

PROCRASTINATION WORKSHOP



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AIM OF WORKSHOP

- To find what you procrastinate about.
- To recognise procrastination activities.
- To be aware of the consequences of procrastination.
- To understand reasons why you procrastinate.
- To develop strategies for overcoming procrastination.

Definition of Procrastination



..making a decision for no valid reason to delay or not complete a task or goal you've committed to and instead, doing something of lesser importance, despite there being negative consequences to not following through on the original task or goal.

Signs of Procrastination

- Difficulty in making a start on a piece of work or revision
- Craving diversion
- Ineffective working
- Last minute rushing
- Missed deadlines
- Nagging guilt
- Disappointment and self-reproach



Get my stuff done

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P785j15Tzk>

Personal Action Plan- Qs 1&2

What do you procrastinate about?

Study, work, household chores, health, financial, social, family, relationships, self-development, decisions, goals, thank-you letters, phone-calls, job applications, tax-returns, presentation preparation.....

What activities do you do instead? (Procrastination Activities)

Pub, movies, reading, sorting, tidying, socialising, cooking, cleaning, sleeping, eating, drinking, smoking, emails, day-dreaming, videos.....

What Causes us to Procrastinate?

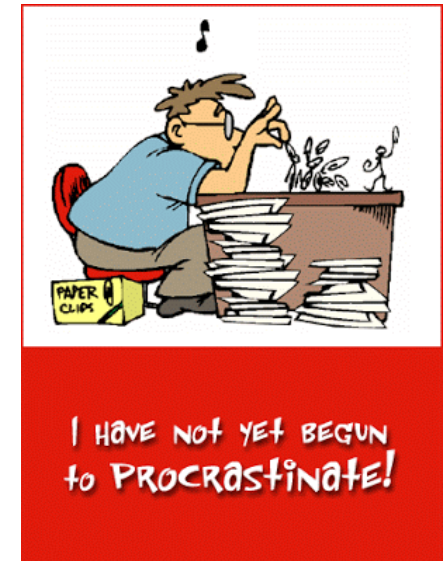
Common Reasons are:

- Over-aversion to discomfort
- Lack of self confidence
- Getting overwhelmed
- Under-developed study skills
- Unrealistic expectations (perfectionism)
- Resentment
- Habituation and lifestyle
- Depression



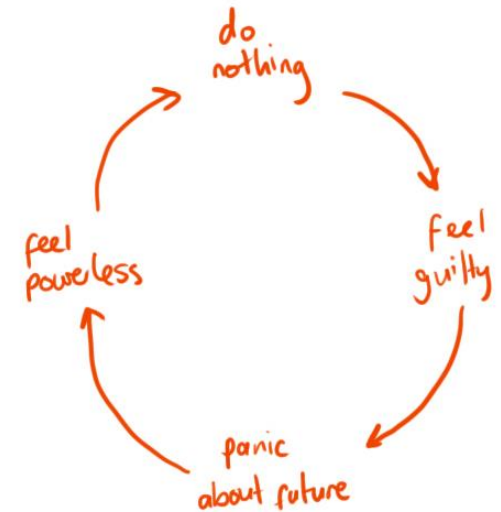
Why might procrastination be worse at University?

- You may have more control over your time than before
- What and how you are expected to learn may be much less clear than previously
- Old study techniques may be less effective
- More distractions
- More responsibility for your own care all round



Procrastination arises from unhelpful rules and assumptions about what we expect of ourselves and the world.

I must be perfect or no-one will love me.
I must be perfect or I'm a complete failure.
I must be perfect or I'll lose my job.
I must be perfect or what.....?]



Procrastination Cycle

Other Unhelpful Rules and Assumptions

- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Fear of uncertainty
- Low self confidence
- Needing to be in charge
- Pleasure seeking
- Expectations that it should be easy
- I don't feel like it, I'll wait until I do



**When these rules or assumptions are activated,
they lead us to feel (or detect) discomfort.**



The Procrastination Cycle

If we can't tolerate or detect this feeling,
(anger, resentment, frustration, boredom, anxiety, fear,
embarrassment, depression, despair, exhaustion etc.)
we will be likely to engage in other activities as our way of
dodging the discomfort.

