

How to Overcome Procrastination

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Procrastination

- Do you often find yourself putting off things you know you need to do? Even things that are in your own best interest?
- Are you late for appointments? Do you miss deadlines? Ignore tasks, even important ones?
- Have you ever wanted something very much but found it impossible to get started on it? ...And the more you wanted it, the more difficult it was to take action?

Not a good feeling, right? You're frustrated and angry with yourself, and the worst part of it all is that you don't understand why it's happening. You're falling behind on the job and frustrated at home, and it just seems to be getting worse. You want to achieve more. You see other people making progress.

Whatever it is that you want to accomplish, there is a way for you to accomplish it. By the end of this book, you'll understand what's holding you back, and you'll be able to make a practical plan you can count on to help you achieve the things you want.

Increased understanding of the primary causes of procrastination and the most effective techniques for dealing with it will give you emotional freedom and a secure, positive self image. You will be on your way to creating your optimum life.

The Mystery of Procrastination

Whether it's a discussion of setting goals, time management, or procrastination, they all begin with a discussion of attitude. That might seem strange, but there are very good reasons for it. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and some of those weaknesses are very likely at the root of our procrastination.

Some of us think we lack willpower, and some of us think we just don't have the determination to follow through, no matter how much we want something. Sometimes we say to ourselves, "When this thing happens (whatever it is), I'll be ready to work for that goal." But putting things off that way is just another way of not taking responsibility.

Some of us really don't know what we want for ourselves. You see people all around you achieving things, but sometimes it can be difficult to know what you want, what your own special priorities should be, and the things unique to your own life that would make you happy.

Some of us enjoy being carefree and living for today. We have an actual resistance to setting goals, but goal setting is crucial to achieving the life we want to live.

Sometimes, we do the opposite and set goals that are so daunting that we think we can never achieve them. We can become overwhelmed, and not realize we can accomplish our goals one step at a time, one part at a time. A little organizational skill can help us break those goals down, make them manageable, and help us sustain our motivation while reaching those goals.

Some of us are perfectionists and are afraid that any failure means that we as human beings are failures. This can be a paralyzing idea, and it's just wrong. Most of us learn best from the things that do go wrong in our lives. You may have heard this before, but it's true. We enjoy the good times, but we learn from the bad times. Here's a great saying for your arsenal: "The greatest failure is not having tried."

Comparing ourselves with others is another bad habit that can be paralyzing. Often, we endure self-inflicted blows to our self-esteem when we think that

others are smarter, better educated, more attractive, or nicer than we are. Again, this kind of thinking is wrong. We all have the strengths and skills that we need to achieve the goals that are right for us.

Some of us are loners who just can't stand to ask for help. But obviously, large projects need to be done with the assistance of others. And most of us need cooperation and support in one way or another in our lives.

Others of us have real difficulty in prioritizing and managing our time. This can be difficult since life has a way of intervening to upset our plans. Luckily, setting priorities and managing time are skills that can be learned when you have the right attitude.

Sometimes, we lack self-confidence because we don't have the necessary skills. While this may be true, often we don't recognize the skills we do have. Once you recognize your strengths and skills, you'll be able to start using those in your favor. This will increase your self-confidence and keep you moving toward your goals.

If you're one of those people who think you have no willpower, you might be right. That's a big club! But the secret here is that developing willpower comes from a combination of using self-discipline and managing the fears that are holding you back. Once again, we're in luck: both of those skills can be learned.

You might have a few ideas of your own about why you procrastinate. Add those to this list. When you know a few key things about yourself -- your strengths and weaknesses, your skills, and your patterns of behavior -- you'll be able to develop some key skills to help you stop procrastinating and achieve your goals.

Evaluating Your Strengths and Weaknesses

So, who are you, anyway? First, let me tell you the end right now at the beginning. When we come to the end of this section and you have learned a few things about yourself that you didn't know, you're very likely going to approve of the person you find. When most people finish taking a good look at themselves, they're pretty happy with what they see.

Second, some of the exercises might ask you questions you haven't thought about before, but do your best to answer them because they will give you insight into your preferences. An important part of overcoming procrastination is getting to a point where you want to do the things you need to do because you like them. The more you know yourself, the better you'll be at framing your tasks in terms of your preferences.

