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CONFIDENCE COACH

WEEK TEN

Procrastination

HANDOUTS

AND

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
WORK

"Procrastination is attitude's natural assassin. There is nothing so fatiguing as an uncompleted task." *William James, one of the founders of modern psychology*



Week 10
Recap Questions

1. What one thing have you learnt from last week's session?
2. What change or progress have you noticed since last week around ongoing goals?
3. How many confidence dips did you notice this week? What did you do when you noticed?
4. How successful were you at catching past events and challenging them?
5. What difference (if any) did paying attention to past events, noticing the emotions, changing the interpretation of the event, and practicing the lessons learnt have for you this week?
6. Which confidence tips did you practice in the week?
7. How did you get on with the valuing and respecting yourself exercise?
8. Have you continued practicing your techniques past sessions daily so you can achieve your 30 day challenge?
9. If not, what stopped you?
10. How has your expectation of yourself around your goal(s) improved?



You may find yourself agreeing with this week's quote, 'there is nothing so fatiguing as an uncompleted task'. Not doing something you think you should, ought, must or want to, drains emotional, mental and physical energy from many human beings. It stops so many of us from getting the most out of our life. And sadly as so many people I have interviewed or worked with say, it's a real and daily problem for them.

What is it exactly? The word procrastination literally means to leave something "for tomorrow." Or to put off doing something that ought or should be done! The first step toward overcoming procrastination is recognizing that it's a problem. Procrastinators have big and small problems, but most of their problems are because of procrastination.

All procrastinators share certain traits:

- They know what they should do and in many cases they know what actions need to be taken, yet they find reasons to avoid doing them.
- They are reluctant to do anything about a problem right now, but promise to take action at some 'vague time' in the future.

Procrastination keeps people from living their best lives, so knowing that, why do we do it? Procrastination is a bad habit which has developed over time, either because of learnt behaviour, decisions made at some point that you couldn't be bothered and would do it later, fear of failure or success not wanting to do a task but knowing you 'should', not wanting to just say NO to someone, therefore saying you'd do it later hoping they'd forget, not being interested in doing the task in the first place, tiredness, lack of interest and or information, being disorganized, or FEAR.

Procrastination is learnt one step at a time and to break the pattern a similar strategy will need to be put in its place. If you don't you may see the years pass by without the achievement of that goal you so want. Changing behaviour patterns like procrastination ironically requires you working at it, the problem of avoiding doing something can only be solved by doing it! *'the problem of avoiding work can be only solved by doing more work'*(Knaus, 1993)



Step one is getting clear about your goal(s), which we have already covered. Check on a scale of 1-10 (10 being I really want this goal), how much do you want to succeed at getting this goal?

Step two is uncovering and then forcefully disputing the self-defeating thoughts and beliefs around the goal or task being too hard or difficult to start and work through. This starts with your attitude towards the task and involves you developing an anti-procrastination attitude which you decide to practice regularly in order to break old patterns. Your attitude is simply a cluster of beliefs that need challenging, however, if your mind is set (mindset) that it is impossible to shift or alter your attitude then no progress can be made.

Start overcoming procrastination by working on your mind/attitude, approach tasks with a positive attitude and PRACTISE the steps you identify as being essential for this change. Practice is the key word here. If you know you have a tendency to want change instantaneously and know that doesn't work for you then get clear now. Practice is essential.

Mental attitude is a choice. In CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) we discover that procrastinators tell themselves that they will most likely be successful when all the circumstances are exactly right – procrastination holds hands with perfectionism both are negative behaviours and will hold you back from success.

Your attitude determines the outcome of your actions, start cultivating a positive attitude, believe you can and complete those jobs.

Belief is another key ingredient when it comes to eliminating procrastination. If you don't believe you can – you can't. And as we have already quoted: Henry Ford said "whether you believe you can or whether you believe you can't you're right!"

So when you catch yourself procrastinating, the first consideration is checking your belief system around the chosen action or goal. In order to become successful (which we will cover in a later session) at beating procrastination, you need your unconscious and conscious mind working together. *(Remember you can use the kinesiology test to support you in asking your conscious and unconscious mind if it is ok to work together here)* Taking those first steps may feel like an uphill struggle or battle if your conscious mind knows it 'should', 'must' or 'ought' to be working on a task or goal only to have your unconscious mind 'knowing' that you won't succeed, because of past programming, experiences or other messages that you've received, along with decisions you've made which uphold your current 'attitude' towards your ability to change.



