

## PROCRASTINATION – 5 TIPS TO SIDESWIPE IT

### 6 Tips To Get A Head Start On

Because procrastination is essentially a combination of neurology and habit, cognitive-behavior techniques can help even chronic scatterbrains (I say this with love) break the habit. If you've been putting something off for days (or years), try the following tips. Remember that if you have enough "Brain Juice" to do something then your brain will kick in (that's my former mentor Kate Kelly, author of "You mean I'm not Lazy, Stupid, or Crazy?!").

You are, in fact, special: there's a combination of anxiety, perfectionism, overwhelm, and just plain old brain farting that goes on when we don't want to do something. Hacking or tricking your brain into starting it, just doing it, or just biting off an easily chewable piece is the goal. Procrastination, for us, isn't always just a mind set: it's often woven in with so many factors that oddly *just getting started* is the hardest part. Trick or treat!

**1. Do Something Fun** – Why start a project that utterly sucks? Get your brain lubed up and give yourself a little juice. If looking at videos or news is something you get lost in for hours set a timer and allow yourself to go get some Brain Juice from something stupidly fun. If you can physically move, even better. Shoot some hoops (ok, so paper balls into the waste basket), run around the office, or do what I do: there are websites for my favorite stupid TV shows and I just go to 'em for 5 minutes at a time. Gives my brain a little juice.

**2. Don't Have a Crappy Work Environment** – People who are most productive in odd places: quiet libraries, noisy coffee shops, in the passenger seat in your car (not moving). Try making your own deadline like I did in college: I made every paper due the *day before*. This trick tricks your brain into feeling the Juice – make a deadline and ask a friend to keep you on task.

**3. Don't Be a Jerk** – What we say to ourselves "This will take all day, and I'm such a \_\_\_\_\_" instead try "I might not be able to finish this, but I can do the just a teeny bit. Hell, do *two minutes of work on it*. I bet you'll do more ☺ Watch out for negative self talk. Be silly: act like your own self-coach and give yourself a pep talk. Heck, look up a good pep talk on YouTube!

**4. Just Do It** – Just start the task – give yourself permission to do a crap version of it. Why worry about the perfect outcome when you can just get some of it done. This is another trick to get past that pesky inner critic who won't let you start. Set a timer and do a rough draft, agree with a co-worker that you'll race them to get \_\_\_\_\_ done. Make a bet that you can produce something in 5 minutes ...

**5. Eat An Elephant** – One bite at a time. OK, so you're in overwhelm. Well, yep that's what your brain does. Try breaking it down into big chunks, then chunking the first chunk. If that seems impossible get someone else involved: have them help you make steps and chunks so that you're not trying to bit off the elephant trunk, just his little teeny toe.

**6. Accountability** – If you make a co-working date, hire a coach, or ask a friend to co-support one another you'll have a better chance of getting stuff done that otherwise sits dormant. It's basically harnessing mild shame and social constructs – we want to be "seen" as folks who are contributing (vs. slacking off, which really is just habit and fear).