

Procrastination is Keeping Me Waiting

Toolbox Teleclass Transcription

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Professional Program

**Track 3: Nuts & Bolts: The Fundamentals
of Business**



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DEFINITION OF PROCRASTINATION

Welcome to the Toolbox Teleclass call on Procrastination: It's Making Me Wait, which of course, is a bit of a play on the old Motown song on anticipation. Hope you guys got that.

Okay, so I'm going to be talking for the next hour or so about procrastination. About what it is and how to work through it--how to manage it. I did a fair amount of research on this, and I found it very interesting in that while most places agreed with the definition of procrastination, there was a lot of disagreement around what it actually--what's causing it, and I thought that that was kind of intriguing.

TO PUT OFF INTENTIONALLY THE DOING OF SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE DONE

So the definition of procrastination is basically to put off intentionally the doing of something that should be done. And I found the use of the word "should" to be a little interesting as well, because you know I do recommend that you not "should" on yourself.

REFERS TO THE ACT OF REPLACING HIGH-PRIORITY OR IMPORTANT ACTIONS WITH TASKS OF LOWER PRIORITY, OR DOING SOMETHING FROM WHICH ONE BRINGS ENJOYMENT, AND THUS PUTTING OFF IMPORTANT TASKS TO A LATER TIME.

The other definition that I found which was interesting was that it refers to be act of replacing high-priority or important actions with tasks of low-priority or doing something from which one brings enjoyment, and that's putting of important task to a later time.

And so procrastination isn't doesn't necessarily look like sitting on your couch and doing nothing. Very often procrastination looks like, "Oh I need to do this thing, but I don't really feel like it, so I'm going to go do that other thing instead. I'm going to do my email or I'm going to play computer games or I'm going to do the dishes."

And I find a lot of people procrastinate not about doing important things, but then the actions, the activities they replace them with are all "good things," like doing the dishes or cleaning up or, you know, going through email or whatever, but it's not really the thing that you know you need to be doing.

PROCRASTINATION IS A BEHAVIOR OR A CATEGORY OF BEHAVIORS THAT INVOLVE CHOOSING TO DO SOMETHING OTHER THAN WHAT YOU "SHOULD" BE DOING.

Basically, procrastination is a behavior or a category of behaviors that involve choosing to do something other than what you "should be doing".

WHAT IS MOST URGENT

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT



WHAT WOULD MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE?

And I would categorize what you should be doing are as the things that are most urgent, the things that are most important, the things that would be making the biggest difference, okay? You know, and that may mean also, you know, assignments for other people, for work, that kind of stuff as well.

WHY DO WE PROCRASTINATE

So, why do we do it? Why do we procrastinate?

THERE ARE A LOT OF THEORIES OUT THERE FOR WHY HUMANS PROCRASTINATE.

As I said, I did a fair amount of research and really found a whole bucket full of different reasons why, and each person felt like that they have found the one reason why people procrastinate.

I THINK THAT'S BECAUSE THERE ARE A LOT OF DIFFERENT REASONS OR MOTIVATIONS FOR PROCRASTINATION. YOU MAY TEND TO IDENTIFY WITH ONE OF THESE OR YOU MAY FIND THAT EACH INSTANCE HAS ITS OWN MOTIVATING FACTOR IS UNIQUE.

But what I believe is that there's a whole lot of different reasons why we procrastinate. And you may tend to, for your own self, identify with one of these and say, "Oh yep, that's me. That's why I procrastinate"

So there for you personally, there may be one thing or you may find that depending on the circumstances or depending on the thing that you're avoiding, the reason behind your avoidance of it may be different.

So here are some of the ones that I find are most common:

ANTICIPATION OF PAIN, DISCOMFORT OR DIFFICULTY

The first, and I think this one is the biggest, is the anticipation of pain, discomfort or difficulty. When I've worked with private clients and they didn't do the action that they promised to do for that week and I ask them what stopped them, what got in the way, very often the answer is, "Oh boy, I just thought it was going to be really hard," or you know that kind of thing, so it was some anticipation of pain, discomfort or difficulty.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO DO THAT THING

The second reason I find is the lack of confidence in your own ability to do that thing. Now that may show up, and actually the next couple of ones, of items may show up as, "I want to do it perfectly, so if I can't do it perfectly, I'm not going to do it," or the need to, you know, to



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be perfect, but I think that again the need to be perfect is actually a symptom of something different, of something deeper.