In NLP there is a fantastic technique called parts integration. It is used when a client reports they feel 'torn in different directions' or conflicted around taking action on a goal and therefore don't take any at all. The intention is to check what the highest positive intention is of the conscious and unconscious parts of a client. By the end of the intervention, the 'two parts' realize they have the same good intention and start working together, instead of apart from each other.

Not everyone has access to NLP training, so I want to share a quick and simple exercise that can be done prior to working on limiting beliefs, which helps clients to check if their unconscious and conscious minds are in agreement with the change they are about to work on. If they are not, there may be other work to do before the real change can take place. If you find this is true for you please work with a professional to support you with your change.

Checking in this way supports the conscious and unconscious mind in understanding they are on the same side and can help each other much like in the parts integration. It allows the client to see and feel if there is any self-sabotage going on and offers them the opportunity to reconcile it. Because of this simple technique, clients have found they have been able to move on with their belief changes easier than when they've previously attempted to change limiting beliefs or take action on goals in the past.

It would be good if you could stop what you are doing now and go and try this out for yourself.

- Take a look at your procrastination list. Select one of the topics you are procrastinating on.
- Check your beliefs about it.
- Have your coach or supporter check out if your unconscious and conscious mind are working together or separately on this topic
- Notice any feelings or mind chatter as your coach asks you the questions
- Reassure the unconscious as per the audio demonstration
- Check if you feel different afterwards

You do not need to feel different. If you do, it can be used as a measurement and reassurance for you that something shifted or changed.

If you don't have a partner to support you right now and you want to give this a go, you could consider

- you could self-testing as demonstrated in week 5 or
- you could just ask the questions without any testing
- Do that now and pay attention



Regardless of what you have practiced or done in the past, your real power is in the present. Your future is created by the thoughts you have and the actions you take today. If you make a decision to learn from the past, identify your fears, face them and then take action in spite of them, not only will your self-esteem and confidence grow but you will also start to win the battle against procrastination.

Take the above situation you tested for a moment ago that you have been procrastinating about

As you think about it, what are your thoughts or feelings about not taking action?

Write them down

How long have you been putting this off for?

Is this a habit?

How might you have acted differently?

Reflect on what you could, should or ought to have done

What could you have done instead of what you did do?

Reflect

What can you learn from this old behaviour/experience?

Ensure you have at least 3 learning points from your reflection?

What will you do with those 3 learning points?

If the same situation is occurring now or if it was to in the future, how could you handle it differently next time?

Get clear about what you will decide to do instead of what you have done and step into your personal power in the present

Now chalk your old behaviour up to experience and move on

Regularly practice this new way of thinking, reflecting and acting and allow change to occur

So, what will you do with the above answers? Will you explore your attitude towards procrastination and challenge it and your beliefs? Or will you continue putting off doing what you say you want to, have to, must or ought to do?

Make a decision now and then if you are ready to work on this topic, continue below.

The best step you can ever take – is action. And to do that you have to want the goal 10/10. Any less and you may not take the necessary action to succeed.



Pick a goal now that you have been procrastinating over and write it below.

My goal I have been procrastinating over is.....

I want it /10

Next it's advisable to identify the steps that need to be taken to achieve the goal, (you covered this in 'What's in the Gap?') Do this **now** before moving on

Look at each of the steps that need to be taken, get clear about the importance and priority of each step. Do this **now** before moving on

These are the steps needed to be taken in order for it to be successful:

These are the steps I can do by myself:

Which do you need some help with? I need help with these steps:

Which don't you want to do? Which can't you be bothered to do?

I don't want to or I can't be bothered to do these steps:

Which ones are you scared or fearful of doing?

I am worried, fearful, scared of taking these steps:



The consequences of not taking action on this goal are:

The rewards of taking these actions and achieving this goal are:

The order the steps need to be taken in are:

These are the essential three steps that must be done first:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Answer the above **now** before moving on

What will you do with the above answers and information? Decide now.

With this awareness you can now make a conscious decision to do what you can do, get help for what you can't do or don't want to do and work with someone, like your coach, and this programme, on the things that make you scared or fearful



If you have just done that exercise, well done, you now know what needs to be done and which of the steps are yours or for you to find support with. I encourage you to make a commitment to act on the tips you find below. Most people fight a daily battle against procrastination, some win against it, some don't. Remember, procrastination is a common enemy.... by taking action you can beat it.

1: Take full responsibility and face up to past failures. One of the main causes of procrastination is people blaming circumstances or others for their failures. When you do this you give up the opportunity to learn and grow from your mistakes, and in turn give away personal power, all this does is prepares you for a lifetime of procrastination.

