

Lesson 2

Tackling Procrastination

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.

-Mark Twain

STEP 1:

Start by asking yourself **WHY** you are procrastinating on a certain task. Figuring out where your roadblocks are coming from can help you resolve the issue and get to work. This is by no means an all-encompassing list but I've listed a few questions that are meant to help you brainstorm:

- *Are you afraid of doing something wrong? If so, what are the consequences if you do make a mistake?*
- *Is there a moral or ethical dilemma? If work related, who can you talk to make sure you're not doing something illegal/wrong?*
- *Does the process take too long or is it too tedious? Can you think of any ways that it can be changed or streamlined (i.e. cut out unnecessary steps, improve the technique)?*
- *Is the task too big? Do you need help? Who can you arrange to get help from or pair up with on the task?*
- *Do you need direction on how to get started? Can you find a mentor or someone who has experience or is a subject matter expert who will collaborate with you?*

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Your 'frog' is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it."

- Brian Tracy, Eat That Frog

STEP 2:

Once you know **WHY** you're procrastinating, here are a few ideas you can implement immediately to help you take action:

1. Plan each day either the night before or first thing in the morning, using the Eisenhower Matrix. This will help you focus your energy so you can get started right away. Being able to jump right into your to-do list helps you work more efficiently throughout the day.

Question: *When you find yourself turning to distractions for too long, how can you easily pull yourself back to the task?*

Action: *Develop a mantra or phrase that you can say to yourself any time you find that you're starting to drift away from productive actions. This could be something as simple as, "Time to get back to work!", "Stop wasting time!", or "Focus on the task at hand!" Repeating this phrase to yourself over time and it will become a trigger that gets you back on track.*

2. Always start with the hardest task that's in front of you. You need to learn to discipline yourself to tackle the most important task first, from start to finish, before you can move on to something else. This helps you get that big daunting task done and out of the way first. Then during the rest of your day, everything else will seem easier!

Question: *What is the one task do you dislike to do the most each day?*

Action Item: *Wake up each day with the intention to do this task first thing and get it out of the way. Don't hesitate, just take immediate action.*

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3. Don't confuse being busy with completing tasks. If you spend your entire day caught up in meetings and planning activities, but never start and complete anything, then you won't be able to cross anything off your to-do list.

Question: *How can you plan and prioritize your days to save time so that if you do have to attend meetings, you can get the most out of your remaining time to get things done?*

Action Item: *On your schedule, block out large chunks of time in the mornings and/or afternoons. Use these uninterrupted time blocks to focus and complete your most important tasks.*

4. Become addicted to the feeling you get after you've accomplished something great and contributed to the outcome of your family, team, or company. When you consistently get rewarded with positive endorphins you start to crave them and in turn you'll begin to start and complete more difficult tasks on a regular basis.

Question: *What is one area or task where you tend to hesitate on taking action?*

Action Item: *Select that one area where you always seem to procrastinate and resolve to start acting quickly on it. When you develop a sense of urgency you will begin to work in a more efficient manner in order to receive a sense of pride and accomplishment.*