

Beyond "Just Try Harder": A Science-Based Approach to Conquering Procrastination

These presentation notes accompany "**Beyond 'Just Try Harder': A Science-Based Approach to Conquering Procrastination.**" They focus on understanding procrastination through a scientific lens and provide practical strategies for overcoming it. Key concepts and actionable insights are highlighted to facilitate effective learning and application.

About the Speaker

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Takeaways

- **Audience:**
 - **Individuals with ADHD:** Identify personal procrastination patterns and learn management strategies.
 - **Supporters:** Understand your procrastination patterns to help yourself and others.
 - **Core Concepts:**
 - Learn how procrastination manifests and presents itself.
 - Discover ways to break the procrastination cycle
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Procrastination Defined

- **Focus:** Procrastination isn't about laziness, time management, or self-control.
 - **True Cause :** It stems from emotions, distractions, and discomfort avoidance.
 - **Procrastination's Origin:** Derived from Latin words: *Pro* (forward) and *Crastinus* (of tomorrow).
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Emotional Causes - Short-term Mood Repair

- **Quote:** Dr. Tim Pynchyl, "Short-term mood repair" – a cycle of temporary relief that worsens task-related stress.

- **Emotional Triggers:**
 - Boredom, anxiety, insecurity, frustration, fear of failure, and self-doubt.
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Procrastination Loop

- **Common Patterns:**
 - “I have plenty of time” → Leads to “I’ll start later.”
 - “Just one more show/game” → Leads to relief but no action.
 - “What if I fail?” → Self-doubt, worry, and eventual frustration.
 - **Impact:** Negative thought loops reinforce procrastination, leading to self-blame.
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The Science - Brain Regions Involved

- **Prefrontal Cortex:** Controls planning, decision-making, and self-control.
 - **Limbic System:** Emotional center focused on immediate rewards.
 - **Conclusion:** The limbic system often overpowers the prefrontal cortex, prioritizing comfort over productivity.
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Not All Delays Are Equals

- **Procrastination**
 - **Voluntary Delay:** When emotional coping leads to avoidance which has a cost or opportunity loss.
 - **Not Necessarily Procrastination**
 - **Intentional Delay:** Adjusting priorities as they evolve.
 - **ADHD Delay:** Unintentional delay associated with inattention, distraction, forgetfulness, not knowing how to start, inability to ask for help.
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Core Method - Name It, Tame It, Claim It

- **Name It:** Recognize personal procrastination costs, clues, and causes.
 - **Tame It:** Acknowledge and defuse negative thought loops.
 - **Claim It:** Take small steps, reinforcing proactive choices.
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Naming Procrastination - Recognition

- **Behaviors:** Recognize costs and clues of your procrastination.
 - **Emotions:** Acknowledge the causes of your procrastination.
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Taming Procrastination - Self-Compassion

- **Forgiveness Steps:**
 - Recognize procrastination as a coping mechanism.
 - Practice self-kindness, avoid self-criticism.
 - Celebrate small wins to build momentum.
 - **Forget Past Failures:**
 - Connect negative self-talk to stress and move forward.
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Claiming Procrastination - Practical Actions that Break the Cycle

1. **Vote for Yourself:** Align actions with who you want to become.
 2. **Step on the Mat:** Start before you feel fully ready; motivation grows with action.
 3. **Two-Minute Rule:** Commit to two minutes, often enough to build momentum.
 4. **Minimize Distractions:**
 - Set up a dedicated workspace.
 - Use technology to block interruptions.
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Review - Key Takeaways

1. **Procrastination as Coping:** Understanding its root cause helps address it.
 2. **Naming the Emotions:** Identifying stressors weakens their hold.
 3. **Claim Your Method:** Choose strategies that resonate personally to disrupt patterns.
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