So the lack of confidence in your ability to do that thing and perhaps the ability to do that thing to the perfection that you expect or demand of yourself.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE – DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO

Another reason could be a lack of knowledge. Like, you know that you need to do this thing, but you're just not really sure exactly just what it is. I had this conversation with a client yesterday actually who said, "Okay, what if I set aside this block of time to do marketing, but I don't really know what that means," right? So it's a lack of knowledge about what exactly it is, what to do, how to go about doing it, which is also the next reason, which is the lack of skill.

LACK OF SKILL – FEAR OF MAKING A MISTAKE OR EMBARRASSING YOURSELF

So you know what it is, but you just don't think you're going to be very good at it, and so you're afraid of making mistake or embarrassing yourself and so you avoid it, because you have this perceived lack of skill.

WAITING FOR SOMETHING AND THEREFORE CAN'T SEEM TO CONCENTRATE

This next one is one that's been coming up for me a lot in the last week or so, which is to wait. That waiting for something that isn't necessarily have anything to do with this thing that you're avoiding, but you're so involved in waiting for this other thing, that it's impossible to focus.

I was waiting to hear back on something, and I'm waiting to hear back and waiting to hear back and waiting to hear back, and I just found that I couldn't focus on anything. I had a really hard time doing anything, so that waiting is actually in the way of concentration.

TRYING TO DO SOMETHING AT THE WRONG TIME OF DAY OR IN THE WRONG ENVIRONMENT

Here's a mistake I see happen quite a lot for people which is deciding that, "Okay, well I'm going to do this project or this activity at this time of day," but it's not the right time of day for you. So it's trying to do something at the wrong time of day or in the wrong physical environment.

I work on this a lot with private clients where they're trying to get this work done in a very cluttered or messy or disorganized environment, and what they find is once they've cleared out their environment, it's so much easier to get to work. So sometimes it's the wrong time of day so your energy is wrong, and sometimes you're just your space isn't conducive, so you're in the wrong place to be doing it.



OVERWHELM WITHOUT CLEAR PRIORITY

And the final one is a feeling of overwhelm of there's so many different things to do. They all seem to have the same priority, and so, how do you choose? You know, "I could do this, but wait a minute, I need to do that, and oh, there's this other thing."

So those are some of the reasons that I've seen at commonly for procrastination. If I haven't named yours, feel free to comment and tell me what yours is. I'm always looking to expand this list. So yeah, go ahead and add to this list if you had a different ones.

FUNDAMENTALLY PROCRASTINATION IS A COPING MECHANISM OF AVOIDANCE
Fundamentally procrastination is a coping mechanism of avoidance; So you cope with the stress or the anticipated pain or the uncertainty by avoiding it.

AS WITH ALL COPING MECHANISMS, YOU LIKELY DEVELOPED THIS AT A VERY EARLY AGE.
As with all coping mechanisms, you likely developed this mechanism at a very early age;

IT SERVED YOU THEN. AND IT'S SERVING YOU NOW.

And the truth is it served you then. It may even have saved you. And it's still serving you in that it is allowing you to avoid experiencing the stress or pain that you think is going to be involved.

DECIDING THAT YOU'RE BAD OR WRONG FOR DOING IT ACTUALLY EMBEDS THE BEHAVIOR MORE DEEPLY INTO YOUR PSYCHE. (WHAT WE RESIST PERSISTS)

Deciding that you're bad or wrong for doing it, deciding that you're just lazy for procrastinating. Any of these kinds of self-judgments or self-flagellation, like beating up on yourself around it, actually embeds the behavior more deeply into your psyche (what we resist persists).

So blaming yourself, shaming yourself, telling yourself you're bad, wrong, lazy, any of these things aren't going to help. In fact, they will likely make your circumstances worst. So I'm going to give you some ideas about how to actually shift this behavior for yourself.

3 QUICK TECHNIQUES TO JUST GET MOVING WHEN STUCK

The first one, firstly, I want to give you some a couple of quick techniques that if you're just feeling stuck and you just need to get into movement can really help propel you into movement.