The Procrastination Cycle



Procrastination becomes the strategy for avoiding these uncomfortable feelings.

“I’m tired. I am better off leaving it until after I have rested”

“I have plenty of time”

“I don’t have everything I need”

“I have other things to do”

“I’ll miss out on all the fun happening now”



what is
your
excuse?

Consequences:

Positive:

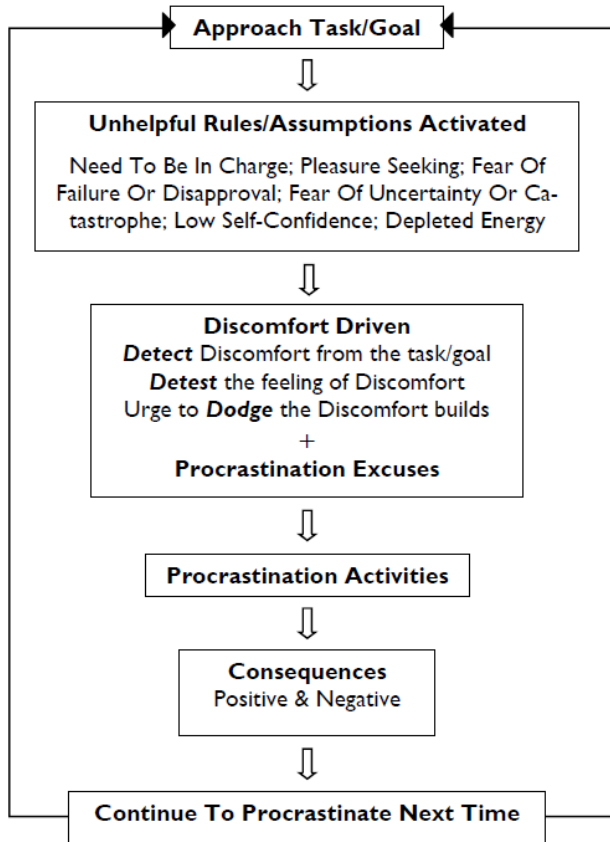
- Temporary relief from Discomfort
- Feel good about sticking to your unhelpful rules and assumptions
- Gain pleasure from procrastination activities
- The above 'pay-offs' keep the vicious cycle of procrastination going

Negative:

- More discomfort, in the long run; guilt and shame
- Preserving one's unhelpful rules and assumptions
- Self criticise
- Tasks pile up
- Punishment or loss
- Task or goal becomes more aversive,
making procrastination seem more attractive next time

Personal Action Plan Q 3

Vicious Cycle of Procrastination



What are the unhelpful rules here?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EsgPB5tFP0>

Challenge *Your* Rules and Assumptions

- What is the unhelpful rule or assumption?
- Where did it come from?
- In what ways is it unreasonable or unhelpful?
- What is the negative consequence of having this rule or assumption?
- What is an alternative and more helpful rule or assumption? (3)



Personal Action Plan Q 4

Change to the Cycle to Doing

The *iCan* Procrastination Plan:

1. Being aware that you are procrastinating
2. Adjust unhelpful rules and assumptions
3. Practice tolerating discomfort
4. Dismiss procrastination excuses
5. Carry out practical strategies
6. Reflect and revise the plan



Tolerate Discomfort

“I can’t stand it”“I don’t like it but I can stand it”

Mindfulness

Let Go

Riding the Wave – Discomfort is temporary



Procrastination Excuses-1

They may have a grain of truth and are used to justify procrastination:

The Truth	Unhelpful Conclusion	Dismiss the Excuses
I am really tired	I am better of doing it after I have rested	But I can still make a small start right now
I will miss out on what is happening now	I can always wait until nothing much is happening	But if I get some of it done, I can reward myself with other fun later
I don't have everything I need	I will wait until I do	But I can still try to make a start on some bits of the task
I have plenty of time	So I don't have to start it now	But better to get on top of it now than leave it to the last minute
I have other things to do	I will do it once those things are finished	But they are not more important and can be done after this

Procrastination Excuses-2



"Nurse Barnes' winning excuse was original, well-written and believable, even though no one saw the alien ship that abducted her."

