



## [Procrastination: What is it costing you?](#)

By [Joel Garfinkle](#) on December 15th, 2014

There's a reason why Nike adopted the slogan "Just do it." Actually, the expression may have originated with Amelia Earhart, who said, "The most effective way to do it is to do it."

The habit of procrastination deserves special attention because it is so widespread and so costly. In addition to robbing you of time, procrastination can cause you to question your own value and abilities. It's a dangerous practice that feeds on itself and becomes stronger and more damaging with continued use.

You can **stop procrastination** in its tracks with this success formula:

**Motivation + energy + action = results**

Motivation generates energy. Energy cultivates action. And action over time will always produce results. Any action you take will generate energy and take you from a place of stagnation into movement.

The first step is to **learn what motivates you**. For many people, it's the promise of a reward. "As soon as I finish this Power Point deck for next week's conference, I will treat myself to a latte at Starbucks."

For others, it's **checking items off a to-do list** or making a periodic list of completions and accomplishments. Perhaps you enjoy celebrating achievements with friends or colleagues. Most of us still love the gold star next to our name from kindergarten days, even if now it is only symbolic.

Whatever motivates you, learn to use to it whenever you face that procrastination roadblock. Once you have taken that first step, your energy begins to build. A cautionary note, however: **your energy can fade fast unless you have a strong, compelling reason for doing what you're doing in the first place.** Think passion and purpose. Knowing your purpose is the single most powerful way to defeat procrastination. You won't put off doing what you love to do. Chronic procrastination is actually a big wake-up call that's telling you, "Maybe you're working on the wrong things, or you're headed the wrong way. Find a different path!"

We've all read the stories about the attorney who bought a vineyard and became a winemaker, or the sales executive who opened a bakery. While such a life-changing strategy may not be a good choice for you today, it's possible to **find passion in the job you have** by emphasizing the parts you do like and minimizing or powering through the parts that are less appealing.

Don't let overwhelm suck you into the procrastination swamp. If you have more items on your list than you can possibly accomplish, there are two ways to approach the problem:

1. Tackle a lot of small, unpleasant, boring, or routine tasks first and get them out of the way. This builds momentum and you can move on to something more important and interesting. Or,

2. Take the most critical task or the biggest problem and get started. Give yourself a time frame. "I'll work on this for 30 minutes and see how far I can get." Small bites, taken regularly, make the job seem less daunting.

If the state of "**overwhelm**" has become a way of life that is stifling your creativity and your productivity, re-evaluate your situation. What tasks or projects can you delegate? What might be eliminated altogether? Staying in a constant state of overwhelm does the exact opposite of what you need. It drains your energy and stifles your passion and enthusiasm.

Here's the challenge: if you know procrastination is costing you, look at each of the components above in decide how you can put them into action this week:

1. What motivates you? How can you give yourself the rewards and gold stars you crave?
2. What is your passion or purpose? How can you get more passion into the work you are doing right now?
3. Are you suffering from overload? What can you delegate or eliminate, starting today?
4. What small action steps can you take now to move key projects forward?

When you implement these anti-procrastination strategies, your energy will build, your momentum will increase, and the results will be inevitable.

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