

***Priorities:** Find out what priorities your manager has and then blend in the special projects and interests that you bring to the job. Don't waste your time doing work that is not valued by the organizations. You'll find that there is little reward for that kind of activity. And now that the priorities are set, stick with them. Do the "A's before the C's."*

Successful Planning

- **Crystallize your thinking:** If your mind can visualize it, you can do it.
- **Write out your game plan:** Write out your specific ideas and plans. Spell out the intermediate steps. Write down the deadlines for both your career and personal life.
- **Self-discipline:** The difference between successful and unsuccessful people is that successful people do the unpleasant things that need to be done to accomplish their goals.
- **Positive attitude:** People who think they are powerful are. Feed your mind good stuff. Pay more attention to your success than to your temporary failure.
- **Motivation:** Expect the very best from yourself and other people. Set yourself and your employees up for success.

Procrastination

If you are reading this, you probably already know about procrastination. You know how to put things off until the last minute. You know exactly how far past your deadlines that you dare complete the work. You have also suffered from missed deadlines, last minute scrambles, and the constant feeling that you really should be doing something else. Let's take a look at some questions and answers about procrastination. Hopefully, you will get some insight into why it is so hard to get started sometimes, and better yet, this new insight might also help you change your behavior.

- **Q:** Is the job really important – what would happen if you never did it?
- **A:** This is one you have to figure out for yourself. If you have been putting a task off for days or weeks or even years, it is hard to keep from wondering whether the job is actually very important. Procrastination presents both internal and external problems. The external problem is work or tasks that either do not get done or get done late. The internal problem is the load that we carry around by saying to ourselves, "I really should be doing this, but I'm not doing it so I feel bad." One of the ways out of the dilemma is to simply decide for you that the task is not important and to forget about it.
- **Q:** Could someone else do the job for you?
- **A:** Delegate the job to someone else and breathe a sigh of relief. Sometimes we keep ourselves in this procrastination trap by thinking that we have to do everything ourselves, and that is simply is not so. There are few things that you do that someone else could not learn to do just as well as you.
- **Q:** Who says you should do this job?
- **A:** If someone else said you have to do this job, maybe the reason you are putting it off is to prove that you really do not have to do it. Particularly at work, we often have job assignments that we find unpleasant. And sometimes the unpleasantness is related not only to the job, but also to the fact that we do not like the person who told us to do the job. A lot of irrational thinking goes on when we procrastinate. We are unhappy because we have a job assignment we do not like. We're unhappy because we don't like the person who assigned the job. And now we make ourselves unhappier by going around worrying about the job. The only one who can tell you that you have to do a job is yourself. So, the sooner you say to yourself, "Ok, it's a nasty job, but I know that I do have to do it eventually, and the sooner I do it, the sooner I will feel good again," the better off you will be.

- **Q:** Does everyone else have to approve of the way I do this job?
- **A:** No. If you think that everyone else has to approve of everything you do, you will be eternally handicapped. If you try to do every assignment in a way that guarantees total approval, the tasks become so overwhelming that it is impossible to even start them.

- **Q:** What will happen if I make a mistake?
- **A:** You will probably learn something new. And you may even have to correct the mistake. It is much easier to correct a mistake than it is to do a whole project late.

- **Q:** Does it do any good to read articles on time management to get over procrastination?
- **A:** Yes, it does. Even though you are sitting here reading and thinking that you should be working on your priority item instead of reading this, you may be changing the way you think about work. If you are going to keep on procrastinating, you are going to have to hang on to some crazy ways of thinking. The crazy thinking goes like this:
 - “I’ve got a job to do.”
 - “There is something unpleasant about the job, and I don’t like to feel bad, so I’m going to put it off awhile.”
 - “Now I’m feeling unhappy because I should be doing something and I’m not doing it.”
 - “I was trying to avoid feeling bad so I didn’t do the job, but now I feel bad anyway.”
 See how it goes? We really want to feel good, so we avoid the unpleasant task. And does that make us feel better? Of course not.

- **Q:** So what can I do to change?
- **A:** I thought you’d never ask.
 1. Be absolutely clear about what you want to do. Be sure you want to do it. Be sure you are not doing it reluctantly, because someone else thinks you should do it.
 2. Convince yourself that it is possible for you to do this job. The real difference between people who get things done and people who do not is one word ... “action.” The millionaires, the people who write books, and the people, who are doing what you want to do, are not any different from you in basic ability. In fact, some of them, when you meet them, are rather disappointing. The difference is that they did something. “Action.”
 3. Decide what the first step toward your goal is. The first step toward completing an education might be a simple phone call to register, or a trip to the school to pick up a brochure, a catalog, or a registration form. Once you know, in clear action terms, what the first step is, it begins to look possible.

(Time Management: Dennis Murphy, Professional Training Association, 1981.)