience with **waiting until the last minute** to complete a project, **putting off** starting a goal, or **finding any other task to engage in** beside the most time-sensitive, critical one. **Procrastination** can hurt your **quality of work**, as well as your **wellbeing**.

The **PROBLEMS**

- We are particularly susceptible to **procrastination** when we are stressed, fatigued, and overwhelmed. Depending on your workplace environment and operations tempo, you may find yourself resorting to **procrastination** tendencies more often than when under different circumstances.
- **Procrastination** can produce feelings of guilt and shame before, during, and after the choice to engage in such behaviors. Guilt and shame can potentially motivate people in the short-term, but often are poor sources of motivation for the long-term. Hence, **procrastinators** are left with the byproducts of these negative emotions, without solving the root of the problem or behavior(s).
- If people experience success after procrastinating, they may chalk it up to a cause-and-effect relationship that doesn't actually exist.

Sources: Webb (2016); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)



HOW did we get here?



- Tasks and goals may require a great deal of effort and time beyond what we initially planned for. **When we lack strong systems, habits, and routines in our lives, it can leave us prone to mishandling tasks and goals.**
- People tend to dislike experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, boredom, or frustration. As a result, we may bypass any task that would (or could) involve having to experience these particular feelings.
- **People are flawed, and this includes our thinking.** Completing tasks and goals efficiently and effectively can test how accurate our patterns of thinking are. Additionally, our brains tend to struggle understanding the upside of the future compared to the promise of the now.

Sources: Webb (2016); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)

-DRIVERS-

- Present bias, or the cognitive distortion that the here and now is disproportionately more important than the future, may be fueling procrastination.
- Fear of the unknown and risk of failure could be underlying contributors to procrastination.

-BYPRODUCTS-

- Labeling yourself a procrastinator may be unhelpful to your self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.
- People may unknowingly inflate the stakes surrounding a task or goal, which adds unnecessary pressure to the situation and invites procrastination.

PROCRASTINATION: drivers & byproducts



Sources: Webb (2016); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)



Jess Burgett, MS // Leadership Training Specialist

801.213.6432

Jessica.Burgett@hsc.utah.edu

PROCRASTINATION episode // part 2
COMING SOON!

Part 2 will include **strategies and tools** to help you combat **procrastination** and enjoy **staying the course** when achieving goals and tackling everyday tasks.

Thank you!

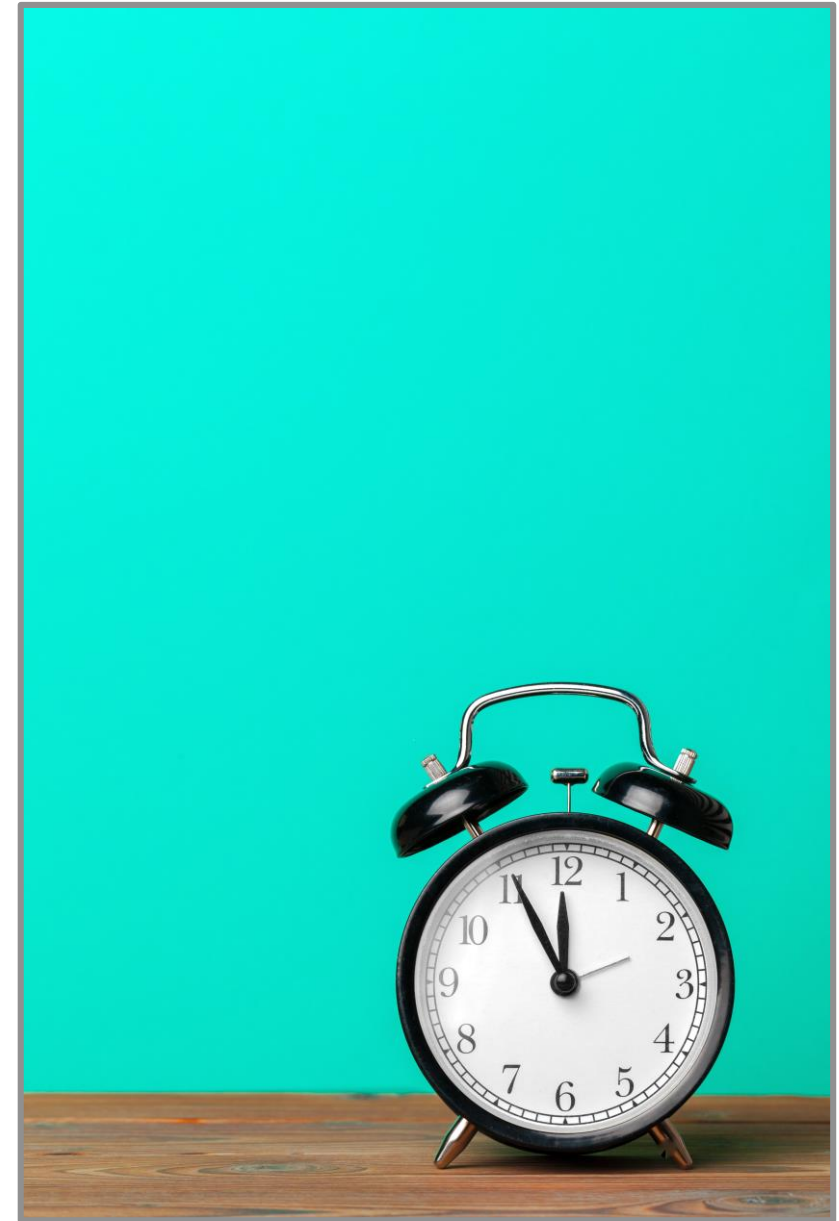


Procrastination is a human condition. When a task is **difficult, boring, frustrating, vague, unstructured, lacking personal meaning** and/or is **not intrinsically rewarding**, then the more likely we are to **avoid starting** the work altogether. If minimized, **procrastination** can be **less problematic** to our **personal professional goals and progress**.

