



3 NEW WAYS TO ELIMINATE PERFECTIONISM, OVERWHELM, AND PROCRASTINATION

A guide to accompany Impact
podcast episode 6

As a business owner and thought leader, there will inevitably be times when you procrastinate a task or project despite its significance to your goals.

There are many reasons why we procrastinate, but two of the most common are perfectionism and overwhelm. I certainly have plenty of experience in this respect.

Procrastination can be especially frustrating when the task you are avoiding is essential to an important goal. You want the benefits of the outcome but find it difficult even to get started.

Perhaps you want to write a book but find it challenging to sit down and write.

Perhaps you want more clients, but you struggle to get started doing consistent outreach.

Perhaps you want to meditate so that you can enjoy increased mental clarity and awareness, but you find it difficult even to do a ten-minute meditation.

In this quick reference guide, I share a set of questions you can ask yourself to eliminate the overwhelm and perfectionism that lead to procrastination.

Q1: What is one small task I can do first?

Identify the immediate action to take next, something that will take less than five minutes. Allow yourself to stop there or keep going if you feel inertia. This question eliminates overwhelm by quickly creating momentum.

“An object at rest stays at rest, and an object in motion stays in motion.” -- Sir Isaac Newton

Examples

1. **Writing a book** → Open a new document and write two sentences.

2. **Prospecting** → Make a list of three people you can contact.
3. **Difficult conversation** → Find a time in your schedule to have the conversation.

Q2: What would make this easier? (Alternate Question: How can I make this work for me?)

This question removes friction and sidesteps perfectionism. We often assume something needs to be hard to do to have value or get the desired outcome. As a result, we use an approach that demands too much time and energy. Usually, there isn't one right way to do something. Find the way that works best for you.

Examine the process, question the “givens,” and think of ways to make the task easier by allowing yourself to do it in a way that feels natural (and that leverages your unique strengths).

Sometimes doing 50% of a thing is better than never getting around to do 100% of the thing.

Example 1

I struggled for years to journal consistently because I felt I had to do it in my neatest handwriting so I could refer back to it later. In the case of doing Morning Pages--a journaling practice recommended by Julia Cameron in her book, *The Artist's Way*--I decided to allow myself to write with messier (and quicker) handwriting. This tweak finally allowed the habit to stick long enough for me to benefit from the practice.

Example 2

One day, I had a crucial sales email to write, no motivation to do so, and little time to do it due to procrastination. After staring at a blank page for fifteen minutes, I finally asked myself how I could make the task easier.

A few minutes later, I wondered if I had past content I could repurpose for the email. I combed through the archives of my past emails but couldn't find

anything. Then it occurred to me that I'd had a Messenger chat with a friend a few days before where I talked about the very topic I was trying to write about.

I copied and pasted conversation text into a Google Doc and used it as a starting point. From there, it was easy for me to finish writing the email quickly.

Q3: What would make this fun?

Fire up your motivation by finding a way to make the activity more enjoyable to you. Is there a way to engage your curiosity or creativity? Can you experiment or try something new? Is there a new tool that would make it more exciting?

Example 1

My client struggled to sit down and create content. I asked her when she most enjoyed conveying ideas. We figured out that she was most inspired and energized when she was coaching or teaching. She was always excited to answer questions and share ideas when she was interacting with others. She decided to use recordings of coaching and teaching sessions as a starting point for content.

Example 2

Returning to my struggling journaling habit example above, I created motivation by thinking of ways to make it more fun. I settled on buying myself some fun new pens I'd wanted to try out—this added novelty and enjoyment to the experience.