Past Performance

This exercise should give you an idea about how you perform on projects currently. Think about a project you have successfully completed -- at work, at home, or in a social situation. Answer the following questions:

1. What did you do to make the project successful?
2. What skills did you use?
3. What support did you have?
4. Did you encounter barriers? How did you overcome them?
5. Think of at least three things that made the project successful. What were they?
6. Try to remember the feelings you experienced at different stages during the project – what were they?
7. Try to remember what strengths and weaknesses you displayed during that project. Name as many as you can.
8. If you had a similar project to do in the future, what skills would you carry over from the first project?
9. Overall, what did you learn from the project?
10. Ask these questions to other people who were involved in the project. Compare their answers with yours. Did you learn anything new from their answers?

Goal Setting

This exercise will tell you something about your attitude toward goal setting. Which of the following statements apply to you?

1. Generally I like to plan things in my life.
2. I like to live for today and not think about tomorrow.
3. I know what I like to be doing in five years and in 10 years.
4. I love surprises.
5. I have a clear idea of what to focus on at work and in my life.
6. I only like change when I have a plan.

Whether you prefer planning or spontaneity, there is a planning style that is perfect for you. What changes planning from drudgery to something positive is flexibility and the ability to make alterations when necessary.

Will Power and Motivation

Let's talk about willpower and motivation next. To some extent, they go hand-in-hand because the more willpower you have, the less easily you give in to distractions and the more motivated you are to begin a task and to complete it. Which of the following statements fit your personality?

1. "Work before play" are words I live by.
2. I can play anytime.
3. I am easily distracted.
4. I don't like to be interrupted when I'm working.
5. If I don't finish it today, I can do it tomorrow.

Taking Responsibility

It's easy to put things off for all kinds of valid reasons. But if you're procrastinating for other reasons, you need to identify those reasons. Do you really want to take on this project? Is there any common thread running through all the tasks you are putting off? Do you feel anxious about your skills? Your ability to complete the task? Try to understand why you are unable to start – or finish – certain tasks.

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure can stop you dead in your tracks even though everyone fails sometimes. It can interfere with your time management, your productivity, and even your relationships. High standards are a good thing; unrealistically high standards (perfectionism) can lower your self-esteem and immobilize you. Answer *often*, *sometimes*, or *never* to the following questions:

1. Do you see failure as something that happens to everyone?
2. Do maintain your positive attitude after suffering a defeat?
3. Do you network to find out what went wrong?
4. Do you support the decision that was made?
5. Do you try to learn from your failures?
6. Do you keep your allies so you can win in the future?

The more times you answered *often* or *sometimes*, the more effectively you cope with failure. Feeling rejected or threatened when something doesn't turn out as you had hoped is somewhat natural, but passion and anger can be destructive if they're not managed.

Prioritizing and Managing Time

Sometimes, we procrastinate because we believe we don't have time, but the truth is that we don't know how to manage our time or how to prioritize. Use the following questions to assess your time-management skills.

1. Do you tackle the most difficult tasks first?
2. Do you have a "to do" list?
3. Do you say no at times when asked to do something?
4. Do you prioritize your tasks and work on them in that order?
5. Do you allow a lot of interruptions?
6. Do you do things yourself instead of delegating them?

No worries, these skills are ones you can learn.

Evaluating Your Skills and Personal Qualities

In this exercise we're going to think about what we do well. Make a list of all the things you are good at. You could ask somebody who knows you well. Now, make a list of all your positive qualities. These lists will help you determine your strengths.

Assertiveness and Influencing Others

How assertive you are and how you interact with others can directly affect how much you procrastinate, and also how well you initiate and negotiate tasks. Your answers to the following questions will let you know how assertive you are in four areas: at work, at home, in public, and with friends.

1. How do you respond when you were criticized by a superior?
2. What do you do when you notice that somebody has worked especially well or extra hard?
3. If you have to confront a subordinate or coworker for lateness, and productivity, or dishonesty, how easy is it for you to act?
4. What do you do when you find yourself with a store clerk who ignores you?
5. How do you react in a movie when the people next to you are continuously talking?
6. How do you respond when a friend persistently uses you to complain to?
7. When you want to ask a friend to repay a loan, how do you proceed?
8. What do you do when you feel put down by a friend?
9. When one of your parents criticizes you, how do you respond?
10. What do you do when everyone leaves the house cleaning to you?

Now, let's think about how you react in these situations.

1. What do you say and do?
2. How do you feel about the behavior?
3. What are your short-term gains or payoffs?
4. What are the long-term negative effects?
5. What are the risks in behaving more assertively?

Awareness about your skills and personality traits is the first step toward strength. You can't change what you're not aware of. So, take a look at all your responses and ask yourself what they tell you.