2: Just do it. Make a decision either let go of the task and decide you aren't going to do it or get on and do it! One of my clients recently said she had finally 'got it' that putting things off was more painful (and for such a long period of time too) than just getting on and doing the task.

Successful individuals know that in order to get what you want you have to make a decision to act, and that takes commitment, focus, determination and self-discipline.

3: Establish your priorities (as previous task). Choose to change your behavior, thoughts and actions by doing something different from what you are currently doing. Most of us experience having to fight procrastination at some point but by getting your priorities right you can start to win against it.

Make a commitment to make something happen in at least one of your high-priority items every day. The novelist George Elliot said, "It's never too late to be the person you could have been." The best time to start is now.

4. Get enthusiastic. Thomas Edison said, "If the only thing we leave our kids is the quality of enthusiasm, we will have given them an estate of incalculable value." Enthusiasm is the most powerful weapon against procrastination.

Enthusiasm has nothing to do with how you are feeling, feelings and emotions can take you all over the place, and will often drag you back when you had good intentioned thoughts. The answer may lay in an earlier exercise you took part in all about choice. By choosing your frame of mind, by managing your state both physically and mentally you can remind yourself of a past time when you felt motivated and action orientated and step into it at any time you choose.

Do the following now think of a time when you felt really motivated to take action on a goal.

How were you standing? Do it now – down to every last little movement, what were you saying to yourself? What did you look and feel like? Practice this state often and then anchor it each time, by squeezing two fingers together, or pressing on a part of your arm or shoulder etc until you are so good at it you can just squeeze or press (as above) and you find yourself feeling motivated.



5. Stay away from negative people and find supportive family and friends who will cheer you on, support you and challenge you if you decide to fall back into old behaviours or habits.

You may already know that positive and negative attitudes are contagious, and even if we are feeling 'up', if we hang out in places of negativity it can really affect our mood, behaviour and attitudes. I have seen and taken part in a number of energy kinesiology demonstrations that show how a positive thinker who arm tests strong by themselves, when surrounded by negative thinkers, their arm goes weak, even though they are feeling and thinking positively. (If you are interested in seeing or finding out more about how to test, take a look on u-tube).

6. Get those difficult, hard or unpleasant tasks done at the time of day when your energy is at its highest. If you're not sure when that is for you, then do what Brian Tracey suggests, and 'eat that frog'! Do the most unpleasant or most difficult task first thing, imagine that! Just thinking about 'getting it out of the way' can lift a huge weight off your shoulders.

When you change your old behaviours and get in the habit of taking action, your enthusiasm, self-belief and confidence in yourself goes through the roof. Did you know that lack of action is a major cause of depression and anxiety?

7. Find a question to ask yourself that helps you to get motivated. A popular one is "if today were my last day alive how would I spend it?" If that isn't the right question for you, find the one that is.

"Do something every day that you don't want to do; this is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain." Mark Twain

8. Did you know that procrastination can be linked to chronic fatigue? According to research 80% of people who visit doctors with chronic fatigue don't require treatment, but they do admit to having a sedentary lifestyle.

9. What gives you more energy? Discover what you need to improve it. Having energy makes facing boring or tedious jobs easier. And of course the better you get at getting things done the better you will feel about yourself.

10. When you catch yourself thinking about procrastinating, get clear about what habits and strategies are involved. Notice your thoughts, pictures, feelings, step by step. Then start to interrupt them by breaking your state, changing your posture, catching that limiting mind chatter, shattering that negative image and replacing each one of them with a new thought, image or behaviour. Consider standing up or sitting on a high stool when doing certain activities if it's possible to do so, you may find yourself becoming more productive and getting unpleasant desk type jobs done much faster by not allowing yourself to get too comfortable.



11. Gratitude is a wonderful state to be in, start looking for stories of those who have little or no choices both past and present. Use their stories to help you be thankful that you are free to choose to do something – or not.

12. Is honesty important to you? Maybe yes, maybe no. Did you know that persistent procrastinators are telling lies to themselves? They refuse to accept responsibility for themselves and their lack of action, they get caught up in playing a delusional game which they cannot win. They fool themselves that problems will go away or that they will get around to taking action, tomorrow! They cause themselves daily, unnecessary pain.

Procrastinators are always justifying their lack of action, they make excuses and lie to themselves, they choose to stay in their comfort zone and play small in life. Is that how you want to be? If you are doing this programme the answer is probably a resounding NO.

