

Why Do We Procrastinate?

Your Name

Title of course
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Date

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We often have tasks and duties with which we must deal. Additionally, very often, nobody can or nobody wants to complete your tasks for you, because people have their own important things to do. We all make plans and create to-do lists or force ourselves to do things we planned to start doing long ago, such as giving up smoking or starting to do push-ups every morning. However, it does not always work. We often tend to put important things off until tomorrow, doing something completely unnecessary, like checking our e-mail, watching funny videos, chatting on social networks, etc. The next day, we feel we have fooled ourselves and now are more determined to do what we planned, but here we go again, and it looks like a vicious circle. Why does it always happen to us?

We all make bookmarks to read an interesting but rather long article in the future, we plan to watch a documentary but end up with a lowbrow blockbuster that requires less thinking, or we eat a cake today promising ourselves to go on a diet next week. Psychologists have a clear explanation of why all of this happens to people. In fact, if we have a choice between two things, one of which will bring us instant pleasure and the other one that is more enjoyable and useful but we will have to wait a bit to get it, most often we will choose the first one. This is called a present bias, which means we choose a thing we want right now, not understanding that in the future our preferences are likely to change, and what seems a great thing to do or to buy right now will turn out to be completely useless in the future. For example, if a student has a paper due in a week or so, he is likely to put it off for doing things that actually do not seem so useless, such as cleaning up, washing the dishes, planning a future vacation, or cooking a meal. However, one or two days before the deadline, you will realize that you are not going to make it on time and writing a paper should have been your main priority.

No matter how often you get into this trap, it is not impossible to avoid. All you have to do is set your priorities right to determine what will be useful for you in the future. You should know how to distinguish between what you want to do and what you need to do. At the same time, the

future is obscure for all of us, so we would rather choose a worse option but will get a result immediately than to do something useful, not knowing whether it will pan out in the end. What we need to do here is plan ahead, as well as try to predict our needs and priorities in the future. There are also many apps that will help you be more disciplined, take care of your duties, and do this on time. Another thing you should be ready to face is the temptation to get something right now, knowing you do not really need it. Sometimes you must know how to fool yourself and how to persuade yourself to do what you really need to do, so that in the future, you will be grateful for what you did and not ashamed, as before.

Bibliography

McRaney, David. Procrastination.

<http://youarenotsmart.com/2010/10/27/procrastination/>