

Procrastination

People think procrastination is a bad thing. But if we put off doing bad things, it is a plus. A finely honed skill. The best way is to put off the bad thing is to put off the bad thing - just right now. Get to tomorrow. Repeat. We just did the right thing.

Same thing for good things. Do the right thing. Just right now. Get to tomorrow. Repeat. Even if it is just a little thing.

I have put off writing this for 3 months. OK, enough of that. I have finished my work, cleaned the house, gone for a vigorous bike ride, and now I am ready to tear into this for the bazillionth time. I set my timer for 12 minutes. Maybe I will get into a flow and finish this. Only the timer will tell.

We all have reason to put off things we know we should do:

1. Better things to do
2. Inertia
3. Stress

Here are 3 things to realize

1. Doing good things doesn't take long
2. An object at rest stays at rest.
3. Starting things is the hardest part.

Let's look at why we put stuff off:

Better things to do

It's cool if you have better things to do. But do you really have better things to do. Or is it just easier to think that since there is one in a ten million chance there is something new on your phone, and so you should check your social meds and then spend 45 minutes looking through all the trash that has accumulated, or they have rerun in your stream. There is almost zero chance there is something new, exciting and valuable to your life. What would social meds smell like if they had a smell? There are better things to do.

Inertia

Inertia is a cool concept. Big ships have a lot of inertia, and not very good brakes. They come into dock slowly and carefully. It is hard to get them to stop and turning them around is not easy. It is best they get going in the right direction in the first place. It takes a lot of energy to get them going again. Once they are floating along, they keep moving in the right direction quite nicely.

Stress

Stress sucks. It is part of every day. Some stress can be good stress, and we seek it out. Like checking a mark on a term paper or check our email to see if we got a response from the company we applied to. Stress can be bad because we did something that we really should not have done. That is bad stress. Easy to see which stress we should go after. The most stressful part of a project or a To-Do item is the start. Once you start moving in the right direction, the stress will dim.



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Procrastination, cont'd

Here is a simple process to get through the stress and get something done:

1. Recognize the stress.
2. Start.
3. Set a timer (only 5 – 15 minutes to get started).
4. List the steps you need to complete.
5. Check your list.

Part of growing up is realizing the difference between things you want to do, and things you have to do or things you should do. Growing up is realizing it is less stressful to keep doing a bunch of small things that keep the stress from building up. This is why old people keep their kitchens and their bedrooms clean. It is easier and less stressful to keep things in their place, and to keep the dishes from piling up and becoming a big job. It is way more efficient to take 10 seconds to put them in the dishwasher when they are dirty.

If you get used to doing a bunch of little things (like putting your stuff away) you will have less clutter and will have more clarity and focus to get to the tasks that you need to get done.

There. I am done. It didn't take too long.

Now I can get to some of the other things on my list.

