

How to Get Motivated

A Guide for Defeating Procrastination



The Procrastination Equation

The Procrastination Equation—discussed in detail by Piers Steel in his book by the same name—accounts for every major scientific finding on procrastination and draws upon the best current theories of motivation. It looks like this:

$$\text{Motivation} = \frac{\text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value}}{\text{Impulsiveness} \times \text{Delay}}$$

Expectancy refers to the perceived odds of getting a reward and whether we expect success or failure.

Value refers to the pleasantness of doing a task, and the size of its reward.

Impulsiveness refers to the tendency to get distracted or lose focus on a task.

Delay refers to the time between the present and a task's reward or completion.

How to Get Motivated

The solution is simple. To increase motivation and decrease procrastination you must:

- ▲ **Increase** our **Expectancy** of success and the certainty of being rewarded.
- ▲ **Increase** the **Value** and pleasantness of doing a task.
- ▼ **Decrease** our **Impulsiveness** by removing distractions and maintaining focus.
- ▼ **Decrease** the **Delay** of the reward by having more immediate, salient deadlines.

How to Use This Poster

1. Notice when you are procrastinating. Be specific about what you are avoiding.
2. Pick an action from one of the three branches to either increase value, increase expectancy, or decrease impulsiveness.
3. Use the tips to help you implement the action.
4. Repeat Steps 1-3 until you are motivated.

Tips

Tip! If you feel overwhelmed by how many possible actions there are, focus on implementing *just one*.

Tip! Keep track of what works best for you.

Tip! Delay is hard to address directly. It is covered in other actions, especially Set a Goal under Decrease Impulsiveness.

Tip! If you run into problems, always remember the main reason for the action: to either increase value, increase expectancy, decrease impulsiveness, or decrease delay.

Acknowledgements

This poster was inspired by *The Procrastination Equation* by Piers Steel. See this book for extensive detail on the causes of procrastination and the many methods for defeating it. Buy his book and support the scientific investigation of procrastination and motivation!

How to Get Motivated v2.0 by Alex Vermeer

Also check out:
alexvermeer.com/getmotivated