



WEEK ELEVEN

Procrastination & Accountability

HANDOUTS

AND

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
WORK

You are not your current circumstances they are a reflection of your current
circumstances and set of mind



WEEK11

Recap Questions from previous week (s)

Set aside at least **30 minutes** to do the following exercise it will build on earlier exercises. This exercise may take between 30 – 90 minutes.

1. How did you get on with your weekly questions?
2. What insights did you have around procrastination?
3. Were there any particular times you found you were more likely to procrastinate or make excuses?
4. If so what did you do to change that behaviour in order to move towards achieving your goals?
5. What evidence have you to show you broke old habits around procrastination during the week?
6. Did resistance to changing show up during the week? If so what did you do about it?
7. When you looked at your goal(s) and the gap from where you are to where you want to be, what steps did you identify needed to be taken to move you on?
8. Have you started to notice any changes? If yes note them down now...
9. What one thing did you learn from last week's lesson?
10. What change/progress have you made or noticed during the week? Have you congratulated yourself or celebrated in some way?



As we approach week 11, if you have been following this programme regularly, you will probably have a much better idea of how you operate, what your behaviours and patterns are and how they can support you or hinder you when goal setting.

Are you keeping up with the lessons? If not, what do you need to do to keep on top of them?

“If you knew time as well as I do, you wouldn’t talk about wasting it.”
Mad Hatter to Alice in through the looking glass

When working with procrastination you will find it essential to learn how to control your negative thoughts. If your mind says or shouts that you can't do something, refuse to listen to it. If you have a lot of inner dialogue, here is a great exercise to help you deal with it.

Get in touch with where your mind chatter or inner dialogue ‘lives’ is it in your head or somewhere else?

- Notice if it has a weight, if so, is it a heavy or light?*(*this is the programme*)
- What colour is the mind chatter? Is it light or dark?
- How does it move? Slow, fast, up and down, clockwise, anti-clockwise?
- Pay attention to the messages it is giving you

Now that you know what it is like, tell it to STOP! However it was moving, imagine a large wooden spoon has been introduced to the picture, now start to stir the spoon in the opposite direction to the way your thoughts were moving a moment ago, (ie if it was up and down have it go down and up, clockwise – have it move anti-clockwise). This should feel slower and you may have to really think in order to be able to do it. This exercise breaks your old patterns, it is one you can call on anywhere you are at any time it takes seconds to do and is very effective. Give it a go now.

Pick something that causes your mind chatter to go into overload

Check out the mental programme*

Interrupt it by changing its direction

Go back and notice if the mind chatter around procrastination is the same as before you started or if it has changed. (Often the initial programme* will have changed too – so notice as this is a great way to measure any change, perhaps it feels lighter in weight and colour, perhaps the mind chatter seems slower or more settled, notice and write it down). Now continue with the task you wanted to work on before the mind chatter started up the old procrastination programme.



Breaking habits can be easy when you decide you really want to break them. Having made that decision you now need to **PRACTISE** what you want instead, often. You are so good at your old habits because you've practiced them so often.

If you want to create new ones you will have to:

- Identify the old one
- Interrupt it
- Put something new in its place
- Practice that new habit lots and lots of times – consciously, until it becomes an unconscious behaviour

Of course I get that it isn't going to be easy for everyone, but when you break your first procrastination habit, you'll be so pleased with yourself, you'll find it's worth all the effort you've put in. Remember what we covered last week? Many people procrastinate because of fear, uncertainty or attitude, maybe they've made up their minds that they're going to fail or it's too difficult to change. If over the past week you found yourself thinking like that, make a note to challenge that kind of thinking if it crops up again this week.

- Write down anything you have noticed over the past week now.

In order to change anything that is holding you back it's important to take responsibility for what's within your control (remember cause and effect). Coaching and having a coach can help, as it supports clients by asking them questions they may not have thought about before or questions no-one has ever asked them before. In order to develop your personal power you'll need to learn how to take responsibility for your goals, choices and actions along with becoming accountable, take action and step into your personal power.

Remember, we have a choice. Individuals are able to make changes to their lives when they decide they want to. As already mentioned, you **can** change bad habits by wanting to! And you can defeat the habit of procrastination by believing you can.

Procrastination causes anxiety and worry and each time you avoid doing something because of fear of failure, you knock your self-esteem and your confidence.

As mentioned last week, there is one main way to overcome procrastination and that is to get on and do the task or goal. So far everything we are doing in this programme is aimed at helping you to get prepared for action, we've addressed goal setting, getting clear about your fears, you've got tools to identify and then handle fears so that when you take action (which you probably are by now) you can start to realize that you are no longer fearful (because of all the planning, preparation and practice) you are in fact, excited!



