



## Beating Procrastination in the New Year!

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As we enter the New Year many of us look back at what we thought we *really-really* intended to do in the past year -- and notice that things we thought we wanted to do didn't get done.

In many cases we didn't "forget" to do these things -- far from it: sometimes they were almost obsessively in our thought -- we just never got around to actually doing them.

Particularly high on the list of things that often get put off are all sorts of issues related to wellness, particularly diet, exercise and lifestyle changes that we all know are beneficial -- but that never even get attempted.

There are an infinite number of reasons why people procrastinate, but four of the really popular ones are:

- A (usually exaggerated) fear of the technical difficulty of the task, and whether we have the skills to do it correctly. This translates into the "I'm not going to try to do anything unless I can do it perfectly" mindset.
- A (usually exaggerated) estimate of how long it will take to achieve the desired result -- and the willingness to be distracted by pretty much anything that is more enjoyable / entertaining at the moment.
- The perpetual wait for "inspiration". Sometimes putting things off when you're not inspired is reasonable but, unfortunately, "inspiration" doesn't arrive on a timetable, and it's easy to use lack of inspiration as an excuse to perpetuate inaction. It is also worth noting that often "inspiration" flows from actually attempting to do something, rather than thinking about doing something.



- And the fourth -- gracefully expressed by Erica Jong: "We are so scared of being judged that we look for every excuse to procrastinate."

While it is true that all of these "reasons" that we put off even attempting important transformations reflect ideas and emotional states are often deeply embedded, procrastination is a choice, not a destiny or genetic predisposition, and there are straightforward ways to address procrastination in your life.

## To quote Nike, "Just do It" - delay often causes anxiety!

Once you actually start a task -- as opposed to thinking about starting a task, which is something completely different -- the actual experience of what you're doing will effortlessly change how you view your project.

Once change begins most people find that the task isn't as hard as imagined, and begin to find themselves excited about the progress being made. You see the transformation here? Dread-of-a-task is replaced by pride at what has been accomplished and excitement about how completion is nearing!

## Forget the "Big Picture" for awhile

While it is often useful to look at the "Big Picture" in many contexts, for tasks that we have procrastinated about for awhile, maybe not so much. If a person who is substantially overweight looks at a fashion magazine and tries to think of everything that will need to happen for him or her to have a body like the models, the task can be daunting.



The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu got this right: "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

Always remember that success is the product of the accumulated gains of a large number of small choices. Not ordering fries with that -- or even getting a smaller order of fries -- is a meaningful choice that is part of your journey.

When you break tasks into small pieces and address them one at a time, even seemingly monumental tasks become just a series of human-sized projects.

## Make time for your project

In business, very few people expect to get positive results without expending real focused time on projects. In our personal lives, this rather simple relationship between time committed to a project and its advancement and completion often seems to become blurred.

We live in an era where "multitasking" is considered a virtue. Without delving into the questionable validity of that idea, it is certainly clear that -- for things that we have procrastinated doing for awhile -- multitasking is not helpful: it simply gives us too many distractions and quick exits to other activities (I wonder what's happening in Washington? Is my favorite star athlete's knee any better? Maybe I'll check Facebook!)

When trying to transform a pattern of procrastination it is very helpful to set aside time to focus on nothing but your single chosen task.



## Celebrate your achievements (that glass isn't entirely empty)!

Keeping a record of what you've done to move toward your goals! This helps you to remember what you've already accomplished, and is a confidence-builder that provides clear evidence that the distance to the finish line growing shorter!

## Find support

Whether a friend, a support group or one-on-one work with a life coach, the assistance of others is virtually always helpful when tackling projects that you've been putting off. Your support system helps you stay on track. Friends and life coaches can also prove helpful when you reach a challenging part of your task, as well as great sounding boards who can remind you of what you've already accomplished if you start to lose sight of your own successes.

The rewards of facing the tasks that we have procrastinated about are large and -- for many people in many contexts -- once the task is completed the strongest reaction is, "that wasn't so hard" and "gee, I wish I'd done that a long time ago".

At Inspire Momentum we help our clients tackle habits of procrastination head-on, and use Neuro Linguistic Programming processes to help our clients overcome blocks that stand between them and the realization of their true goals.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss how NLP can help you beat the procrastination habit.



Whether you choose to employ Inspire Momentum's life coaching or not, we encourage to you know that the habit of procrastination can be transformed into its' opposite: an active and engaged relationship with your goals, and the tools to make handling your self-assigned life tasks timely and stress-free.

**Remember: Just Do It!**

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