Please remember that this is not about focusing on your weaknesses alone. Your strengths are just as important in helping you to succeed.

The next section will help you build on your strengths, improve on your weaknesses, and develop your skills.

Procrastination--Be--Gone Toolbox

Self-Esteem

Procrastination always has two elements: the task you're putting off and the internal forces that are causing you to do so. The more you deal with your inner "demons," the easier it will be to take action. First on the list of these inner demons is self-esteem. Feelings of guilt and worthlessness fuel procrastination. When you start to get things done, you experience these feelings less and less.

In our projects as in life, we come up against obstacles. We need to handle those obstacles in order to see the task through to the end. Self-esteem helps us to do that because it helps us develop resilience and the belief that we can succeed despite barriers. Self-esteem can grow or it can diminish, and we can control that.

So, what is self-esteem? The most important component of self-esteem is internal. It's the ability to like and accept yourself with all your strengths and weaknesses, and in spite of the mistakes you make. It's understanding that you are equal to anyone else and you, like anyone else, are unique and one-of-a-kind. It's not ego driven. It's not a belief that you're superior to anyone. It's the understanding that each one of us is unique, special, and important.

Another component of self-esteem comes from the reflection of ourselves that we get from other people. We get either positive or negative feedback from people in obvious or subtle ways all the time. We get from the media, from work, and from our relationships. Unfortunately, we can't always depend on outside sources to have our best interests at heart or even to be honest. So, although it's inevitable that some of our self-concept comes from outside sources, a much better, more fulfilling approach to our lives is to develop our internal self-esteem and diminish the effects of external self-esteem.

Our job, then, is to build a solid foundation of internal self-esteem. The key to doing this is to be aware of what's going on in your thoughts and your emotions and then taking action based on that awareness. Here are the questions to ask yourself:

1. How many of the things I do are based on the need for others' approval?
2. Whose approval do I seek in order to feel accepted?
3. What are my own personal standards? In other words, what standards do I need to meet in order to approve of myself at work, at home, and in relationships?
4. Is there a conflict between what I really want to do and obtaining approval from others?

The answers to these questions should give you an awareness of yourself that will strengthen your internal self-esteem and lessen your need for approval of others.

Next, here are some powerful actions that you can take to strengthen your self-esteem and diminish your tendency to procrastinate:

1. Being aware of your self-growth and development.
2. Taking the initiative.
3. Practicing assertive behavior.
4. Talking back to your negative inner voice.
5. Setting goals.
6. Taking physical and emotional care of yourself. This includes giving yourself quality time, exercising, eating right, and relaxation.

Here's one non-negotiable law for living the life you dream of: self-esteem is essential to our well-being. It's not selfishness; it's just the opposite.

Dealing with Inner Negativity

It's possible that you are not even aware of the negative inner voices that keep harping at you. Science has shown, though, that the vast majority of our thoughts are negative, and a lot of those thoughts are about ourselves. It's natural that this is true because these thoughts are an accumulation of judgments we received in childhood, then from our peers, and eventually from ourselves. These thoughts are even more frequent when we're feeling vulnerable or facing obstacles.

How many times have you said things like if yourself:

- "What a stupid thing I did!
- "I'm ugly... lazy... stupid... mean."
- "This is too hard! I can't do it!"
- "I have to do this!" "I ought to..." "I should..."
- "Everything depends on this!"

All of this self talk puts pressure on us, unnecessary pressure. This is the inner saboteur at work. The way to combat these messages is to see them for what they are: unreasonable and irrational. Being aware of them is the first step. Can you see how they can interfere with your ability to succeed?

The next step is easy and even fun. Start talking back to those thoughts.

Say things like

- "It's okay to make mistakes."
- "I'm not stupid, this is just something new for me."
- "This is not too hard – I just have to take it one step at a time."
- "Everything does not depend on this. If this doesn't work out, I'll find another way."

See, wasn't it fun? Won't you feel a lot better doing that than giving in to negative thinking?

The next step is to reinforce your self-esteem with some positive thoughts about yourself. Remember the list you made of the things you're good at and your positive qualities? Repeat a few of those things to yourself after you've had some negative self talk. Then give yourself a small reward (talking to a friend, reading a book for a little while, taking a time out for yourself, etc.). These positive thoughts and actions reinforce your positive feeling about yourself.

Our negative self talk tries to protect us from taking risks and things we fear, but it also puts up barriers to opportunities and challenges and changes that would enhance our lives. And think about this: research has shown that four out of five of our fears never materialize. The fears that do materialize, we can handle, especially after we build our strengths.