I remember hearing that the difference between fear and excitement is breath. When we are scared we drop our bodies and hold our breath or hyper ventilate, when we are excited we stand differently and breathe! Give it a go. Think about how you sit, stand, hold your body and breathe when you are fearful.

Do it now.

Notice anything else going on in your body. Is your heart beating faster? Have you got goose-bumps on your arms? Really pay attention to the physical programmes that run you when you think about certain tasks, goals or fears.

Write your observations down:

When I am fearful, I notice that I sit or stand

My head/eyes are looking (up/down?)

My breathing is

My heart beat is (faster/slower?)

I notice I feel in my

I am saying to myself.....

What else do I notice?

Now do the same exercise for excitement:

When I am excited, I noticed that I sit or stand

My head/eyes are looking (up/down?)

My breathing is

My heart beat is (faster/slower?)

I notice I feel in my

I am saying to myself.....

What else do I notice?

When I did this exercise I noticed that apart from the way I held myself, what I was saying to myself and where I looked everything else was the same. My breathing was the same when fearful and when excited, as was my heartbeat, I had goose bumps and the feeling in my chest moving up to my throat was exactly the same when in both states. The main difference was that when I was fearful I also felt tearful, my eyes were looking down right and my shoulders were slumped. I was saying negative things to myself and shaking my head.



When excited, I noticed that I felt scared but I was smiling (nervously), breathing deeply, looking up, head high, saying reassuring things to myself and I changed from head shaking to head nodding.

So what can you do with such information? Well as we have already covered, when you know how you behave when fearful and you know how you behave when in a more positive state, you can change your body language, challenge your inner dialogue, re-adjust it, change where your focus is, hold your head high and move into a more powerful state. If you haven't given this a go yet, I urge you to do so **now**. It really works and can make the difference between you taking action and not taking action. Stop now and try it.

Consider reading Susan Jeffers book "Feel the fear and do it anyway". When you face fear and 'do it anyway', you expand yourself by stepping out of your comfort zone and into your stretch zone, such actions give you a big confidence boost. By taking action, (and it is ok for it to be a small step – it doesn't have to be huge) the very thing you feared or procrastinated about, will have you smiling or laughing about in the very near future, as the imaginary fears that kept you from taking action in the past suddenly shrink or disappear. And as you already know, you can do something about it today!

Here are the last set of tips on this subject to support you, which ones will you choose to do to move you forwards on any of your goals that you are procrastinating about?

- Get clear about your goal and end date
- Break it down into manageable chunks
- Prioritise it
- Set realistic time frames
- Set up measurements to regularly see how far you have travelled (a coach will support you with these steps)
- Give yourself permission to adjust your goals or the time frame if needed
- Find someone to encourage and support you as well as your coach
- Use affirmations and past experiences to support you in moving on (remember wk9)
- Take (at least) one action doing something you dislike doing each day 4-5 days per week
- Be honest about how you spend your time
- Get up earlier and have 1-2 hours of undisturbed time



- Change your mindset/attitude/body language/mind chatter/old behaviours/program
- Get organized with a filing system that works
- When you have planned, prioritized and practiced – Stop thinking and get on and do it!
- At work or home, keeping a log, journal or diary for a few days or ideally up to a week, around how you spend your time can be very helpful in identifying where you are wasting time.
- Use a diary to monitor your successes (and learning's)
- When you have completed a task or job reward yourself
("The idle man does not know what it is to enjoy rest." Albert Einstein)
- Eliminate unnecessary interruptions and distractions
- Focus on the task in hand and know when it is time to move onto the next
- Use Stephen Covey's important/non-important/urgent/non urgent quadrant and focus on what is necessary/essential rather than 'just filling your day'
- Get support where possible – especially for big or difficult tasks
- Delegate anything you are able to – work to your strengths
- Remember – successful people make more 'mistakes' than unsuccessful people ("Ships are safe in harbours – but that is not what ships were built do to")

Remember, most of the things we put off are simple and quick to do, especially if we break them down into manageable bite-sized pieces. Stop causing yourself unnecessary stress and anxiety by wasting time and lying to yourself.

Over the past 20 years I've noticed many individuals I personally worked with (prior to changing my career to coaching),wasting time on the internet doing personal 'stuff', grumbling about tasks they didn't want to do, talking about them, putting them off and then feeling stressed and overwhelmed as deadlines appeared. Research shares that up to a 1/3 of time can be wasted (in offices) putting off doing something or not planning ahead. As the saying goes "failing to plan is planning to fail".

Check with yourself, do you really want to stop procrastinating?

You may say you want to stop but where is the evidence that this is true? Are you getting some secondary gain from holding onto this bad habit? No doubt you don't want the consequences of continuing to procrastinate any more than a smoker doesn't want to get lung cancer.



