

Reasons you Procrastinate, **and How to Snap Out of It** **Monday Call, September 21, 2014**

- Mannatech Now – Tuesday 7:30 Pm CT Presidentials Kevin Robbins and Merri-jo Hillaker at Mannatech Corp Offices or www.mannatechlive.com
- Building Champions Call – Saturday 10 AM CT - 800-768-2983 – Access code 4717417#
- Mannatech Leadership Event – November 7-10 - Frisco, TX... You need to be there. Registration is open... don't wait to register. www.events.mannatech.com
- Last Week of BP 10

An article by Rieva Lesonsky

Putting off the critical steps in life (whether Mannatech, or other) will never serve you.

What are some of the classic items we "put off" in network marketing:

- 1) follow up
- 2) call backs
- 3) calls
- 4) sending out information
- 5) answering emails
- 6) responding to downline

Costly? Not just costly, but deadly to your growth and others' perception of you as a leader.

7 Reasons:

1. Fear

a. Fear of failure

- 1) If you never try, you can't fail. If you don't follow up, you don't risk getting a NO (but you do guarantee it!).

b. Fear of Success

- 1) If you get that new dynamic person signed up, then what do I do with them?
- 2) If my business grows big, I will have to show up as a leader...
- 3) If my business really thrives, I will have no time for my family, I might have to give a speech on stage at a national convention...

3) What if I start making \$10,000+ per month? Then I will need to be responsible for what I do with it.

c. What to do?

- 1) First, figure out exactly what it is you are afraid of.
- 2) Is the fear unfounded?
- 3) It is telling you something...listen carefully.
- 4) Work through a competing commitment exercise

2. Burnout

a. Maybe you are putting something off because you are fried.

If entrepreneurship is starting to feel like a grind, figure out how to freshen it up.

- 1) Can you do it differently?
- 2) Try breaking up the tasks.
- 3) Try finding accountability partners.
- 4) Find a mentor.
- 5) Read and study new ideas to freshen up approach.

b. Big task you don't want to tackle? (revamp business plan, start new prospecting campaign, whatever)

- 1) Start listening to tapes of successful people, inspirational "food."
- 2) Upline counseling session from someone you respect.
- 3) Or perhaps take a day to just totally "blow off" on something you love.

3. Incompetence

a. Is the project outside your comfort zone? That causes delay.

- 1) Either delegate the project if you can (give to a competent downline, ask for help from upline leader, even get help from crossline)
- 2) Build your own competence with respect to the action.
The skills of networking are well known; focus on what you are lacking and spend a day on that skill. Become better...and never stop learning to be better. It is a never ending task in life.
- 3) If it is an outside skill, delegate to someone else and let them get it done! (like building a website, marketing materials, building contact manager system, etc.)

4. Distractions

a. Notice when we don't want to do something, there are always "distractions". Why? We allow them or even worse, create them.
Temptations: facebook, TV, fridge, family, house duties, neighbors,

"drama", sports, etc. You know what yours are.

- 1) Set specific time to work on project. Discipline the work day. Build a time schedule with definitive items in it and JUST DO IT.

5. Temporary ADD

a. When you have something you need to do, and your brain just starts buzzing with lots of other things to do...

- 1) You need a brain dump. Take time to write everything going on in your brain on a piece of paper. This is the way you know you won't forget anything, and then you can clear the path to do what needs to get done.

6. Complexity

a. Project, new prospecting technique, new product, new way to build your downline, etc. is difficult to understand.

- 1) Break it down into small pieces
- 2) Open yourself up to trainings by others to support your piece by piece understanding
- 3) Complete at least one "step" per day until you understand
Once you take a step, momentum will usually carry you forward.

7. Emotion

a. Does a situation cause you to have to have to deal with a person you don't really like, or care to interact with?

- 1) Face the emotion that is making you stall.
- 2) Cost benefit analysis...why give that person power over your life?
- 3) If you think being uncomfortable is too tough, you will never succeed
- 4) Grow yourself out of this kind of experience...it is a WIN WIN.

Learning to work with people you don't see eye to eye with is incredibly empowering. "Sharpen the saw" as Stephen Covey would say.

Attached is a piece I used to use in my Pathway to Presidential class. It is terrific in understanding Procrastination, the price we pay, and how to overcome. It is an accumulation of information from some brilliant minds, so if you perceive this as an issue, use this and get over it TODAY (in other words, nothing worse than procrastinating on getting over procrastinating!)