Fear is a powerful negative emotion that can cause procrastination in all areas of life. We all have fears; the difference is in how we handle them. Here are some strategies for managing your fears:

- Take some small risks at first. Notice the feeling of well-being when you succeed.
- Talk to people you trust about your fears – get their opinion about how valid your fears are.
- Allow yourself to feel the fear. Then talk to it, watch it recede or disappear, and enjoy your feeling of satisfaction at bringing that about.
- Gradually increase the size of the risks you take, while keeping those risks reasonable, not irrational.

Handling fear is not easy for any of us. But facing it leads to a more fulfilling, productive life.

Motivation and Will Power

Of course, it's obvious that we have to have some degree of motivation in order to overcome procrastination. And it's also obvious that we need some willpower in order to want things to change so that we do follow through on our projects.

You very likely have some degree of motivation and willpower in general or you wouldn't be reading this. If you can't come up with any motivation or willpower in regard to a certain project or projects, this is probably not the right time to be tackling them. A better idea would be to choose projects and tasks for now that can help you build your motivation and willpower in general. Try these exercises to increase your willpower:

- Try something that you never tried before – it can be something simple like trying a new restaurant or driving a different way to work.
- When you want to say something you know you shouldn't, don't say it.
- Do something you really don't want to do but have to do. This can be anything – something small is fine. The idea is that you do it.
- Find a way to say something nice to someone. Make a genuine compliment. It can be any small thing you think of.
- When you want to say something appropriate but feel shy about it, say it.

These are all small steps, as you can see. You can and should substitute as many small steps as you can think of. The point is that you're building your willpower. This in turn builds your self-confidence: you begin to realize that you can depend on yourself to follow through.

Assertiveness

What is assertiveness? And why are some people so much better at being assertive than others? How can we be appropriately assertive without being aggressive and overbearing?

Acting assertively can be complicated because how we behave stems from a combination of our beliefs and values, our attitudes, our thoughts and feelings, and our self-esteem. It comes down to choosing the way we will behave in order to get what we want. We have basically four choices: first, being assertive; second, being aggressive; third, being passive; fourth, being indirectly assertive or manipulative.

Many of us use more than one of these techniques, and while we probably know that the first choice is the best choice, many more of us don't know how to go about being assertive.

Being assertive means acknowledging our needs and asking in an open and direct manner for those needs to be fulfilled. It implies respect for the people we're asking, respect for ourselves, and respect for the task at hand. If our needs in this particular situation are not met, it is not a blow to our self-esteem because our self-esteem is not based on the approval of others.

Assertiveness is not always the easiest behavior choice, but it is the one most likely to get what we want. It is the win-win approach.

Being aggressive is often a compulsive overreaction; it's competitive and leads to win-lose situation.

Being passive is negative behavior with negative results. It creates victims who allow other people to decide their fate. But the truth is that those people are victims of their own passivity.

The indirectly aggressive or manipulative approach also rises from low self-esteem. For these people it's safer to control and manipulate rather than face confrontation and the possibility of being rejected. This behavior shows a lack of respect for the initiator and the other people involved. Manipulative behavior can be effective, but the cost is continued low self-esteem and confusion on the part of the people the manipulator interacts with.

There are some techniques you can use to maintain an assertive attitude without becoming aggressive or passive. Try some of these to keep you on track. You don't need to use all of them; use the ones that work for you in a given situation.

- Be specific about what it is that you want. Clarify first in your own head and then be prepared to ask for it specifically and directly.
- Repetition can be a handy tool. Stay on track by repeating your simple, clear request. This technique prevents you from being manipulated or getting off-track.
- If you're dealing with the manipulator, acknowledge that you hear what they are saying, but repeat your own simple, clear request without allowing yourself to be manipulated or becoming aggressive.
- Remember, your best solution is a win win for you and the others involved. The way to achieve this is to be clear in your own mind about the ideal outcome, a realistic outcome, and a fallback position (bottom line) for you.
- Some people find it helpful to disclose their honest feelings during the interaction. For some people this alleviates guilt and anxiety.

Remember that being assertive is often about negotiation and compromise. It's about not being aggressive or passive or manipulative. It's about the win-win for everyone involved.

Anger and Frustration Management

Few things encourage procrastination better than anger and frustration, yet anger and frustration are inevitable in life and in projects. The first thing you must do is recognize when you're frustrated or angry. Many of us are so proficient at hiding these feelings from other people that we've become great at hiding them from ourselves. That is usually a problem because the anger and frustration show themselves in other ways. One of these ways is to discontinue whatever we've started. Another outcome is that we show our anger toward other things or people that are unrelated to the real cause. All of this is unproductive.