So decide now:

- What are the consequences of continuing to procrastinate on your current chosen goals?
- What's going on?
- Do you feel bad or guilty when you procrastinate?
- If so how come that doesn't motivate you?
- What would?
- Have there been times when you haven't procrastinated? If so what caused you to take action?
- How did that make you feel about yourself?
- What would you need to do to make this your new way of operating?

Answer the above questions before moving on

“Procrastination is like a credit card: It's a lot of fun until you get the bill.”

Christopher Parker

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability relates to and supports measurable things like goals and objectives, whether you are a coach or on a personal development journey, it is important to become aware of as well as clear about, personal accountability and commitment when working on goals.

When looking to achieve a goal, it is important to observe your patterns and bad behaviour and change any that are not supportive as you take steps towards achieving your goal. All too often bad behaviour is overlooked by colleagues and partners who turn a blind eye to it, hoping it will go away, or that someone else will deal with it. Step up, identify it or if you can't find someone who can help you,, challenge it and then commit to taking better actions in future. Remember also, to notice and challenge any negative self-talk and find a friend or coach who will hold you accountable to the actions you state you will take on a weekly basis. All of this will support you in becoming more accountable and responsible and thus move you towards your desired optimum future.



EXERCISE

Select one of your goals then answer the following questions before moving on:

- What personal 'bad' behaviour are you aware of when thinking about this goal?
- How do you rate yourself in terms of self-awareness with this goal? 1/10
- How do you rate yourself in terms of taking action(s) that move you on?
- What accountability and responsibility are you prepared to take in order to move forwards?
- How and by whom would you like to be challenged if your 'bad' behaviour shows up?
- What commitment will you make right now to challenging and changing it?
- What one thing will you start to be more accountable for as of now?

When clear communication and common goals drift or are lost, small things are let go, when this happens it may lead to larger problems in the future. A great example is a captain of a ship drifting a few degrees off course at sea. Initially there's no problem, but over the course of the next 24 hours, because he didn't correct his drift, the eventual destination will be way off course, maybe hundreds of miles away from where he originally intended to go.

So how does this affect you? When you decide you want something tangible or intangible and commit by setting a goal, you plant your stake in the ground and create a possible bright future. Initially your motivation is high, your attitude is good, you are keen to act, you take regular and consistent actions; you're on track and focused on your outcome and achieve victories.

- This exalted state may last a few days or even a week or two, but then gradually something gets in the way of your focus and takes you off track but you promise you will get back on track tomorrow.
- You may notice your conscious mind wants one thing whereas your unconscious mind is pulling you in a different direction. (Parts Separation – NLP “part of me knows... but the other part of me says....”)



- Or maybe something important comes up and you have to postpone your new actions or commitments, but only for today of course.
- You feel tired or can't be bothered one day so you give yourself the day or afternoon or morning off – you'll do twice as much tomorrow.

Do you get the picture? And each time you let something small go unnoticed or un-challenged, thinking it won't matter too much, it takes you a degree or two off course. And as more little things are let go and more excuses are made, as the weeks and months pass by you get to the point where you end up asking yourself something like: "how did I end up here? This isn't what I had in mind one, five, ten or more years ago!" Acknowledging this, bringing it to your sessions and learning how to treat yourself kindly will in turn help you to develop and grow, which in turn will have a positive impact on those who you surround yourself with.

"If you don't know where you're going, any path will do and you won't know when you get there" – old proverb

A congruent and accountable individual will notice when they are going off track and will be honest with themselves. Ideally they will have a coach who will help them by asking questions to identify the reality of the situation, challenge them supportively and then help get them back on track, altering their course consciously if appropriate, taking smaller steps if necessary, leaping ahead every now and then if the course demands it and regularly taking action in order to get them working towards the purpose or goal that was agreed at the start of their work together.



EXERCISE

What are your goals for this programme?

What is your mission statement that will support you in achieving your goal(s)?

What are your core values in this area of your life?

Do you notice or know when you or others are not honouring them?

If yes state how.

If no, what can you do about this? (Your coach will be able to help you with this)

How do you communicate with and about yourself? (Mind chatter)

Select one goal you are committed to achieving. What signs will you notice that will tell you if you start to go 'off track'? (Excuses, procrastination, fear etc)

What will you do to challenge them?

How will you get yourself back on track and motivated?

Are your conscious mind and unconscious mind working together in harmony on your current goals?

Are you ever aware that part of you wants something but another part doesn't?

What do you do to show yourself respect?

Exactly what does the word respect mean to you?

How do you show others respect?

How well do you look after yourself?

State exactly what you do and how often you do it to make you feel good about yourself?



This is an excellent exercise to help you get clear about how you can start to take responsibility and accountability for your outcomes.

