



LEADERSHIP insights

ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 2010

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Laugh at yourself-it helps!

One last procrastination,
[click here to view video](#)
"Procrastination Tales of Mere
Existence."

Goal: Quit procrastinating...
tomorrow...

SMART Goal:

Work on XYZ project the first
30 minutes of each day this
week completing a to-do list,
a project outline, and identify
3 top resources.

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Procrastination - Read this before you start.

Procrastination...

What an evil beast! I've been doing it all morning, when I could have just gotten this article done. I checked email compulsively and answered the easy unimportant ones, got some hot chocolate, cleaned up a couple of piles of paper on my desk, etc., etc.

You may know the drill...

Overwhelmed? Unpleasant task? Perfectionism? Not in the right mood? Know you can't get it DONE so why start? Can't decide? These reasons pretty much boil down to feeling either like you *can't do it* or *don't want to do it*. IMPORTANT TASKS DON'T USUALLY GO AWAY, DO THEY? SO-

How can you get yourself started? Depending on your personality type, some of the following tips may be helpful:

a Do ANYTHING. Make a list of the tasks involved so you can cross them off as you go (the crossing off action feeds motivation for some). Break it down into tiny chunks and complete any part of it-any feeling of accomplishment builds upon itself. Do a part of it QUICKLY even if you have to fix it later because it wasn't quite right. Set a timer for 30 minutes and work on any of the project for just that amount of time-you can always go back to procrastinating in a half hour. Chances are you'll keep going because the "fire" will be started.

b Call a FRIEND - but with a purpose! Ask someone who you look up to or admire what they might do with the project if it was theirs. Talk through how the project might benefit others or help someone else in the end. Once you begin to feel that your work will positively INFLUENCE others, it might be like a breath of fresh air to get you motivated.

c LIMIT your options. Sounds counter-intuitive perhaps, but when options are endless, it's hard to land on one, hence the relentless search for the "very best" way. Pick three options (of a way to do the project, resources to check, whatever defines your project) and select from those three (not the 3,000 that are possible), and you will move to accomplishment more quickly; it's like letting the particles in the water settle down and being able to clearly see the goal you are swimming toward.

d Spend a set amount of time on putting the project in ORDER. The project may seem huge and chaotic, and you can't get started until you have a plan. Find a quiet spot where you can't see your OTHER work, give yourself a set time (**30 minutes, one hour-but not days!**) and start with a list of what all needs to be done, and then put the list in logical order. Once you feel you have applied some order to things, you can begin at A and move to Z. A sense of order can help you feel that there is solid ground beneath you and you kick in. This need for order may be the most challenging of all of procrastination's beasts because there can be endless details to consider, and you may be looking for the ONE RIGHT WAY where nothing can go wrong.

(Another tip is to make a list of all the things that could go wrong. For some folks it actually feels better to think about the downsides first just to make sure nothing gets missed). If you want to be effective and reduce your own stress, decide if your plan can be "good enough" or if it must be "perfect". Example-taking your turn typing up meeting minutes needs to be done "good enough"; completing 10 employee reviews by a deadline must be done on time and done thoughtfully but they won't be perfect; eye surgery needs to be perfect. Pick your perfects.