Competing Commitment Exercise Worksheet

| What goals are you committed to achieving? (In the next 12 months) | What actions or inactions are holding you back from achieving these goals? | What commitment do you have behind the actions or inactions in column 2? | Compare the commitment in column 1 to column 3. Where is the inconsistency? How will you rectify it? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

Weekly Action Planner

Time is our only limited asset. How are you utilizing yours?

Step 1: Cross out all times you can't do Mannatech (i.e. church, family, other commitments).

Step 2: Cross out all times you choose not to do Mannatech (date night, devotional, etc...).

Step 3: Fill in slots you commit to dedicate to the necessary activities to grow your Mannatech business. Know that "Lifestyle Marketing" should be happening everywhere you go (grocery shopping, working out, office depot, post office, etc...).

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| 8:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 AM | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 2:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 3:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 4:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 5:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 6:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 7:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |

- Activities:**
1. Prospecting: find 2-5 new contacts every day
 2. Presentations: Do 2-5 every week
 3. Training: Support new associates with learning/doing the business
 4. Customer Service: touch base with your Members/Customers
 5. Personal Growth: commit 1-5 hours of reading, training, seminars to grow yourself both in the skills needed to be successful in this business, as well as personal development.

Overcoming Procrastination

Discussion

Procrastination is a complex psychological behavior that affects everyone to some degree or another. With some it can be a minor problem; with others it is a source of considerable stress and anxiety. Procrastination is only remotely related to time management, (procrastinators often know exactly what they should be doing, even if they cannot do it), which is why very detailed schedules usually are no help.

Characteristics

The procrastinator is often remarkably optimistic about his ability to complete a task on a tight deadline; this is usually accompanied by expressions of reassurance that everything is under control. (Therefore, there is no need to start.) For example, he may estimate that a paper will take only five days to write; he has fifteen days; there is plenty of time; no need to start. Lulled by a false sense of security, time passes. At some point, he crosses over an imaginary starting time and suddenly realizes, "Oh no! - I am not in control! There isn't enough time!"

At this point, considerable effort is directed towards completing the task, and work progresses. This sudden spurt of energy is the source of the erroneous feeling that "I only work well under pressure." Actually, at this point you are making progress only because you haven't any choice. Your back is against the wall and there are no alternatives. Progress is being made, but you have lost your freedom.

Barely completed in time, the paper may actually earn a fairly good grade; whereupon the student experiences mixed feelings: pride of accomplishment (sort-of), scorn for the professor who cannot recognize substandard work, and guilt for getting an undeserved grade. But the net result is reinforcement: the procrastinator is rewarded positively for his poor behavior. ("Look what a decent grade I got after all!") As a result, the counterproductive behavior is repeated over and over again.

Positive reinforcement for delay (a good grade) is a principal contributor to continued procrastination.

Other Characteristics

- Low Self-Confidence - The procrastinator may struggle with feelings of low self-confidence and low self-esteem. He may insist upon a high level of performance even though he may feel inadequate or incapable of actually achieving that level.
- I'm Too Busy - Procrastination may be used to call attention to how busy he is. "Obviously I cannot do such and such because my affairs are so complicated and so demanding. That is why I am late, etc." The procrastinator may even spend considerable time justifying his reasons, time that could be spent doing the work.
- Stubbornness - Procrastination may be used as an expression of stubbornness or pride: "Don't think you can push me around. I will do it when I'm good and ready."

- Manipulation - Procrastination may be used to control or manipulate the behavior of others. "They cannot start if I am not there." Let's face it: deliberate delay drives others crazy.
- Coping with Pressures - Procrastination is often truly difficult to eradicate since the delay behavior has become a method of coping with day-to-day pressures and experiences. Obviously if one is cured, others will put new demands and expectations upon you. It's easier to have an excuse, to delay, to put off.
- A Frustrated Victim - The procrastinator often feels like a victim: he cannot understand his behavior or why he cannot get work done like others. The whole thing is a frustrating mystery. The reasons for his behavior are hidden from him.

Benefits of Overcoming Procrastination

What are the benefits of overcoming procrastination? Peace of mind, a feeling of strength and purpose, and healthy feeling of being in charge of your life. While procrastination makes you feel weak, useless, and helpless, taking charge of your life will make you feel strong, competent, and capable. You will experience increased personal freedom!