Ask yourself.....

- What is the factual evidence that this 'excuse' is true?
- What is the factual evidence that it's better for me to start this task now?
- Is it really true that I'll be better off in the long run if I delay?
- Is it really true that I can't even make a small start right now?
- Can I get some parts done now, even though conditions aren't ideal?
- Is it really true that later is better?
- How might I feel if I do/don't delay?

Procrastination and Stress

You know it has to be done,
sooner or later.

You ignore it at first.
Later you *try* to ignore it.

Later still, you can't ignore it, it
has to be attended to right now!

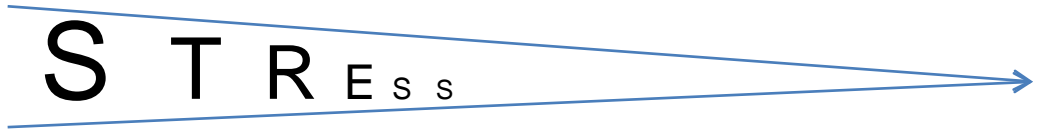
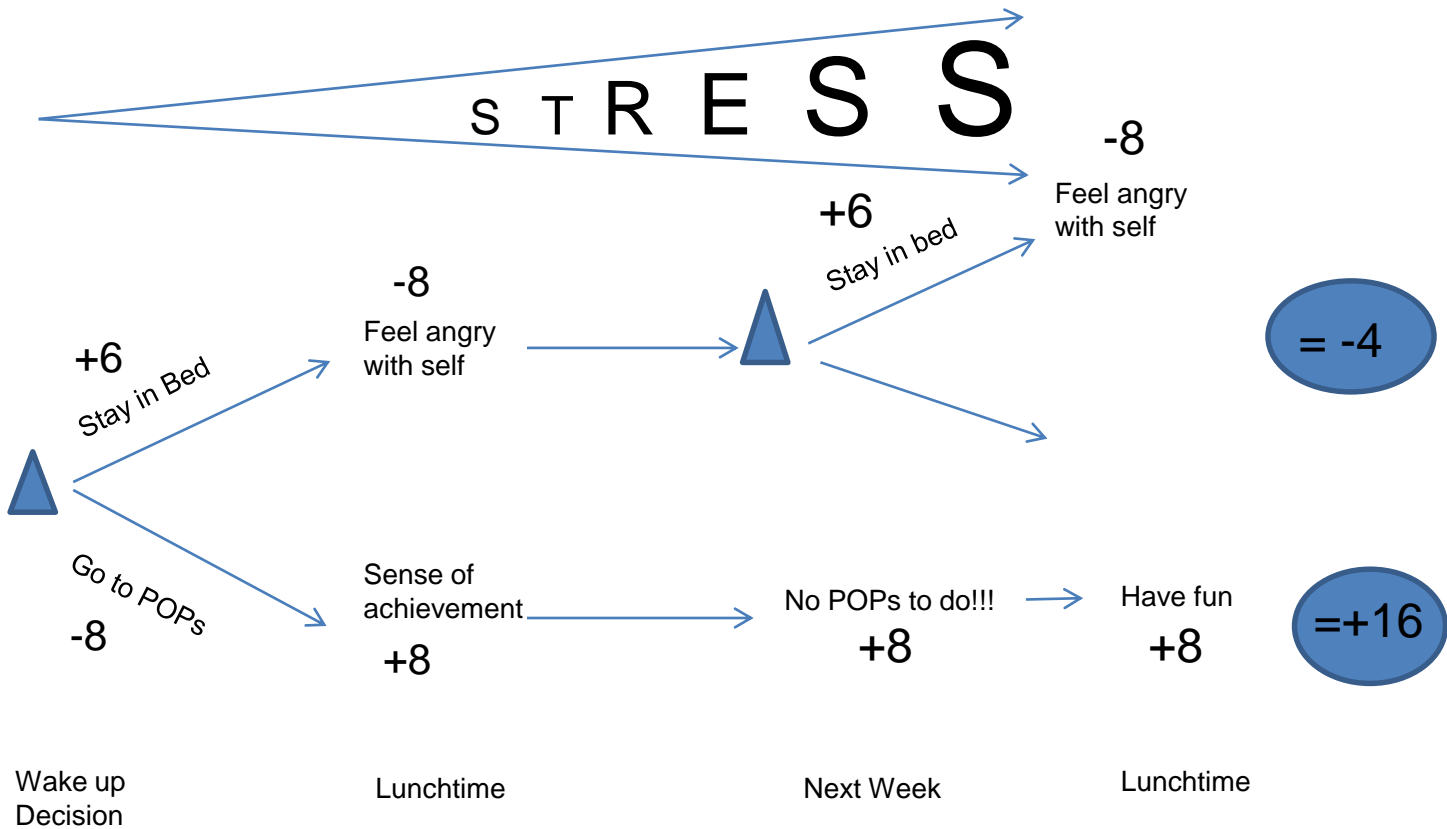
It has become so urgent and
unavoidable.

So you do it.

Stress has motivated you.

Procrastination





Carry Out Practical Strategies

- Be Realistic
- Just Do It
- Break the Bad Habit
- Organisation
- Ask for Help
- Get Rid of Guilt
- Reward Yourself
- Self Talk
- Get the Basics Right
- Challenge your Self-Sabotage



For the scientists:



$$Motivation = \frac{Expectancy \times Value}{Impulsiveness \times Delay}$$

- Increase your expectation of success
- Increase the tasks value, make it more pleasant or rewarding
- Decrease impulsiveness to do something else (or increase willpower to resist)
- Bring the deadline forward

Exercise

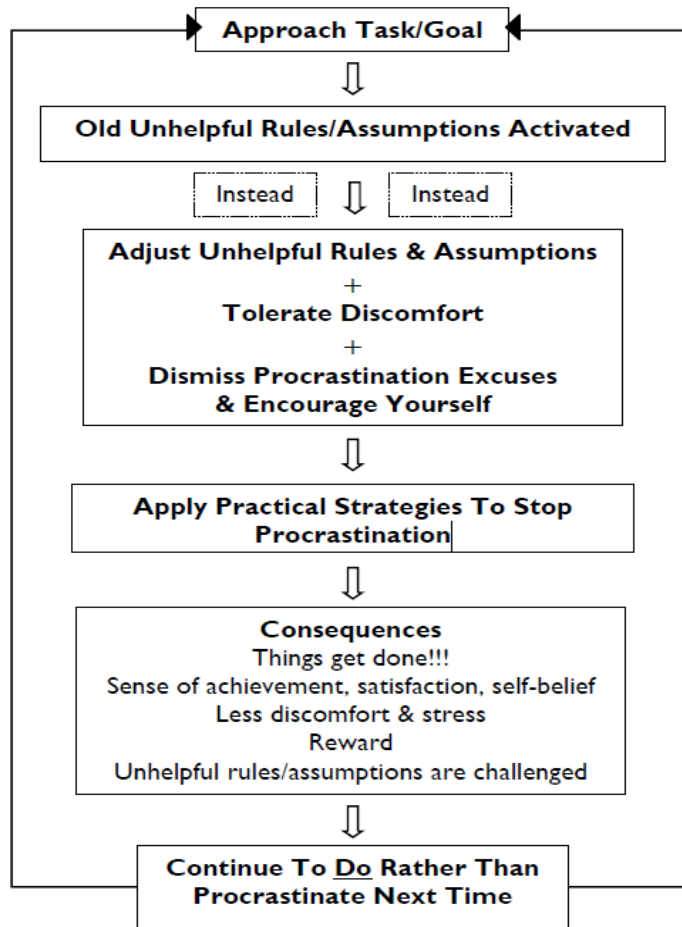


WILLPOWER



Roy F. Baumeister
Eminent American Social Psychologist
Guardian 08.02.12

The Doing Cycle



Beating Procrastination



Procrastination

Procrastination
is the grave in which
opportunity is buried'



The End