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DO JUST 5 MINUTES OF THE HARD THING. JUST 5 MINUTES

So the first one is the 5 minute rule. Just do that thing for 5 minutes. Whatever it is, whatever you're avoiding, just do it for 5 minutes. That's all you need to commit to--5 minutes. Think you can do that? Just 5 minutes. Say to yourself "I'm going to do it for 5 minutes, and if it's really hard, I'll stop, and I'll do it again for 5 minutes tomorrow. So I'm just going to do it for 5 minutes."

I used to play this game with myself around going out to events, because when I'm in a room of strangers, I get very shy, and it's hard for me to make myself go to these things. And my sister and I came up with a technique of saying 30 minutes--30 minutes rule. Go stay for 30 minutes. If it's horrible, leave.

You're only committing for 30 minutes. So this kind of short commitment, 5 minutes, 15 minutes, 30 minutes, whatever make sense to you, but just give yourself permission to stop after that period of time.

CREATE AN EMPOWERING CONTEXT FOR THE ACTIVITY AND CHANT IT TO YOURSELF

The second trick or tip to just get yourself moving is to create an empowering context for the activity and chant it to yourself. When I was confronting my techno-phobia, having to figure some things out that just--I just thought we're going to be really hard, and I was avoiding it, avoiding it, but it was a problem avoiding it, because it really needed to get done. And asking for help and not getting the help that I needed, it kept getting put back on my own shoulder, which I found was, thought was kind of interesting.

What I said to myself was, "I love technology. I love technology. I'm good at technology. I'm getting better at technology every day. I'm getting better at technology every day. The more I learn, the better I get, you know. I'm getting better at technology every day. The more I learn the better I get."

That one actually worked better for me than I love technology, because I knew that wasn't true. I've made my peace with technology and actually gotten pretty knowledgeable around it, and when I tell people that I have techno-phobia, they're usually pretty shock because I know a lot about it, but that's because I decided I would face it.

And I definitely use the 15 minutes rule. I'm just going to do it for 15 minutes, and you know, I'm learning technology and the more I learn the better I get. The more I learn the better I get, and just kind of chanting that to myself over and over and over again.

And I found that that made a huge difference in my willingness to make mistakes and my willingness to get confused and get lost and get frustrated. Because the more I learn, the



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better I get. So if I get lost, well then, I'm just going to figure it out, because the more I learn the better I get. And so every time I would get lost and frustrated, I kept coming back to that mantra--the more I learn, the better I get. The more I learn, the better I get.

So find what it is for you around the thing. You know, so for example, if this thing that you're avoiding that you don't want to do is dealing with your finances, perhaps, you know, a positive statement could be, "The clearer I am, the more money comes in. The clearer, I am the more money comes in. The clearer, I am the more money comes in," which by the way has been my experience.

Another thing around that could be, "What I don't know really does hurt me, so the more I know the better I feel." You know, the more you know, the better you do. The more you know, the better you do. So you know, find a chant for yourself that is appropriate to the circumstances and try just chanting it a bit, and then get into action for that 15 minutes or 5 minutes.

START DOING SOMETHING PHYSICAL, ALMOST ANYTHING THAT IS PRODUCTIVE AND HAS MOVEMENT IN IT WILL HELP TO LOOSEN YOU UP

If you're really stuck and you're so overwhelmed that you feel like you're physically frozen in place and you can't do anything, except like watch TV or Beyoncé book, and you just-- oh you're so stuck you just can't move, do something physical.

Clean, vacuum, take a walk, do anything that is physical and is in some way productive. By the way, taking a walk is hugely productive. It's good for you. Any movement will help you to move.

I'd, frankly when I'm that stuck, I find cleaning to be tremendously freeing. Doing the dishes, vacuuming, dusting, putting stuff away, organizing, anything like that, you know, for a few minutes can very often be enough to just shake me out of my, you know, inertia, because you know, the body and motion tends to stay in motion. so just move. Get moving, okay?

HOW TO ADDRESS THE REAL PROBLEM

So now, what I'd like to do is go back through each of those causes that I talked about earlier and give you some ideas of ways to address them.

FIRST – YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF – WHAT'S STOPPING YOU.

So the first thing you have to do is figure out what it is for you with this circumstance. So there's this thing you're avoiding. What is it that's having you avoid that thing?



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DON'T ASK WHY!

So the first thing is don't ask why.