Research shows that you can develop new habits in just two weeks, that is, if you're serious about changing. Are you? Think about people you know who always get things done. What are their work habits? How do they approach unappealing tasks? How do they stay focused?

Here are some tips from clients who have 'beaten' procrastination they said they:

- mentally prepare themselves to be productive
- keep inspirational messages where they can be seen
- visualize their success a number of times throughout the day
- do something on their 'hard to do' list every day
- know that the easy jobs or jobs they are passionate about can be done at any time
- decide to tackle the 'hard or horrid jobs early on at their most productive time
- avoid and get rid of all distractions, such as looking at emails every 5 mins or getting involved in office gossip
- use tools such as Covey's important/urgent/not important/not urgent
- commit to changing their habits and take action
- remember the 80:20 principle (look it up if you don't know about it)
- they tell others and go public so they 'have' to do the task
- use 'do not disturb signs' and stick to them
- arrange their environment so it works for them – they can find what they want
- don't wait for the "right" set of circumstances to get started there may never be a 'perfect time'



- give it their best effort
- when things go wrong they ask themselves “ what could I have done to get a better or different result? How can I ensure I do that next time?”
- have good self-esteem which means they can make decisions and then focus on them (beating procrastination is a move towards building good self-esteem)
- know when to stop doing one task and start on the next one
- don't waste time – it's too precious
- ask themselves the following questions when they find they are not taking action and start from that point. Thinking of the task in hand how do I feel about it?
 1. I can't do it and I don't want to do it – so what will I do?
 2. I can do it but I don't want to – what do I need or who can help me?
 3. I want to do it but I can't – what resources/training/help do I need
 4. I can do it and I want to – put a start date in my diary

Often the tasks we procrastinate about are the very ones that would move us forwards most.

Stop now. Make a list of all the things you are procrastinating about.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9



Get clear about how you handle each of them.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

Which ones have you started but not finished?

How far have you got with each one? 10%, 50%, 75%

Do you tackle the difficult tasks first or leave them until last?

Which one if you took action on it would give you the greatest reward?

Decide to start doing that one first, or sandwich it between two you are happy to take action on.

"If we did all the things we were capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves." Thomas Edison

Do something today that you've been putting off and start astounding yourself.



Next Week

Procrastination, accountability and beliefs

RECAP

Procrastination – what is it?

Traits of procrastinators

Steps for challenging it

Mental Attitude

Working with the unconscious mind to challenge it

Examining areas you have been procrastinating on

Self- awareness about your procrastination strategy and how to challenge it

Tips for working with procrastination

Personal Exercise

Personal Development Exercise (s)

- Inner check (self-testing)
- Questions to support your self-awareness
- Checking your goal
- 12 steps to move on from procrastination
- Tips from past clients
- Your areas of procrastination
- Clarity regarding how to handle procrastination



Personal development work between sessions

WEEK TEN exercises to do at home in between sessions

Find a coach or trusted friend who you can report to on your actions and successes

I will ask to support my work on this course

Put these questions onto cards and place them around the house where you can see them, place one in your bedroom (to remind you what you are doing when you wake up in the morning), one in the kitchen where you can easily see it, one in your car and another in your diary. Put the cards anywhere that will remind you of the questions you are to think about this week to help move you forwards.

Questions to think about this week:

In order to continue the self-awareness work I have started here **as I go through my week, I will ask myself the following questions as often as I can every day** and just notice how I operate so I can choose to change anything that is not helpful for me.

Questions to think about and ask yourself each day when you wake up and throughout the coming week:

- How much do I want to beat procrastination on a scale of 1 - 10?
- If I was less aware, which actions might I ignore or procrastinate about today?
- Which of them would it be great to get out of the way or done?
- Now I know what they are, which of them will I act upon first? Second?
- I notice when I procrastinate and challenge it IMMEDIATELY, I then take action
- By the end of today I will have taken action on areas

Optional Extra

Research or read more around this subject and then commit to act upon what you read!

- Do the exercises you have experienced during this session for at least two or three more 'things' you have been procrastinating about and apply the same lessons to them.



WEEKLY ACTION PLAN

Where are you with your goal(s) now?

Write a sentence saying what you think about the goal you are working on right now.

On a scale of 1 - 10 how much do you want to achieve this goal(s)?

What three steps could you take this week to help move you closer to your goal?

Write them below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What have you done over the past weeks to take you closer to your goal? Write your progress to date here.

