

Procrastination – Why you choose to do something else

By Ella Scheinwald ©

“Look at my office and this growing stack of files. I have so much to do - meetings, conference calls, reports. But I never seem to have time for anything and my work is never done. Just thinking about it exhausts me. I’m so stressed, I need a vacation.”

Sound familiar? Procrastination is common among even the most successful executives. I like to define procrastination as choosing to do something else rather than tackle the tasks at hand. Although you may prefer doing the “something else,” your stress level probably goes up as your unfinished work accumulates. Over time, the weight of the tasks you’ve put off becomes heavier and heavier, getting in the way of your productivity ... and your happiness.

Procrastination usually is a symptom. Maybe the task you’re avoiding is not interesting to you. Or it seems menial and better suited for someone in a lower position. Or you flat out don’t want to do it because you ignore its direct added value to your business. Or it’s plain boring. Or misaligned with your dreams. So you keep putting it off and putting it off.

Let’s take a look at what you’re choosing instead. I immediately become concerned when clients tell me how much time they spend on the Internet, reading emails, talking on the phone, texting, and chatting with people who stop by their office and interrupt their important work with distractions. This isn’t productive time – it’s a form of procrastination. Their mental “to-do” list never gets done and keeps weighing on them, preventing them from being more efficient.

If your system works for you, why fix it? Because doing the tasks that you’re putting off actually would give you more time. Wouldn’t following through with decisions made but never implemented free you? Stress slows you down and drains your energy. Overcome procrastination and you’ll free up minutes, hours, and days to get more done.

Now is the time to face procrastination head on. Identify the real reasons that you’re avoiding certain tasks. Be truthful. Take the first steps toward overcoming the problems that are at the root of your procrastination. And, importantly, think about how you might put meaning and passion back into your work. When you’re happier and more fulfilled, your stress and frustration levels diminish, your home life improves, and you free up time for other things that are important to you.