ASK WHAT AM I AVOIDING?

Asking why am I avoiding this thing or why am I procrastinating about this thing just gives you more reasons to not move. And we'll tend to again solidify you and keep you stuck.

So I find why in general to be not that useful a question. Instead ask yourself, what am I avoiding?

WHAT'S MISSING THAT WOULD ENABLE ME TO MOVE FORWARD?

You might also try asking yourself what's missing that would enable me to move forward? Is there a piece of knowledge that's missing? Is there a skill that's missing? Is there information that you need in order to move forward? What's missing that would enable you to move forward?

WHAT AM I AFRAID OF?

You can also ask what are you afraid of, because very often, that's going to help to guide you into some of these categories of what's stopping you.

ANTICIPATION OF PAIN, DISCOMFORT OR DIFFICULTY

So, the first one I talked about was the anticipation of pain, discomfort or difficulty.

REFRAME YOUR CONCEPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

So the first thing you can do is re-frame your conception of the activity. See, because when you're looking at the activity in anticipation of it, you're deciding in advance what your experience is going to be, and in the moment, you're deciding that your experience is going to be really bad.

It's going to be painful. It's going to be hard. It's going to be a struggle. You're going to get rejected. You're going to embarrass yourself. It's going to be bad, right? That's what you've decided in advance is going to happen, and the bottom line is no matter what's happened in the past, you actually don't know what will happen this time, because you're not in the same place, okay?

So you don't know what's going to happen. So if you're going to make something up, why not make something up that's empowering? So if you look at it and you'd say, "Okay, but if I figure out how much I owe, it's going to be really, really bad and horrible." You could look at it and say, "Well, if I figure out how much I owe, I can make a plan that's going to get me into a better place. If I know how much I owe, I'm going to have power to change it," or



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maybe you're looking at it and think this is going to be really hard, doing this activity is going to really be hard."

Well, you could look at it and say doing this activity is going to challenge you and stretch you in a way that will be really invigorating.

Or you could look at it and say, "I think doing it is going to be hard, but you know, what if I find out that it's actually easy and fun?" Or you could look at and say, "Well, what could be fun about it? What could be exciting and inspiring about it?"

What are the other options besides deciding that it's going to be hard and painful? So just you know allow yourself to imagine something different.

REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU DID THIS THING IN THE PAST – DID IT REALLY HURT THAT MUCH? WHAT WAS THE PAYOFF FOR DOING IT?

Another thing that's really useful is to remember a time when you did this thing in the past, did it really hurt that much? And what was the payoff? What did you get out of doing it? How did it help you? How did it improve your circumstances? Was there a time when you did it and ended up being kind of fun? Can you remember a time when it wasn't nearly as hard as you had thought it would be? So the more you kind of focus on that, I think the easier it will be.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO DO THAT THING

The next one is this lack of confidence in your ability to do that thing. Well, first of all you need to kind of ask yourself, "Is it true? Am I really not able to do it?" Because if you're really not able to do it now then you need to develop the skills.

Which means you need to back up a little bit and figure out how to learn how to do it how to get better at doing it, okay? And very often you know those are just you know getting more skills, you just need to get more skills and so I'll get to that in a minute.

ASK FOR HELP

But one of the best things you can do when you don't have confidence and your ability to do something is to ask for help. You know, work with a coach around that issue. Get some training. Ask for help. If it's not an area that you really, really want to learn, then maybe you're better off hiring someone else to do it for whom it really is their core skills, you know, their core talent.



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REMEMBER THAT THE MORE YOU DO IT, THE BETTER YOU GET

And remember that the more you do something, the better to get at it. You know, how do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice. That's true for just about everything. The more you do something, the better you get at it.

REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU DID SOMETHING THAT YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE ABLE TO DO

And again, remember a time when you did something that you didn't think you were going to be able to do and you surprised yourself, and it doesn't have to be this thing. But just remember a time when you didn't think, you know, for anything when you didn't think you were going to be able to do it, but you tried it, and you were better than you thought you were going to be, okay? So if it worked like that then, why can't it work like that now?

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE – DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO

Okay, the next one is lack of knowledge, which is when you don't know exactly what to do. And again, ask for help, ask for support, talk to someone who has the knowledge that you're lacking in, and ask their advice about what kinds of things you could do in order to pursue something.