Four *Simple* Reasons for Procrastination

1. *Difficult* - the task seems hard to do; we naturally tend to avoid difficult things in favor of those which seem easy to us.
2. *Time-consuming* - the task will take large blocks of time, and large blocks of time are unavailable until the weekend.
3. *Lack of knowledge or skills* - no one wants to make mistakes, so wait until you learn how before you start.
4. *Fears* - everyone will know how you screwed up.

The simple cure? Do everything opposite. Tell yourself: this isn't so hard, it won't take long, and I am sure that I know how to do it, or that I can learn while I'm doing it. And no one else really cares because they are all so busy with their own problems.

Four *Complex* Reasons for Procrastination

1. **Perfectionism** - unrealistically high expectations or standards. Everything must go completely right. It may either imposed or self-imposed. The perfectionist is long on criticism and short on praise.
 - It creates a high degree of dissatisfaction and frustration because seldom is anything accomplished that is completely acceptable the very first time. The perfectionist nitpicks it to death.
 - A perfectionist may delay in starting a project because he feels overwhelmed by the sheer amount of energy it will take to criticize and nitpick something, and all the frustration it will generate in the process.
 - The words should, ought, must, have to occur frequently in the person's conversation. (I should get straight A's; I must do everything right the first time, etc.) "If you can't do it right, don't do it at all."

- The desire to have everything absolutely perfect may mask problems of self-esteem and self-confidence.

How to resolve: (1) try self-reassurance that this effort or version will be good enough, (2) make an effort to praise what you have done, (3) it's impossible to eradicate all mistakes, and (4) you have undoubtedly found all the fatal errors by now. Finally, remind yourself that great writers, poets, artists at one time or another completed their work; therefore, it will be okay to say that yours is done also.

2. **Anger/Hostility** - if we are unhappy with someone, we'll often withhold our best efforts. For example, if you are upset with a professor, you are likely to delay in starting a demanding project as a way of "getting even." But you are the one who loses; you are the one with the low grade.

How to resolve: Determine that you are the one who is feeling upset and see how your actions will actually harm you in the long run. You are not going to let how you feel about a particular class stand in the way of your personal future, are you?

3. **Low Frustration Tolerance** - circumstances overwhelm you easily; you find situations radically intolerable and terribly unfair. Frustration is characterized by whining and complaining, and such phrases as "it isn't fair," "this is too hard," and "no one else has to," etc. Feeling the way you do, it seems reasonable to "put it off" until you feel better about doing the work. The trouble is, you feel just as frustrated the next day.

How to resolve: the more you want something and can't have it, the greater your level of frustration. (1) Get help from someone who can show you how to solve the problem; (2) learn how to temporarily postpone your desires. Most of the time, you will eventually get what you want.

4. **Self-Downing** - this happens when you continually minimize your own skills and abilities and express doubt about your ability to succeed. A person who habitually puts himself down tends to disbelieve himself even when he is successful: it was "just dumb luck." In addition, he may also find it hard to accept praise and compliments for work performed - false modesty. ("Wow, you did so well on the exam!" "Oh, I just lucked out; I really didn't know it all that well.")

The trouble with self-downing is that, given a long enough time, the person will actually come to believe that he is incapable of certain levels of achievement.

Self-downing results in procrastination because the person who is uncomfortable with success will seek ways to become less successful and less visible. Turn in that important quarterly report late, and soon success will fade. ("Why did they fire you?" "I told them all along I couldn't sustain the pace, and see! I was right. I can't work at that level.")

How to resolve: (1) practice accepting compliments about your work performance by simply saying "Thank you." (2) Figure out why you feel uncomfortable with success.

The Inner Workings of Procrastination

A = Activating Event. The activating event is whatever you are putting off, such as studying, tests or unpleasant tasks.

B = Belief System. These are your "hidden" feelings about the task; your feelings govern your motivation. If you have negative feelings, you will tend to put off or delay. These feelings control your response.

C = Consequence. This is what we actually do. There are two approaches: rational and irrational. A rational response is "I don't like writing papers at all, but I had better get going on it anyway." An irrational approach is "I hate writing papers, and even though it's due next week, I'll start it later."

The fact is, all tasks are really neutral. Examine your belief system, understand why you dislike the task, then change your way of thinking.

