



## PROCRASTINATION: What, Why and How to overcome

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*“A man who procrastinates in his choosing will inevitably have his choice made for him by circumstance.”*

- Hunter S. Thompson

We encounter moments where we get too lazy to finish our tasks and push them for another day. Well, we call this habit **procrastination**. **Many** tasks keep piling up, and they continue to be delayed until it becomes urgent and has to be done at any cost. Puts a lot of pressure.. Studies have also found that even procrastinators who feel bad about their habit, procrastinate more and more in the future. A common misconception about procrastination is that it involves time management, but that's not the case. Emotions lead a person to procrastinate rather than time management.

In reality, we tend to prioritise the tasks that come under our comfort zone. Whereas, we tend to push forward the hard tasks and only take care of them when they become urgent. These difficult tasks are the ones that require our undivided attention and time. There is a difference between this habit and laziness, which implies apathy and unwillingness to do anything. Delaying our tasks is only going to affect our productivity and problem-solving skills. Changing such habits will help us build our confidence and vitality.

In this article, we look at the devastating impact procrastination can have in our lives, what are its indicators, extent evaluation, types of procrastinators, why we postpone practices, and habits to avoid this practice to the extent possible.

We live in an era where it's tough to find time for ourselves, so it's quite understandable when we have piles of tasks that are not necessarily based on work. The important activities could be focusing on your health, making new connections, spending more time with family or forgetting dreams. At some point, we may feel tempted to ignore everything and continue living the mediocre, unsatisfactory life that we have now.

In my life, I have paid the consequences of postponing important aspects of my life for a later time. I pushed these tasks to the point where I started doubting my capabilities and confidence of ever being able to fulfil them. I have mostly postponed introspecting on this aspect for at least a few years. We all defer action and decisions in some aspects of our lives, including highly driven and accomplished individuals. The people who avoid this habit and accomplish important tasks on time are always at the top of their careers.

Successful people postpone irrelevant tasks, which helps them focus better on important tasks.

*“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” By Abraham Lincoln*



Well, most of us have gone through this once and to avoid it from repeating, we need to practise certain habits which can help us become successful.

## The Negative Impact of Procrastination



Procrastination can create a lot of negative impacts as you know which could include:

- The more you delay the work, the more you will have to compromise on the quality of your work.
- The last-minute stress when you decide to complete your tasks could take a harsh toll on your mental health.
- When it happens frequently, an overwhelming feeling shadows us. This could destroy our confidence slowly as we begin to make excuses and feel guilty for not completing these tasks.
- We would have to prove ourselves with evidence based on our excuses. This evidence could potentially ruin our reputation in the future.
- Remarks such as “unprofessional” and many more from clients can kill our confidence and respect towards us.
- You might end up losing on a lot of opportunities which could take your career to further heights, all because of a lack of discipline.

We can all agree that this habit can kill our professional growth and sabotage our future. The sooner we realise it, we need to reverse it with the help of self-awareness.

## Signs of Procrastination

If we identify the following possible signs of this dreadful habit early, it may save us from falling into the trap or we can act upon them to avoid it.

- We avoid creating to-do lists for daily and weekly activities
- We do not prioritise our tasks in categories, it's usually a long list of undone tasks.



- One of the reasons we avoid long-term goals is to dwell on the present, which can also be an excuse.
- We tend to fill our list with tasks within our comfort zone and avoid the challenging ones to make ourselves feel productive.
- We do not set deadlines as it would stress us out.
- At the first sight of a challenge or difficulty, we abandon the schedule rather than re-scheduling.
- We carry forward the tasks within our comfort zone and leave the rest unattended.
- We burden ourselves with tasks being piled up along with recent work assigned.
- We wouldn't get time off work to be engaged in other important activities
- We will probably forget about the tasks we have postponed.

I can say that in my professional and personal life, I have been guilty of going through all the points at various points of my life.

**Take up an online evaluation to see how often we tend to procrastinate. As a starting point of change, we encourage readers to take an honest look at themselves.**

## **The different type of procrastinators**

There are different behavioural patterns among people who procrastinate. Inspect into it to understand better about procrastination.

### **Type 1:- Pressure Worker**

Some people tend to think they can work best under pressure and so they push work to the last minute. This could impact the quality of your work and might force you to stretch the deadline.

### **Type 2:- Blames oneself**

When you engage in the habit of procrastinating, you might end up feeling guilty for not completing your tasks. This could take a bad turn as some people beat themselves for having false expectations of their skills.

### **Type 3:- Busy bee**

We have all come across a person who is always busy. The calendar is always full and overwhelming with various tasks. They always clutter their schedules and avoid tasks that require a lot of time and effort.

### **Type 4:- Entrepreneur Outlook**

Some people love challenging tasks and require a lot of effort. So, when anything new comes, they leave the present tasks and start on a new project until another challenging work pops up.

Humans are the most complex beings. They can act as the types mentioned above or hybrid.

## Why do we postpone important tasks?



There are a couple of common explanations for this;

- There is a part of us that doubts our competence and skills deep down. Teachers and family may have conditioned us that we cannot do something.
- There are plenty of distractions surrounding us such as serials, games, mobile etc.
- We have no choice but to do something we do not enjoy or consider unimportant.
- We are adamant and do not welcome changes.
- We worry too much about being judged and evaluated with the fear of hearing negative feedback

## How can we break this habit ?

Understanding why we do what we do may lead to some ways to overcome this challenge and live a fully competent and productive professional life. These are a few steps to help you;-

- Taking advantage of technology can make you more efficient and effective. Let's not spend more hours on them as you could fall into addiction.
- Learning what activity to prioritise will help you stay focused on your tasks.
- Sharing your deadlines with all related people can reduce the risk of procrastinating
- Face your fears. Take the tasks that challenge you, so when completing them you would feel confident.
- Change your negative beliefs with positive affirmations. Showering yourself with positive affirmations can help your subconscious mind to believe it.
- Learn to love the tasks that you do, so you enjoy them and are driven to finish them.
- Put realistic deadlines that offer you ample time to offer your best.
- Take a break from work during weekends. Use this time to unwind and spend on other important aspects of your life.
- Own up to your actions. It is okay to miss deadlines, but don't make excuses or blame circumstances for your failure. Making excuses can later become a coping mechanism whenever you fail to complete a task or need to extend a deadline.



- Only about 2% of effective leaders are multi-taskers. If you are above average but not a genius, avoid multitasking and complete one task at a time.

## Conclusion

Procrastination affects everyone in any organisation, from directors, managers, and partners to qualified professionals, trainees, and administrative staff. To resolve important tasks, choose from the options above. Here are some final thoughts for the reader's consideration:

- Do not postpone giving your best
- Do not postpone speaking your truth
- Do not postpone being an optimistic person
- Do not postpone loving and prioritising yourself
- Do not postpone being authentic, even if you're nervous.

If you do, you need to break the habit as described above.

## Questionnaire

1. Procrastination is best defined as:
  - A) The tendency to work ahead of schedule
  - B) The action of delaying or postponing tasks
  - C) The habit of multitasking
  - D) The ability to manage time effectively
2. Procrastination often leads to which of the following outcomes?
  - A) Improved time management
  - B) Enhanced performance
  - C) Missed deadlines
  - D) Increased satisfaction with work
3. Which of the following is a common reason for procrastination?
  - A) High motivation
  - B) Lack of interest in the task
  - C) Strong focus and concentration
  - D) Clear and achievable goals



4. One effective way to combat procrastination is to:
- A) Work in a distracting environment
  - B) Set vague and unachievable goals
  - C) Use a reward system for completed tasks
  - D) Avoid planning and organisation