BRAINSTORM ALL THE THINGS THAT COULD GO INTO THE PROJECT

You could brainstorm all the things that could go into this project. So let's say there's this thing that you want to do, but you don't really know how to do it. Well, what are all the things that it could be? Brainstorm a big list of all the pieces that could go into this project.

BREAK THE PROJECT DOWN INTO SMALL PIECES – WHAT COULD THE STEPS BE?

Another good thing to do especially with a large project is to break it down into small bite-size pieces. What could the steps be in order to do it? And very often, just that process by itself will be enough to un-stick you.

Because once you break that big project down into little steps, you can say, "Okay, well today, I'm just going to take this one little baby step, and then tomorrow, I'll take another one, and tomorrow, I'll take another one," right? So if you've broken it down into bite-size pieces and maybe even into pieces that will only take you 30 minutes, then you can go back to that rule of, "Okay I'm just going to work on this for 30 minutes. I don't have to get it all done today".

RESEARCH HOW OTHER PEOPLE HAVE DONE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

And research how other people are doing what you want to do. You know, you have access to Google, which will probably if you Google 'How do I (blank)' just about anything, you will find what you are looking for.



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Someone asked me a question by email a couple of weeks ago, you know, how do I pitch a script? And I just there's this tool called Let Me Google That For You and it's LMGTFY.com. It's really funny. You can type in anything and hit search, and it will give you a link that automatically creates that search.

So if someone asks you a question that you know they could find if they just take 30 seconds and Googled it, you can send them that link. It's pretty funny.

Anyway, so in doing that for her, because I knew that that was a question that can just Google, I did the Let Me Google That For You, and I just Googled 'How do I pitch screenplay?' and it got something like 30,000 hits. So how do you pitch a screenplay go read about it. There's lots of advice out there for how to pitch a screenplay, okay?

Anything probably that you are trying to do someone has tried to do before you and written an article about it. So just Google 'How do I (blank)'. So your lack of knowledge, you know, honestly, I think the mistake people make around lack of knowledge is that they try to forge ahead on the thing they're trying to do without knowledge. They don't know how to do it, but they just decide they're going to just forge ahead.

One of the best things you can do (and this by the way is built into the [S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Road Map to Success](#) process), the E step is Explore all the ways to get there. It's a brainstorming and research step. So the third step in the process that I walk you through if we set a goal together privately is always to do some research, is to gain more knowledge.

Don't try and push ahead on something that you don't know how to do without finding out how to do it. You know ask for directions. There's a lot of information-- oh my god, go to YouTube, and search 'How do I (blank)' because there's probably a YouTube video of exactly how to do it.

How do you think I've learned almost everything I've learned on technology? I went to YouTube, and I said how do I blah-blah-blah? How do I create a post in WordPress? How do I create a page in WordPress? How do I, you know, embed a URL? All of these questions I don't know how to do it. I Googled it and found it. It's all out there. You just have to be willing to ask the questions.

LACK OF SKILL – FEAR OF MAKING A MISTAKE OR EMBARRASSING YOURSELF

Okay, so the next thing is this lack of skill. And very often the lack of skill manifests as a fear of making mistake, a fear of doing it badly and embarrassing yourself. I think at a very young age we all have had an embarrassing experience and part of our minds decided that it was so horrible and so painful and so mortifying that we decided we never wanted to have that feeling ever-ever again.



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And as a result if looking at doing something triggers that memory of embarrassment, of looking bad, you won't do it, because you just already--a long time ago--decided you never want to have that feeling again.

In Buddhism, they talk about the beginner's mind or the student's mind. I want you to look at everything you do all day long as if you were a student of that thing, which means that nobody expects you to be perfect. So stop expecting yourself to be perfect. You're always in a learning process. I don't care how good you are you're either learning or you're stagnant. You're either exploring, experimenting, trying stuff out, researching, learning or you're stagnant. I don't care how successful you get you're never perfect, and that's a good thing.

I mean, Steve Jobs would not have been Steve Jobs if he had been afraid to do something because he might not be able to do it perfectly. He just, you know, he wouldn't have created these amazing things.

Now that doesn't mean he didn't strive for elegance and perfection in everything he did, but what that means is you do it the best you can to the best of your ability, and you're always looking to grow, to develop, to learn from people who are smarter than you or better than you, to expand your skills.

