

## Stop Procrastination Now!

By Lyndsay Swinton

Some tasks you start without a moment's thought. Others sit there, gathering dirt until they're a festering heap of unpleasantness. Why are some tasks so easy to start while others continually get pushed to the bottom of the To Do list?

Stop procrastination and find out how to take the first step in a troublesome task, with minimum fuss and maximum return and learn a couple of procrastination-stopping secrets too. But first, let me tell you a true story about an everyday guy called Mike. (It's a true story but names have been changed to protect the innocent).

### **Mike has a problem**

Mike's problem is that he has to get up 45 minutes earlier every morning to take a trip to the gym. Not so unusual?

Well what's not so usual is that Mike only went to the gym to take a shower. Mike has been doing this for over three weeks now and he is starting to get tired and irritable about his lot in life.

Why couldn't Mike take a shower in his apartment like normal people?

### **Mike's misery**

Well, the problem is his shower is combined with his bath. And his bath is full of pans, plates and cutlery. When asked why, Mike replied, "because I have a sore back!"

If you're failing to see the link between back pain and a bath full of crockery (like I was at the time) you'll be glad I asked him why. "Because my kitchen sink is full!" Mike replied.

Now is this getting weird or what? When asked why his kitchen sink was full, Mike replied, "because the drain's blocked!"

### **The root of Mike's misery**

As it turned out, a month back Mike was washing the dinner dishes and his sink wouldn't empty. As Mike was tired, he ignored the problem and went to watch TV instead.

Next morning, he took his breakfast dishes through to the bathroom to wash them in the bath. Whilst bending down, Mike's old football injury resurfaced and he couldn't

complete the task. Unperturbed, Mike figured his back would be better soon and he could wash the dishes then.

After each meal, Mike attempted to wash the dishes but was prevented by back pain. Eventually all the dishes run out, the bath was full up, and Mike was forced to use the gym to shower.

Mike made a simple task into a troublesome task. Don't be Mike -learn how to take the first step.

## **Stop Procrastination - How To Take the First Step**

Here's how to do it - it's so simple, I'm almost embarrassed.

The first step is to make a simple decision - decide to do it now or defer it until later.

Making a simple decision takes a few moments and minimal brain effort, so there's no reason to procrastinate. But we all do it, so here's the first stop procrastination secret.

### ***Procrastination Secret One – know your work avoidance tactics***

Learn to recognise your work avoidance tactics and behaviours. Mike sloped off to watch TV. What do you do? People get creative when it comes to avoiding troublesome tasks. Much coffee is drunk, papers shuffled, phone calls made, all in vain attempts to disguise the fact you're avoiding a troublesome task.

Ignoring problems doesn't make them go away. Indeed, ignoring a problem often makes it bigger and nastier, and forces you into all sorts of uncomfortable behaviours or turn of events.

Recognise your work avoidance tactics for what they are and get on with the job in hand.

### ***Procrastination Secret Two – make a task list***

If you decide to defer, think through carefully what you need to do later and make a task list so you know what's next.

Mike's misery – an alternative story

In another life, Mike emptied the sink to investigate the cause of the block. He decided to call the plumber in the morning and goes off to watch TV.

Morning comes, and Mike phones his friend to find out the number of the plumber he used 6 months ago. His friend can't remember the number and leaves a message for his partner to see if they have it. And so it goes on. Meanwhile, Mike's sink is still blocked.

Mike has gone through a convoluted series of time consuming tasks and he has yet to call the plumber!

Careful planning of your task list will throw up ALL steps required to complete the big task, and may trigger thoughts on how to do things better, faster or cheaper.

**Minimum fuss, maximum return**

Learn from Mike and unblock your drain before the debris begins to pile up. Simply make one decision – do it now or defer it until later.

Stop procrastination before it starts. Recognise your work avoidance tactics and get down to the task in hand. Make careful task lists and follow them. Tomorrow is always a day away.

That's not too troublesome a task is it?

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