Steps to the Cure

1. Realize you are delaying something unnecessarily.
2. Discover the real reasons for your delay. List them.
3. Dispute those real reasons and overcome them. Be vigorous.
4. Begin the task.

Practice What You've Learned

- Think of one thing you are currently procrastinating in, and write it on the line below. It might be personal, school or work-related.
- Now write all the reasons for your delay. This may take five or ten minutes because some of them are really hidden from you. These reasons are the controlling influences. Write down as many as possible.
- In the "Arguments Against Delay" column, argue against all the reasons for delay in a convincing manner. If you can argue against them successfully, you will be able to start the task.

I'm delaying on _____ because

| | Reasons for Delay | Arguments Against Delay |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |

3. _____
4. _____

Some Tools That Will Help

- Make the tasks look small and easy in your mind. ("I've written lots of excellent papers; this is just one more paper.")
- Do only a small part of the task each time. ("I'll just check out the books tonight. Later on, I'll glance through them.")
- Five-minute plan: Work on something for just five minutes. At the end of five minutes, switch to something else if you want. Chances are, you'll get involved enough to keep going.
- Advertise your plans to accomplish something, and let peer pressure push you forward. ("I told everyone that I was going to finish this tonight.")
- Use a good friend as a positive role model. If you have trouble concentrating, study in the presence of someone who doesn't.
- Modify your environment - if you can't study at home, find a place where you can study; or, change your study situation at home.
- Plan tomorrow and establish priorities - some students find that simply writing down reasonable starting and stopping times help them get going.
- Expect some backsliding. Don't expect to be perfect even when you're trying to get rid of perfectionism! So occasionally, your plans will not work. Accept setbacks and start again.

An Insight

Procrastination is reinforcing - every time you delay, it reinforces your negative attitude toward that task. Every time you put off something you dislike, you:

- a. strengthen the habit of not doing;
- b. practice avoidance instead of participation;
- c. avoid acquiring training and skills, and
- d. indoctrinate yourself with fears.

Active participation in anything tends to give you a positive attitude toward that activity; inactivity helps acquire an unfavorable attitude. In other words, the reason you dislike calculus is because it's hanging over your head, worrying you. Since you haven't acquired skills in it, you can't do the assignments, so why try? Also, there's a test coming up soon, and you MUST do well on it -- except you know you can't. Suddenly everything seems terribly unfair (class is too hard) and you become angry towards the teacher (he goes too fast, and he seems indifferent to my struggles.) The truth is, the sooner you get involved in your studies, the better you will feel.

Common Impediments to Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination is relatively hard to overcome since you can delude yourself about it so easily. The following is a list of things we often tell ourselves:

1. Mañana - "I'll do it tomorrow."
2. Contingent mañana - "I'll do it tomorrow, if ..."
3. Grasshopperism - "I need to have some well-earned fun first." (In Aesop's fable, the grasshopper fiddled and played all summer while the ants stored up winter supplies. When winter came, the grasshopper suffered.)
4. Escapism - "I've got to get out for a while to clear my mind."
5. Impulsiveness - "My problem will be solved if I change my major, or attend a different college, or É"
6. Music and reading - "I'll relax a while and then get started."
7. Calvary to the Rescue - "The professor will get sick and cancel finals!"

Common Rationalizations

Each of these rationalizations needs to be argued against and defeated so that you can experience success. Write a rebuttal for each one.

1. "I'm more productive when I work under pressure, so I'm postponing all my work until the pressure builds up and then I'll get it done easily."
2. "I don't know how to do this problem, so I'm waiting until I know how before I do it."
3. "This task isn't getting done because I really don't want to do it. And that's the honest truth"
4. "Relax. The world isn't going to come to an end if this doesn't get done."
5. "This job easier to do when I'm in the mood, and I'm simply not in the mood right now."
6. "I waited until the last moment before and it worked out okay, so why not this time?"
7. "If I wait until the last minute, I won't spend so much time on it."
8. "If I do this work right now, I'll miss out on a once-in-a-lifetime social event."
9. "Circumstances beyond my control prevented me from doing so."
10. "I've worked on this for so long that I have no interest or energy for it."

Finally:

Now that you understand how procrastination works, and how you can greatly reduce its influence in your life, you'll experience more freedom and greater personal self-satisfaction.