So that's the framework I'd like you to hold on all of these things, which is that you are always learning and growing and expanding. So every time you attempt to do something, you're always doing it to the best of your current ability, but that's just the truth, okay?

ASK FOR HELP

So if you look at this thing and you say I don't have skill in this area, one, ask for help. Do some research.

THINK OF IT LIKE LEARNING AN INSTRUMENT – PRACTICE

But think of it like it's learning an instrument. The more you practice, the better you get. If you don't practice, you won't ever get any better.

Scientific method

And the other thing to think about in these areas, both the lack of knowledge and the lack of skill, which again, like I said, goes back to the lack of confidence is to think of it like you're approaching it from the scientific method.

Now, I don't know if you remember scientific method from school, but the scientific method is basically this:

You develop a theory about how something works, and then you create an experiment to test that theory. You run the experiment usually more than once, because no matter what the outcome are you always want to see if you can replicate it, right? So you run the



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experiment. You study your result and look at what you got from the experiment. And then you go back and you reassess your theory, possibly hone and polish your theory, and then create a new experiment.

So you're always going back to the--you're always experimenting. You're always testing stuff out. You're always trying stuff out, but the key part of this is to then assess your results and apply what you've learned back to your theory and to your experiment, okay? So try stuff out.

WAITING FOR SOMETHING AND THEREFORE CAN'T SEEM TO CONCENTRATE

The next one is the waiting for something and therefore you can't concentrate. You're waiting for a call back. You're waiting to hear results. You're waiting for someone to do a piece of work that you're then going to move forward on, and whatever it is that you're waiting for you can't seem to move forward on anything else.

CLEARING THE SPACE

So one of the best things you can do if this is the case is the process called clearing the space. And I know that I have taught the clearing the space exercise before, but basically, in other classes and I'm blanking on which classes they are, but I know I've taught them in other classes.

Clearing the space is basically setting things aside so you can focus. And it's a couple of quick steps. Step 1 is to name the thing. So like the last two weeks I was waiting to hear back on the office that I was looking at renting. So you know, so you might say, "Hearing about the office rental." The emotions associated with it is the second step.

So you name the thing. You name the emotions connected to it, and both of these things should be done without elaboration. Just give it a name and name the emotions. So the emotions associated with that thing are impatience, frustration, hopefulness, anticipation, and anger. Those are the emotions connected to that thing.

Then you state your intention, which is to set those things aside so you can focus on this other thing that you want to be doing. So I am setting aside the impatience, frustration, hopefulness, anticipation, and anger, so I can focus on the session. I personally find that it really helps to rename the emotions, because it's the emotions that you're setting aside.

And then you take a moment and you take those emotions and you put them in a box, and you set the box aside. Now, I don't literally mean put them physically in a box, right? I mean in your mind's eye. You take the emotions. You put them in a box, and you set it aside. You put them in a drawer, and then you close the drawer. You put them in a closet. You close the closet. The idea is you're not trying to get rid of anything. You're not trying to solve



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anything. You're just asking it to step aside for the moment. Just for the moment, you'll come back to it, okay? So clearing the space can be really useful.

Another thing you can do...this is really true when it's something you have absolutely have no power over, no control. You've done everything you could do to move this thing ahead and now you're just in limbo waiting for someone else to decide what the results are or someone else to come back to you with their piece of the project.

GIVE IT OVER TO YOUR HIGHER POWER

And one of the things that I do is to give it over to spirit, and your higher power, whatever name you happen to have for Him, Her, It or Them, just let them handle it. Let God handle it. And when I say to myself in my own head is, "Spirit, if this office is meant to be, I trust you to make it happen. If it's in my higher good, I'm giving it over to you to handle, and I'm moving on. I'm trusting you to handle it."

Now obviously, you don't want to do this if there are things that you've got to do around it, right? In order to get it handled, do everything that you can do, but if you're waiting for something and you've already done everything you can do to the best of your ability and the best of your knowledge, then just give it away, let someone else worry about it, okay?

DECIDE TO TRUST THE UNIVERSE – IT WILL ALL WORK OUT

You know decide to trust the universe. Trust that it's all going to work out for the best whether or not you get that opportunity. And by the way I didn't get it, so clearly I was not meant to have it.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER AND DO THAT

Focus on what you can control and do that. Focus on what you can move forward on and do that, and trust that the right outcome is going to happen. So that also might, you know, play into the context that I talked about earlier, which was, you know, like deciding, framing it so that, you know, an empowering context for it.

TRYING TO DO SOMETHING AT THE WRONG TIME OF DAY OR IN THE WRONG ENVIRONMENT

The next one I want to talk about is trying to do something at the wrong time of day or in the wrong environment.

NOTICE YOUR ENERGY – AND ASK YOURSELF, IS THERE ANOTHER TIME OF THE DAY THAT WOULD WORK BETTER?

So notice your energy. Ask yourself is there another time of day that would work better?



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EXPERIMENT

And experiment, try it out,

NOTICE YOUR SPACE – WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CREATE A MORE CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT – CAN YOU CLEAN UP THE SPACE?

Notice your physical space. What can you do to create a more conducive environment? Can you clean up the space? If you're constantly getting interrupted, can you close your door? Can you turn off your phone? Can you pick up and go move somewhere else and do it there?

Sometimes if I'm stuck around my writing, I'll go to Starbucks and write there for a while. Sometimes changing the physical environment can be really helpful.

OVERWHELM WITHOUT CLEAR PRIORITY

And finally this overwhelm without a clear priority.

BREAK BIG PROJECTS INTO SMALL STEPS AND JUST TAKE ONE STEP TODAY

I already talked about breaking bigger projects into small steps and just taking one step at a time. That can be hugely helpful.

IF YOU HAVE SEVERAL THINGS GOING ON AND THEY ALL FEEL REALLY IMPORTANT – TAKE A FEW MINUTES AND CREATE A MINI-TIME MAP FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS – PLACE EACH PROJECT INTO A TIME BLOCK.

But if you've got a lot of things going on and it feels like they all are equally important and urgent and need to get done, first of all, the class [How to Manage Conflicting Priorities](#) could be really helpful, but take a few minutes and create kind of a mini-time map for yourself for the next few days.

Work out the time you have available and look at the projects and decide. Give each project a home in your schedule. So that you don't have to decide which project to do when it's time to get the work done. You've already decided that from 2-4 it's time to work on Project A. From 4-5, I'm going to work on Project B. Then I'm taking a break. 6-8, you know, whatever it is, okay? So create a little time map and block times out and decide which project you are working on.

Now if then when you sit down to work on that project do you find the project itself overwhelming, break it into smaller pieces and use some of the other techniques that I've already talked about.



ASK YOURSELF – OF ALL THESE PROJECTS,

Which feels the easiest?

You might also ask yourself these questions:

Of all these projects, all these things that I have to do, which feels the easiest? Which is one that I could just knock off? Sometimes doing that will enable you to get into the groove, so that you can also then adjust some other things and the harder things.

For some people doing the hard stuff first actually works better. It's up to you, and I would say experiment and see which works better for you. For some people, doing the easier stuff gets them into momentum, and then they can take on the harder stuff. Everybody's different.

Which will get me to a concrete outcome the fastest?

Ask yourself which will get me to a concrete outcome the fastest? Sometimes getting some real concrete results can help you get into and stay in motion.

Start with those.

FLIP A COIN.

And you know, based on that information pick one to start with. And you know what if you still can't figure out which one, flip a coin. But here's what you may notice happens, you may say "Heads is Project A, tails is Project B," (flipping the coin) "Oh it's Project A, damn!" If that's your response work on Project B. There's no rules! Right? But try flipping a coin, why not? Alright I'm going to take a drink of water.

SWOOSH PROCESS

And for the last few minutes of this class, what I'd like to do is an NLP process that you may have heard in other places, but it works really well in replacing a new behavior, an old behavior that you want to eliminate with a new behavior.

This really works with specific concrete behaviors. So if you sit down to do something, but instead you find yourself flogging through email or you sit down to do something and instead you're playing computer games or you know, you say to yourself you're going to work on this project, but instead you find yourself doing that instead. So be specific about what the behavior is, is my point.

If you are driving your car, do not do this process. Pause the recording and do this process when you're in a quiet, still, safe place, okay? And where you feel like you can close your eyes and be uninterrupted.