First, recognize your frustration. After that, decide how to handle it. You could walk away from the situation until you feel you're in control of your emotions. You could channel that frustration into finding other solutions for the problem. Or you could find other projects to work on temporarily. Next, find a productive way to release your anger and frustration. It might be through exercise or even household chores.

Pay attention to what causes you anger and frustration. Try to make sure that you're separating your current anger from past situations that cause anger. One thing that many of us do is bring old anger that has been dealt with to new situations. Find means to deal with anger and frustration as they appear. A good idea is to come up with solutions in advance. Since we know for certain that the feelings will come up again, channeling them in a positive way will produce the best outcome.

Stress Management

Another enemy of productivity, closely related to frustration and anger, is stress. Stress is our body's way of letting us know that we are confronting something beyond our coping ability. On a physical level, much less an emotional level, our instinct is to flee. This is the point where many of us give up on our projects. Again, a lot of us have a tendency to ignore stress until it causes major problems physically, emotionally, and even in all areas of our lives.

Symptoms of Stress

The symptoms of stress can vary from person to person, but we all need to know what they are so that we can deal with them if and when they arise.

Physical symptoms – heart palpitations, nausea, muscle cramps, colds, infections, fatigue, body aches, and indigestion

Emotional symptoms – mood swings, irritability, tension, anxiety, and powerlessness

Behavioral symptoms – accidents, inferior job performance, overeating or not eating, lack of concentration, general exhaustion

Mental symptoms – indecision, memory failure, worrying, loss of perspective, lack of empathy

Get to know your particular signs of stress and recognize when you're experiencing ...the sooner you do, the better for your health.

Causes of Stress

Knowing the factors that cause stress will help you anticipate when you might be experiencing them. We have different levels of stress tolerance, and many times different types of stressors can combine to cause serious stress. The four types of stressors are

Situational stressors – these include unexpected situations, change, bad news, heavy workloads, and negative environmental factors

Life events stressors – these include marriage, divorce, death, birth of a child, moving, ill health, and financial concerns

Stressors caused by others – these include unreasonable demands by others, unreasonable expectations from others, and a negative atmosphere at work or at home

Internal stressors – these include perfectionism, unreasonable expectations from ourselves, feelings of inadequacy, unmet needs for acceptance and love, and the need to control

Stress can be debilitating and lead to many physical problems if you don't deal with it. The way to handle stress is to recognize it, interrupt the pattern, and use the tools available to reduce it.

In order to recognize stress in your life, ask yourself these questions:

- What's causing my stress?
- When does this happen?
- Where does it happen?
- What symptoms do I show?
- Why do I react this way?
- What can I do to reduce the stress in the situation?

Once you recognize that you're feeling stress, come to terms with those feelings. Don't run away from your feelings but accept them as signs that are showing you the need to take action.

Take responsibility for the situation. You might not have created it, but you need to take responsibility to face it and create the best possible outcome for yourself and possibly others. Take the time to do what you need: some free time, saying no to demands, self-care.

Develop a support network. Let your friends know when you need them, and make sure they know that you're grateful for their help.

Take a good look at your lifestyle. What changes do you need to make? Make the time for some exercise and some relaxation. Eat a healthy diet, don't smoke, and drink moderately. Think positively and handle your negative inner thoughts. All of these things that you build into your lifestyle will strengthen you against stress.

The serenity prayer is an awesome piece of wisdom and wonderful for dealing with stress. It says, " God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." – Old Irish Saying

Prioritizing, Organizing, and Planning

The feeling of overwhelm is a major cause of procrastination. It is so uncomfortable it can cause us to put off doing projects or flee from them faster than just about anything else will. The good news is that prioritizing, organizing, and planning – tools that can easily diminish this feeling – are not that difficult to learn.

I know that you know that old expression: "How do you eat an elephant?" "One bite at a time." We all know that breaking things down into parts make sense. It makes difficult things easy by putting them in logical order so that we can address each step and go on to the next one. For some of us, it's difficult to do. Here are the steps:

1. Know what your overall goals are
2. Have a thorough knowledge of your project or task
3. Know all the resources needed to complete the task
4. Give yourself some flexibility with your deadlines
5. Understand that unexpected obstacles will probably show up so build in some time to resolve those
6. Take the time to make the best plan you can come up with. Time you spend here will save you time later and cause you not to feel overwhelmed

Once you begin your project, you may discover efficiencies that will help with your time management. For instance, are the right people performing the right tasks? Could you improve performance by switching people's functions? Would it be more effective to bring in a specialist for part of the task? Are all the steps in your project still necessary? What modifications can be made? These are just examples of efficiencies that you may find what you're going through the project. The point is to monitor your progress to reduce unexpected, unwanted surprises, and to keep you on track.

