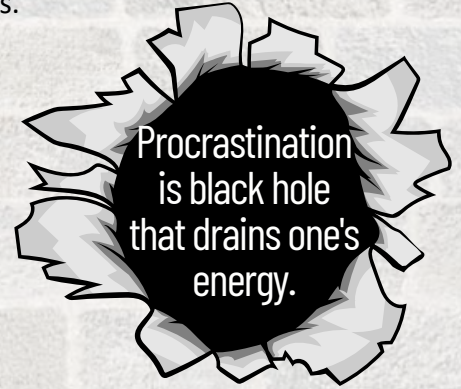


UNDERSTANDING PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is the act of unnecessarily postponing decisions or actions. For example, a person is procrastinating if they postpone starting a task until right before its deadline for no good reason, despite intending to do it earlier. Procrastination is fairly common both among the adult population and younger people as well - 95% experience it and around 20% procrastinate chronically. Probably everyone procrastinates at least at some point in their lives.

Key defining features:

- Involves unnecessary delay with the delay generally leading to predictable negative outcomes, in terms of factors such as the procrastinator's performance or emotional wellbeing.
- The delay is often, - but not always- unintentional, meaning that it occurs despite the procrastinator's intent to do things on time.



People wrongly assume that procrastination is the same thing as laziness, or that procrastination is always caused by laziness but there are very real differences.

Procrastination

I see the task is (very) important

I am afraid to fail or make mistake

I have feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety

The task is perceived as more difficult than it is

Laziness

The task is boring and unimportant to me

I am reluctant to put in effort

I feel alright not doing it

I can evaluate the task and effort but don't care.

Anti-procrastination habits

1. Commit to a tiny first step

When the complexity of a task is overwhelming - the hardest part is to start. Make the first step as easy as possible. E.g. write the first sentence.

2. Time-management

Use time-management techniques by alternating consistently between work and rest. That also helps you to regulate your energy!

3. Make tasks more...

enjoyable (e.g. by listening to music while you do them).
...easier for an action (e.g., by preparing everything you need in advance)
...controlled (e.g., by removing potential distractions).

4. Split the task up

Break tasks into manageable steps/tasks that you can easily complete.

5. Set goals

Goals should be specific and realistic. For example, be able to run a full mile by the end of the month, while bad goals might be "get in shape" (unspecific).

♥ Self-Compassion ♥

It's very important to show self-compassion and recognise if you struggle with procrastination. Follow these steps:

♥ **Remind yourself that everyone struggles and makes mistakes.** "Yes, I'm struggling with procrastination right now, but many other people also struggle with it, and it's perfectly normal"

♥ **Forgive yourself for past procrastination** "It's true that I should have gotten started earlier, but now beating myself up won't help and won't give me any strength to do what I need to do".

♥ **How would you comfort your friend?** Think how you would you react if someone spoke to your friend the way your inner voice speaks to you!

♥ **Change your critical self-talk** Actively notice and engage with your self-critic "I know you're worried about me, but the way you're talking causes me unnecessary pain"; "I know that you're angry at yourself for procrastinating, but the best thing to do now is move on and just get started"