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So first describe to yourself the current behavior or the state that you want to change, and be really specific about what it looks like, feels like, sounds like, get very specific about it.

Now how do you know it's time to do that behavior? What you want to look for is what's the triggering moment, what's the thing that you're seeing, hearing or feeling that pushes you into that procrastination behavior, okay?

So you want to know what the behavior is, and you want to know kind of what's the trigger point, what's that moment like. How do you know it's time to start procrastinating? And if you need to pause in order to really get specific about that, go ahead and do that.

Okay, now that you've got and you're clear about the behavior and the moment which pushes you to start that procrastination behavior, close your eyes, and when you think of that moment when it's time to procrastinate now, do you have a picture? Go ahead and pause until have a picture, and now open your eyes.

Now how would you like to act instead? And I want you again to be specific. What is this specific thing that you see yourself doing easily, effortlessly, and just easily, just move right into it? How would you like to act instead? Okay.

Now when you know what that behavior is, close your eyes. When you think of this new behavior, do you have a picture? Now I want you to look at this picture, and we're just going to adjust some of the qualities of the picture now. So if you need to pause to come up with the picture go ahead and do that.

But we're going to adjust the qualities of the picture now. Go ahead and step into the picture, so that you're seeing what you're seeing through your own eyes. You're seeing what you would see around you.

If it's black and white, make it colored. And turn the brightness up, so it's most compelling and vivid and realistic for you. Making it bright and beautiful. Sharpen those colors, and what are you hearing around you?

Turn up the volume on the sounds, so that they are vivid and brilliant and alive for you. And notice the feelings that you're feeling. Notice how your body feels, and double the intensity of those feelings now, so that it is vivid and bright and the sound is clear as a bell, and your feelings are sharp and strong and invigorating.

Now step out of the picture so that you still see yourself, but you're actually standing outside of it, seeing your body in the picture of this behavior. Seeing yourself, the ideal you in the



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picture. So you've stepped out and you can see yourself doing what you're doing with that new behavior, beautiful colors, the sounds. Seeing it, but from the outside.

Okay, now I want you to clear the screen of your mind, and I want you to pull back up that picture of the old procrastinating you. And have that picture on the screen in front of you, and make sure that what you're seeing is you looking through your own eyes so you're inside of it, okay? And you're looking around, and you're seeing what you see when you're procrastinating.

And as you look at that picture of you procrastinating, now again, you're inside the picture, right? So you're seeing it through your own eyes. Have the new picture of the ideal you small and kind of shadowy dark in the lower left hand corner of the screen of your mind.

So you've got the picture. You're seeing yourself, seeing what you would see when you were procrastinating, but down in the bottom left corner you have that picture, of the new behavior of the new in action you. And in the moment not yet, but in a moment, I'm going to have your replace the old picture with the picture of your new behavior. Not yet, but in a moment.

When you do, you'll have the new picture that's down and to the left explode big bright on the screen of your mind in place of the other, while the old picture fades and shrinks and shriveled up down into the lower left hand corner. So you're basically switching them out. Not yet, but when I say 'whooshed,' you will have the new picture explode big and bright. Do it now, 'whooshed!' Big and bright and sharp and beautiful. Great, clear the screen.

Now again the old behavior is in front of you. The new behavior is down a little bit dark and to your left. Whoosh! Exploding the big picture, big, bright, sharp. Beautiful! Old picture, small, crumpled down in the left. Good! Bring up the big...the old picture. The new picture, big, bright down...the new picture down on the left, and explode, whoosh! Clearing the old picture.

Old picture in front of you. New picture down to the left, whoosh! Old picture in front of you. New picture down to the left, whoosh! Old picture in front of you. New picture down to the left, whoosh! Old picture in front of you. New picture down to the left, whoosh! Seeing the new picture, bright, strong, open your eyes.

And now when you think about the next time you want to procrastinate, what happens? What do you do instead? Excellent!

So go out and get busy. If you have questions or challenges, feel free to submit them in the next Ask Coach Debra call. You could do that right now. You don't have to be available for



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that call. Just go right now to www.askcoachdebra.com and submit your question. It will be answered the next time I run that call, and then you can download your answer, okay?

And do please share what you saw, what you learned, you know, how this is affecting you, how you're implementing this skill in your life in the comments for this call. Thank you very much! Have a great night!