The **STRATEGIES** an **OVERVIEW**

- 1. Get bite-sized**
- 2. Schedule deep, focused work**
- 3. Address emotions**
- 4. Build productive thought patterns**

Sources: Webb (2016); Bailey (2017); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)



When we are faced with a dreaded task or goal, we often assume we have to be perfect off the bat, or we do too much too soon. Slow down and approach your task or goal at a pace and in segments that serves you well.



To TRY—

1. START WITH SMALL BEHAVIOR CHANGE.

When behavior is small and manageable, it doesn't require the same degree of motivation as large, long-term, and complex goals and shifts in behavior.

- Create tiny habits that are consistently repeatable and doable.
- Resetting daily habits can assist you in tackling more difficult behaviors down the line.

2. IDENTIFY THE FIRST STEP AND ITS SYSTEM.

Find the very smallest first step possible that would translate to progress, as well as how you will see this step through.

- Make your first step feel as effortless and minimal as possible.
- Low effort exertion to start means increased probability for initial success and continued commitment moving forward.

EXAMPLE: Goal = complete certificate program; Smallest first step = download upcoming year's course calendar, hang above desk.

Sources: Webb (2016); Bailey (2017); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)

To TRY—

1. LIMIT YOURSELF TO SHORT BOUTS OF WORK.

When we think of deep, focused work, we often think of long, marathon sessions of work. Deep work can be quick as long as it recruits your full attention and focus.

EXAMPLE: Schedule uninterrupted work for 10 minutes today, then repeat the process the following day.

2. GET DISCONNECTED.

Getting started is often the most difficult part of any task. However, once inertia is on our side, the task often proves less difficult as we initially imagined. To help produce momentum:

- Make getting started as smooth and easy as possible.
- Remove any and all distractions (e.g., email, social media, texting, TV) to give yourself no choice but to get to work.

It's unreasonable to think you might enjoy or be productive during long, enduring work sessions. Our brains aren't designed to engage in challenging work across consecutive hours. In fact, humans tap out around 90-minutes; therefore, consider utilizing short work sessions.



Sources: Webb (2016); Bailey (2017); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)

Procrastination is not logical, rather it's the result of the emotional part of your brain (i.e., the limbic system). Deactivating the emotional part of your brain and turning on the logical part (i.e., prefrontal cortex) is essential in minimizing procrastination.



STRATEGY #3: Address emotions

To TRY—

1. EXTEND SELF-COMPASSION.

Certain emotions we feel about a particular task or goal may be due to a previous experience(s).

- Engage in compassionate self-talk to shift your emotions.

EXAMPLE: "I've been frustrated with my public speaking performances in the past, which is causing doubt and impacting my preparation. This is normal. I've had practice and learned through my experiences."

2. LIST THE COSTS OF PROCRASTINATION.

People don't like to win as much as they hate to lose. Especially in larger and more complex tasks, listing the costs associated with avoiding a task can help put things into perspective and forces us to face reality.

- Ask yourself, "What realistically can I expect to gain by starting, working on, and completing this task?"
- Ask yourself, "What realistically am I likely to give up, forgo, or lose by not starting, working on, or completing this task?"

Sources: Webb (2016); Bailey (2017); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)

To TRY—

1. LEARN TO TOLERATE (AND APPRECIATE) DIFFICULT, FRICTION-FILLED WORK.

People tend to interpret challenging and friction-filled work as a sign of doing things “wrong.” Frustration signals the potential for learning to occur, as long as one doesn’t give up too soon.

- Each day, commit to working on something that causes psychological and emotional discomfort because it is just beyond your current capabilities.
- Find a way to celebrate your progress through strenuous effort and accomplishing something you couldn’t/haven’t before.

2. REVERSE PROCRASTINATION TRIGGERS.

When we reframe how we think about tasks, they can move from aversive to attractive.

EXAMPLE: You have the task of writing a quarterly report with no template/structure. First, outline a workflow. Then, make a game of it and see how many steps within the workflow you can accomplish in a 20-minute period.

When we subconsciously inflate the stakes surrounding our goals or tasks, the likelihood to **procrastinate** increases. When we perceive our decisions have deeply-associated consequences, we may get paralyzed to act in productive and progressive ways.



Sources: Webb (2016); Bailey (2017); Boyes (2022); Clark (2022); Meeker (2022)



Jess Burgett, MS // Leadership Training Specialist

801.213.6432

Jessica.Burgett@hsc.utah.edu

QUESTIONING episode//part 1
COMING SOON!

How effectively you form and articulate **questions** can **radically change** the **direction** and **accuracy** of your **understanding, conversations, and leadership decisions.** More to come in next week's Leader Feeder!

Thank you!