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King

Many authors I have read talk about how we have moved into a period of quick fixes and blame. We look to alleviate ourselves of responsibility when something isn't working, it is someone else's fault, it is circumstances beyond our control, it is the government to blame or the company we work for or our colleagues, friends or family. Anyone but us! Coaching and NLP can help us to recognize that by looking at ourselves and our behaviours and patterns, change can really take place. (We looked at patterns and behaviours early on in the programme)

If you want to achieve the goals and objectives you listed at the start of this programme, you'll need to remind yourself (ideally daily) of what you want to hold yourself accountable for. To keep you on track consider the following, start noticing:

- if you blame others or conditions for what's not working
- if you catch yourself making excuses
- if you hear yourself telling stories
- if old ways or patterns creep in and challenge them immediately

Use your coach or buddy to become self-aware and move forwards. Welcome their support and how they hold you accountable to the actions you agree to take each session. Accountability is paramount to your success, without it you will not be able to achieve your goals or outcomes.

No-one can make you successful at weight loss, business, relationships, wealth or any other goal, only you can decide how and if you will succeed at your goals. Take responsibility for your personal happiness, identify fears, past events and emotions that drain your energy or rob you of feeling good. This programme and wonderful techniques such as NLP, TFT and Reflective Repatterning, can be very supportive alongside coaching, in helping you to move on.

If something goes wrong be it a conversation or task, look inwardly for solutions and answers. Consider the learning cycle to help you.



- Stage 1 - you have an experience
- Stage 2 - reflect - you might want to understand why it happened, if you do, get clear then move onto stage 3 (if you choose to stay at stage 2 which so many individuals do, you will remain in victim mode and start to look for someone to blame other than yourself. You may also get trapped in negative feelings and emotions and end up in a viscous cycle of mind chatter and feelings, perhaps feeling victimized and looking for someone else to blame rather than taking responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and actions)
- Stage 3 - check out the facts, ideally leaving the emotions to one side. How did the outcome you ended up with happen? What were the reasons it ended this way? What were you responsible for? If you have done any NLP you will know about perceptual positions which is a great way to understand different points of view you can search for NLP encyclopaedia - perceptual positions if you want to find out more about this – (if you get stuck at stage 3 there is a good chance you will feel confused – hurt –wounded or other emotions – again this stage can lead to blame and victim mode if you don't complete the cycle)
- Stage 4 - Now you have more knowledge about the event, ask “what can I learn from this?” by moving onto this stage, you can recognise the learning's and what you want to do with them. By doing this you may start to realize there are no failures – only lessons. The only failure is not learning anything! This stage helps you prepare for the future, if this same situation should happen again you can ask yourself, “What would I do differently? How would I handle the same event next time? What could I do to improve the situation? ”
- Write out your goals and ensure you have clear targets for each of them
- Read them daily and check your actions are aligned with your values, standards and life plan
- Think about what you really want then promise yourself you get it
- Ensure you can keep those promises then go ahead and take the necessary actions.
- What boundaries do you have in place for yourself and others? How do you protect those boundaries so you don't make excuses by letting yourself get distracted?

Use this information as a means for you to move to action rather than suffer guilt.



To end this session on procrastination and accountability remember that by staying true to yourself, particularly when faced with challenges or difficulties, will help break old procrastination patterns, improve your confidence and self-esteem and move you from a place of victim to one of choice. It will free up your physical and creative energy, move you from your comfort into your stretch zone and support you in growing and developing your strengths and self-belief.

Next Week

Fear

Managing and understanding it

RECAP

Check your mind chatter

Identify your mind programme

Techniques to break your 'old state'

Personal Development Exercise (s)

- Pattern interrupt (wooden spoon)
- Practise and Habit change formula
- Notice any procrastination behaviour from last week
- Visualisation
- Checking in with fear v excitement
- Change your state from fear to excitement



Personal development work between sessions

WEEK ELEVEN 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. (Remember last week's questions as well as this weeks)

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.

- This week, how much do I want to beat procrastination on a scale of 1 – 10?
- As I tackle my tasks today how do I know I expect to be successful?
- What tells me I will give today's tasks my best efforts?
- Today, how often do I intend to believe myself completing my tasks with ease?
- If any of my tasks appear difficult and I feel like giving up, what will I say to myself to remain motivated?
- How will I challenge or replace negative mind chatter with positive thoughts?
- Do I want to go on living with negative thoughts, doubts, and fears?
- Are there any benefits of clinging to my old negative attitude?
- How do I know I believe I can change my old behaviours?
- Who can I ask today to support my changes?
- How can I practice responsibility and accountability today?
- By the end of today I will have taken action on



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.

Optional Extra

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

