

# NEWSLETTER

## “HOW TO STOP PROCRASTINATING AND HAVE SOME FUN!”

I don't know about you but some days it's so difficult to get the motivation to do the next task. For example, today instead of doing my monthly financial reporting I have mainly been organising my emails, redesigning a presentation, making tea and popping out for a walk for some fresh air! But the task needs doing, so I have been researching ways to stop procrastinating and get on with boring tasks – and let's try to have some fun with this at the same time!



According to James Clear who wrote the incredible book 'Atomic Habits', we procrastinate mainly because our present self is not motivated by the rewards that our future self may get once the task is complete. We are not getting any instant gratification! It's easier to eat the cake than to go and do a workout that may benefit your future self. This is why students so often put off writing that essay until the night before it's due – or why you might buy yourself a nice treat rather than saving or investing for your future self – it's an evolutionary concept to want instant rewards instead of ones that may happen in the future.

James Clear explains that you need to bring your future consequences much closer in order to motivate yourself, which is why students may feel a little bit anxious about the essay in the weeks before deadline but the day before it's due the consequences are now present consequences and they finally take action!

### MY FIRST BIT OF ADVICE HERE HAS TO BE 'DO WHAT YOU ENJOY'

– let's start by listing all of the tasks you have to do in your business (watch out, on average a business owner has over 100 roles!) and list them in order of what you enjoy doing and what you really can't stand. Can you delegate the ones at the bottom of the list? A friend once described these as energy drainers versus radiators, so have a think and try to reduce your drainers as much as possible.

For example you may include:

- Accountant and bookkeeper
- Marketer
- Social media manager
- Landlord
- Maintenance manager
- Lettings and tenancies manager
- Event attendee
- Admin assistant
- Time management manager!
- Sales person
- Daily operations manager

In my business the first thing I delegated was bookkeeping, it is an incredibly boring task for me so that went fairly quickly to a VA! The second sure-fire way for anyone avoidant of dull tasks or those that are less shiny or fun is simply to schedule your way into doing them. This is also useful for those that work better under time-pressure and a looming deadline; even highly successful and motivated business people are fond of burning the midnight oil the day before something is due because that is the only way they are forced to work at their best.



## **BUT HOW MUCH BETTER COULD THEY BE IF THEY COMPLETED THEIR TASKS DURING DAYTIME HOURS, WHEN RESTED AND AT PEAK CONDITION?**

If this sounds familiar then try digging out a diary or your favourite planning app and putting in recurring blocks of time for repeating tasks or dividing up the time needed for big one-offs into manageable chunks. You don't have the pressure of needing to power through hours of slog or feel the pressure to have the task done, but if you can convince that part of your brain that needs a deadline to get to work in your allotted slots then you have effectively brought the deadline forward to a point where you get on with it rather than letting it wait.

Once you've delegated & scheduled your way around all your tasks but still find yourself butting up against important deadlines or putting off bigger jobs it is time to roll up your sleeves and try my third and final procrastination-buster. This centres around one of the close correlates of procrastination: perfectionism. What if you procrastinate not because a task is dull but because you need to do it to the best of your ability or it carries a potential for big reward? This involves either not starting or not finishing a task because you know it is high-stakes and will probably be intensive to complete. Now is the time to make use of something called the Pomodoro technique! Italian for tomato, the pomodoro technique takes its name from the shape of the egg timer used by the technique's creator Francesco Cirillo to divide up a big or daunting task into manageable chunks that keep you in peak mental condition, allows for breaks and stops the job becoming overwhelming.

You simply follow 6 steps;

1. Set a 25-minute timer and work on the task (this is called a pomodoro)
2. When the timer ends take a 5- to 10-minute break
3. Go back to step 1 and repeat until the task is complete OR:
4. If the task is still going after four pomodoros take a longer 30-minute break and then go back to step 1.

This obviously only applies once you've finally committed to beginning a task but once you've used it a couple of times you will find you start working in a more relaxed way and don't suffer the kind of micro-burnout related with perfectionism-driven procrastination. Finally if you can't delegate, schedule or pomodoro your brain into getting on with all your jobs, get busy with your work environment, timing and accountability as below:

1. Make rewards more immediate – to do this you need to combine whatever you are putting off with something that makes you feel good immediately, eg listening to your favourite podcast only whilst exercising, or doing that financial reporting only whilst your favourite music is on
2. Create a vibrant workspace – Why not enjoy where you work? Add some colour, plants, nice stationary, whatever you need to feel happy and comfortable. On my desk I have a lovely plant that flowers whenever it feels like it, a little ammonite that my daughter gave me, a stack of colourful notebooks that I use for different tasks, a big water bottle and a pen pot. I also have a lovely view of the Dorset hills and can observe the cows outside!
3. Try music to bring your energy up – this depends on what you are doing but can really help tasks feel less monotonous and create an atmosphere that brings you energy, for example I listen to Ezra Collective when I want to crack on, or for concentration I listen to Einaudi!
4. Protect future you by organising your life to take away distractions – delete your social media apps Monday to Friday, automate your savings by setting up a transfer every month, or hide your TV! You are helping yourself out by removing these things and making your environment distraction-free!
5. Get an accountability or challenge partner – I achieved SO much in my first year of business and a lot of this was due to my accountability partner, shout out to you Julia! We challenged each other and forced ourselves to get that work in so that we could report back to each other. This is so powerful and one of the reasons that I host my own accountability group.
6. Change your location – go and find a coffee shop or co-working space – you can get the novelty of working somewhere else combined with delicious coffee and snacks!
7. Celebrate little wins – acknowledge what you have achieved, even if it's tiny! This will make the whole process more positive. It's also important to manage your energy – if you're having a low day, don't force yourself as everything will feel like wading through treacle! Be kind to yourself and take a break if you need it.

We are all just human.

Let me know what works for you – are you a procrastinator?



**MAKE SURE YOU  
SIGN UP FOR  
MORE INFO!**