

MINDFULNESS OF PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is a type of anxiety and is linked to health issues including cardiovascular disease. The anxiety caused by putting things off is hard on your body, your mind, and your emotions. Use these procrastination hacks to change the way you avoid tasks and activities. Take notes on the ways you will use the skill in your daily life, or journal about your experiences afterward.

Break Down Activity into Smaller Parts – Make a list of the steps needed to achieve your goal. Examples include, looking up a phone number, picking up dirty clothes, or identifying where to buy an item. Then, commit to attending to one or two of the steps per day or per week.

Notes:

10-minute Commitment – Instead of considering you need to complete a task, instead commit to working on the task for only ten minutes. If you feel motivated to continue past the ten minutes, feel free to do so. However, keep in mind you are not committed to any longer than 10 minutes

Notes:

Somatic Work – Close your eyes and notice where in your body feels uncomfortable when you think about starting the task. What does it feel like? Imagine this feeling in a visual way. What color is it? What shape is it? What movement does it create? With your eyes closed, move your hand to mirror the movement and gradually slow down the pace of your hand movement. Breathe into the image in a way that feels accepting and not rejecting. If the image and discomfort persist, ask what does your discomfort need?

Notes:

What Drives Your Avoidance – Are you avoiding a task because you have doubt? Do you doubt yourself, doubt others or doubt the process? Are you avoiding a task because of fear? Are you afraid of something physical? Are you afraid of causing a disruption in your day or routine? Are you afraid of feeling an uncomfortable emotion or enter an unsatisfying mental state? Are you avoiding a task because of past trauma? Is it bringing up a “familiar” state (i.e. feeling rejected or not good enough). Are you in emotional pain? Does starting the task make you feel vulnerable physically, emotionally or mentally? Are you avoiding the task because you are an optimist? Do you have a “fantasy” that everything will work itself out? Do you get a thrill from the intensity? Do you like going into situations “blind”, not knowing if it will fall together or not?

Notes:

Opposite Action – Opposite action is a *Dialectical Behavior Therapy* skill. First, make a commitment to practice this skill for a certain amount of time. Perhaps 30 minutes, an evening or a day. Identify the action you are most resistant to doing in the moment... and do it. Use mindfulness to notice how you feel afterward. Do you feel relieved, motivated, or inspired in some way?

Notes:

Self-Compassion – Validate your procrastination. “It is understandable I am procrastinating because I have trouble believing in my abilities.” “It is understandable I am procrastinating because I dread boredom .” Next, say something kind to yourself, “Even though I am struggling to get started I am loved, worthy, connected and a good person.” Or, “I care about the difficult feelings my procrastination is causing me in this moment.”

Notes:

Decrease Overwhelm – Overwhelm means too much and is an important message you are receiving. First, identify what is too much. For example, too many tasks, too many emotionally charged situations, too many decisions, too many personalities to handle, etc. Then validate your feelings of overwhelm and see what you can take off your plate even if this simply means you stop thinking about it and processing it for the rest of the day.

Notes:

2-minute Launch – Commit to a daily practice of spending only two minutes on the activity. This might only be enough time to walk through the gym, set up supplies, read one page in a book or meditate for two minutes. And then at the end of the two minutes, force yourself to stop. Continue with this daily practice for a predetermined amount of time, such as a week or a month. Allow this to lay a foundation for you to truly begin work on the task at the end of the time period.

Notes: