

Take Action in the Face of Fear

My biggest challenge is procrastination. I am currently unemployed, looking for a job, and the days just seem to get away from me and I don't accomplish anything. Help!

One of the biggest challenges about time management for those who are unemployed, self-employed or self-directed, is the motivation to take action when faced with fear.

Procrastination is very often a result of fear of the result of what might or will happen when we take the action. Fear of interviewing or applying for a job - What if they don't like me? What if I am rejected again? What if I get hired and I can't really do the job? What if I don't make their standards of performance? We aren't used to identifying it because in business, we don't often talk about emotions. The bottom line is fear, somewhere on the spectrum of concern to worry to anxiety to terror.

The usual response to fear is flight, fight or freeze. Most often, when the fear comes from within, we flee or freeze. We don't usually fight against ourselves. We find something else to do, some other busyness to occupy our time, anything but the task we most need to do.

My best advice to the procrastinator is to ask the question "What am I afraid of?" and then tell a trusted advisor, your coach or a good friend what's going on. They can help you walk through the fear by identifying it and the possible outcomes. Almost 95% of what we fear or worry about never comes to pass! When we know what we are avoiding and why, we can take simple, small steps to face it and accomplish our goals.

1) Name your fear - If I do this task, what I think will happen is....And then what will happen is..... And then what will happen is.....- until you hit the bottom line fear

- 2) Do a reality check - What is the likelihood the last outcome will actually happen?
- 3) Do a resourcefulness check - And if it did happen, what would I do then?
- 4) Do a reference check - If it did happen, what would that really mean about me, if anything?
- 5) Check the past - Has that outcome ever happened before? What impact did it have in the bigger picture of my life?
- 6) Future pace three, five, ten years out - what impact would that outcome have on my life three, five, ten years from now? Would it truly make any difference?
- 7) Present time - What one simple action could I take right now that would move me out of apathy or inaction into taking control of the situation?
- 8) Do It!!!
- 9) Still in that energy of action and after successfully completing one step, make a list of what you need to do next and when you will do it.
- 10) Communicate that list to your coach, advisor or friend and set up accountability support for continuing to take action.

This process will move you into action and a sense of accomplishment, boosting your self-image and motivation. Many time management experts tell you to tackle the big steps first. I say take small steps first, establish a sense of accomplishment and success, which will feed a sense of momentum and power. Then you can face the fear with courage and confidence.

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PATRICIA CLASON has been a professional speaker, trainer, consultant and writer for over twenty-five years. She is now the Director of the Center for Creative Learning which offers programs for personal and professional development at offices in Milwaukee and Madison, and Detroit. She has

traveled across the continent doing over 3,000 presentations for corporations, associations, government agencies and non-profit organizations since 1975. Patricia has written many articles, training programs and personal growth seminars and has been a sought-after guest for radio and television.

The focus of her work is on alternative methods of teaching and learning that produce high quality results. Her search for the best in the technology of human resource development has taken her as a student on many adventures through traditional and some not-so-traditional training programs.

Currently she is the owner of three businesses, the Center for Creative Learning, Great Ideas! Speakers Bureau and Accountability Coaching Associates. As a consultant and coach to other businesses, large and small, in the areas of start-up, marketing, and management skills, she guides people to manifesting their dreams. Her articles often appear in business and trade publications and her column Ask the Coach appears monthly in the Employment Times.

To keep all this together, and still have time for her family and herself, Patricia must truly practice what she teaches in the areas of communication, time management, people management and motivation.

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