Keep working on it. You may still procrastinate, but now you'll be able to resolve the situation much more quickly which in turn will enhance your feelings of self-confidence. When you do succeed, take time to savor the moment so you will remember how good it feels. This will help the next time you need encouragement.

Treat the discovery process like a game, and have some fun with yourself.

Work Cited

- Burka, Jane B., and Yuen, Lenora M. **Procrastination**. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1983.
- Ellis, Albert, and Knaus, William J. **Overcoming Procrastination**. New York: Signet Books, 1977.

How to Overcome Procrastination

- Recognize self-defeating problems such as; fear and anxiety, difficulty concentrating, poor time management, indecisiveness and perfectionism.
 - Identify your own goals, strengths and weaknesses, values and priorities.
 - Compare your actions with the values you feel you have. Are your values consistent with your actions?
 - Discipline yourself to use time wisely: Set priorities.
 - Study in small blocks instead of long time periods. For example, you will accomplish more if you study/work in 60 minute blocks and take frequent 10 minute breaks in between, than if you study/work for 2-3 hours straight, with no breaks. Reward yourself after you complete a task.
 - Motivate yourself to study: Dwell on success, not on failure. Try to study in small groups. Break large assignments into small tasks. Keep a reminder schedule and checklist.
 - Set realistic goals.
 - Modify your environment: Eliminate or minimize noise/ distraction. Ensure adequate lighting. Have necessary equipment at hand. Don't waste time going back and forth to get things. Don't get too comfortable when studying. A desk and straight-backed chair is usually best (a bed is no place to study). Be neat! Take a few minutes to straighten your desk. This can help to reduce day-dreaming.
1. First, admit to yourself that you have procrastinating habits. Stop wasting time on defining which parts of your "self" is the procrastinator. Don't call yourself a bad manager of time or someone who does their best work when there is an imminent deadline. Don't label yourself as a procrastinator - that is a huge burden to carry and it is bad self-talk - you simply have procrastinating habits.
 2. Choose a support system. Pick people that motivate you, know your habits, and can encourage you along the way.
 3. I said small steps and this is very important. Practice makes perfect and you can't practice on your whole lifestyle. Pick one project that you want to work on and let's apply some of the suggestions from this list to that one event.
 4. Make a list (it doesn't have to be a lengthy list) of all of the things you might do instead of getting started on a particular task. For example, doing the crossword puzzle, checking e-mail or voice mail, doing laundry, or cleaning your office. We often get sidetracked from starting or completing a task because there are other things we have to do. Who can argue that cleaning your desk is an important task? It may be but focus on the project and decide that it takes priority.
 5. Make your decision to complete a task known to somebody else. I had to complete the narrative for a web site and send it to the company designing our web site but I couldn't quite get it finished. So, I e-mailed the web designer and told him I would get the information to him on a particular day. I put a deadline on myself and set a date for the task to be completed and I let someone else know about it.
 6. If you don't have someone to motivate you along or don't have someone to whom you need to hold yourself accountable, hire yourself a professional coach or find a mentor. A coach will help you prioritize, set goals, encourage you, and check up on you to see

if you have kept your priorities and deadlines. Completing a few tasks with the help of coach will set the foundation for you doing it all on your own next time.

7. Just get started. I know this sounds awfully simplistic but it's important to make that first step, no matter how small it is. For example, turn your computer on, look up the phone number for the person you need to call, or get the tools out onto your desk for the project you need to work on. Sometimes, just making that first step will get you started and keep you going until you complete your task.
8. When setting goals for yourself, keep them short term, realistic and flexible. Set goals for tomorrow, and then the next day. Set a goal of getting to a certain point in a project, not to complete. If you don't meet your goal, redesign your plan. Don't beat up on yourself and let that be an excuse to give up or procrastinate even more.
9. Learn to tell time. Often, procrastinators are unrealistic about time. Then they get flustered because they are late, pushing deadlines, and feeling stressed out. This is not the mental state that is conducive to starting, much less completing, projects.
10. Reward yourself for a baby step completed. Let yourself do that crossword puzzle, or eat that cookie, or check the mail. But set that as a reward for completing a goal or project.
11. Back to the self-talk concept. Never underestimate the negative impact that critical, harsh self-talk has on one's productivity. Make it a point to tell yourself how great you are. Tell yourself that you will complete project on time, that you will have the creative energy to be innovative and brilliant, and that you can do it. You are your best coach.