

5 suggestions on becoming  
a successful structured  
procrastinator

(1) Leave things until the last minute as a way of budgeting your time. Most procrastinators are (sort of) perfectionists. As long as they have a lot of time to do a task, they fantasize about doing a perfect job. Leaving it till the last minute is a way of giving oneself permission to do a merely adequate job. Ninety-nine percent of the time a merely adequate job is all that is needed.

(2) Lots of tasks disappear if given a chance. You should make sure a task is really necessary before committing yourself to doing it. Maybe the boss who asked for it will get fired, or take another job, or get promoted, or forget, or die. Maybe some gung-ho colleague will do it for you. Maybe life on earth will end. If it's still there tomorrow, or the next day, there will be time to do it then.

(3) Non-procrastinators are inevitably ignorant. Suppose you really never put off until tomorrow what you could do today. You'd have to work right up to midnight every night. So you would never be able to watch Jon Stewart or Stephen Colbert or David Letterman. So you wouldn't know anything about current events and their deeper meanings. That would be irresponsible.

(4) Procrastination encourages productive subconscious thought. When we put off doing something, our subconscious focuses on it, so then when we get around to doing it we are full of good ideas we wouldn't have had if we had plunged right in. Any procrastinator will tell you that. So it must be true.

(5) When it comes to email, procrastination is a powerful survival technique. If you answer email promptly, some people will respond with another before you have a chance to pat yourself on the back. If you are careful to procrastinate for at least a day before answering any email, you will encourage such people to drop you from their list of correspondents.