Prioritize your tasks on a daily basis because the priority can change quickly.

Priority one – important and urgent, tasks to do immediately

priority two – important but not urgent, tasks that can't be planned for a future time

priority three – urgent but not important, tasks that can be delegated

priority four – routine, tasks that need to be done but can be deferred or delegated

Putting It All Together

Now that you know all the components of procrastination, you've had a chance to determine which ones might apply to you, and you've learned the skills you need to get rid of or diminish them in your life. Let's put it all together so that you have a coherent assessment of yourself to bring to your tasks, your projects, and your life going forward.

Using your computer or a paper and pen, answer the following questions in as much detail as possible:

1. Identify the areas in your life where you procrastinate. It could be with tasks or projects or relationships. It could be in your home, on your job, in public situations, or with friends and relatives. Where do you want to make changes? What are you dissatisfied with?

Write down a description of the situation you want to change. What is it like right now? Give as much detail as you can.

How do you see it changing? What is your vision for the future? Write this in as much detail as possible.

Remember, you achieve change through a combination of dissatisfaction with the present plus a vision for the future plus a plan plus taking the first steps.

2. Now, give yourself a challenge. Write down each change you want to make in phrases starting with, "I will....." Look at each thing you want to change and ask yourself

- What's my payoff if I leave things the way they are now?
- What are the negative consequences if I don't change?
- What are the benefits if I do change?
- Are there any negative effects if I do change?
- Can I handle them?
- Prioritize your changes in the order you want to tackle them.

3. Next, turn your challenges into goals. Decide when you want to achieve the goal, and write this down for each goal, "It is (the date) and I have achieved this goal. Make these goals real in whatever way you want: for instance, a vision board, a journal, or by telling your friends about them.

4. You need a way to measure your success. How will you know if you've reached your target goal? What will success mean to you? Write it down. "My success criteria are....." Do that for each goal.
5. Write down each goal, leaving some space beneath each one. Think through all of the negative things associated with that goal. What will the obstacles be? What can you do in advance to diminish the obstacles? For each goal, finish this statement, "I am removing the barriers to success with this goal by....."
6. Now it's time to break your project into steps. We know by now that this will make it much more manageable and give us reason not to be overwhelmed or afraid. Develop two or three first steps for achieving your goal and write them down.
7. Now take a look at your first steps. What are the positives? What are the negatives? Choose the first steps for each goal that you determine to be the best ones.
8. Next, plan the rest of your project step by step, going back and assessing each step as you did in number seven. Remember to build in flexibility in time constraints to allow for unforeseen events and obstacles. Remember also that it's completely acceptable to amend these steps as you go along.

A few more pointers to remember when you're actually working in your project:

1. Review your goals and projects periodically. Ask yourself these questions:
 - What's going well with my project?
 - Am I on track to achieve my goal?
 - What adjustments do I need to make?
 - Is there anything new that I need to do to keep my project on track?
 - Do I need to get help in any area to achieve my goal?
2. Assess whether you're using the skills you've learned in this book. Ask yourself how well you're using them. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Make a written note of what you're learning about yourself. You'll be able to use it in the future for your next project.
3. Remember to take care of yourself as you're working toward your goals. Get regular exercise, eat right, and practice some stress relieving activities. Don't forget to give yourself some treats along the way. You deserve them, especially if you're doing well. Change isn't easy.

4. When your project is almost completed, take time to evaluate your achievements – that is, how well you're completing your project and how you've changed for the positive internally. Look at your goals and see how close you've come to achieving them. Are you falling short? Are you exceeding your goals? Which aspects of overcoming procrastination have you conquered? Which ones do you still need to work on? Make a written note of what you've achieved, point by point. That is, after all, your most important goal.

5. Now your project or your task is completed. It's time to celebrate. Allow yourself this luxury. Do it now! Go big, and put yourself first! Even if you didn't achieve everything you set out to, you've finished your project and you've made progress. You have the skills to overcome procrastination, and you have the rest of your life to improve on your progress.

Well done! Celebrate you!