

Tackling procrastination for better mental health

Looking for
Empowering
interventions

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Welcome!

Why are we here?

Are we

- A community of changemakers?
- Co-Architects of the student experience?
- Democratizing education?

Can we make this a more shared journey and co-create solutions?

Let's focus on

- Finding/sharing simple interventions with systemic impact.
- Empowering (vulnerable) students and help them to develop a positive identity, to find their place in society.
- The optimal use of resources in society.

Procrastination is the gap between
intention and action.
(Tim Pynchyl)

Procrastination is about feeling good right now ...

Tim Pytchyl:

- Prevalence: cross-cultural: 20 % of the people procrastinate problematic
- 95 % of the students report procrastination.
- Emotion regulation: it is about feeling good right now – Negative reinforcement: taking away sth negative pays off immediately!
- In september procrastinators feel better than non-procrastinators, but later in the academic year it flips: non-procrastinators are more happy and a lot healthier.

... and feeling bad later

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQvvmT3ab80>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS9LCR5P5wI>



Loving
your
future self



The Missing link

Students that present with ...

- Depression / Anxiety / suicidal ideation
- Loss of motivation/doubting study choices
- Conflicts with staff, parents, group members
- Feeling lonely or rejected
- Low Self-esteem (not smart enough)
- No purpose in life
- Physical pain
- Bad academic performance

... may be in a procrastination loop which is often **overlooked** as (partial) cause and amplifier.



Procrastination & Wellbeing

Avoiding a task

- grants immediate, temporary emotional relief.
- leads to accumulation of unconscious chronic stress.
- Studies (JAMA Network Open) tracked university students and confirmed a direct, longitudinal link between high procrastination and subsequent physical/mental decline.
- The Cycle: Procrastination directly predicts higher depression, anxiety, and disabling physical pain. Depression depletes energy levels, feeding a vicious cycle that creates more procrastination.

The empowering effect of overcoming procrastination

Not only for students who's 'only' or main problem is procrastination:

- Students that experience multi-problem situations in their family of origin, need success experiences to separate from their past experiences and to build a better future.
- Achieving success during adolescence is crucial for building a positive sense of identity.
- It makes social and intergenerational mobility possible.
- To reach longterm goals (future self) leads to a sense of purpose.

Financial cost of delay

Life time consequences of drop-out or delay

- The Wealth Gap (Degree vs. No Degree) loss of income
- The Debt Trap: Non-graduates are six times more likely to default on student loans than graduates. Dropping out leaves an individual with 100% of the debt but 0% of the earning power.
- The Career Delay: Immediate Salary Drop

[I Just Paid Off My Student Loan #standupcomedy #funny #oldage #comedy #humor #lol #fyp](#)

Financial cost for the individual student:

- One year of extended study costs an EU student between **€1,000 and €10,000** + additional living expenses.
- **Delayed Career Entry:** Delay by one year defers full-time salary potential by **€25,000 to €45,000** on average depending on the European country and industry.
- **University Tuition and Fees:** EU students pay €900 to €3,000 annually at public institutions,
- **Financial Aid Impacts:** less government grants and scholarships (like *Erasmus+* or state study allowances), more repayable loans.

Financial cost of procrastination for the government

Rough Guess of the cost of procrastination for the Belgian Government.

Average annual study costs: €14,000 (including tuition fees, allowances, and living expenses)

Knowing that we lose we lose around one year of study/10 students (based on drop out figures)

Estimation based on this: 50,000 students/year experience delays due to procrastination

Estimation of the annual cost for Belgian government: approximately **€70 million** (10% of 50,000 students × €14,000).

Solutions?

Is anybody home?

What if ...
small
interventions
made all the
difference?



WISE INTERVENTIONS:

Psychological remedies for social & personal problems

Literature:

(The 3 Processes of Long-Term Effects)

- Hecht, C. A., Priniski, S. J., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2019). Understanding long-term effects of motivation interventions in a changing world. *Advances in Motivation and Achievement*, 20, 53–78. doi.org [\[1\]](#)
- **Foundational Wise Interventions Theory**
- Walton, G. M., & Wilson, T. D. (2018). Wise interventions: Psychological remedies for social and personal problems. *Psychological Review*, 125(5), 617–655. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000115> [\[1\]](#)
- Walton, G. M., & Crum, A. J. (Eds.). (2020). *Handbook of Wise Interventions: How Social Psychology Can Help People Change*. Guilford Press. [Stanford University Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity](#). [\[1\]](#)

Psychologically Wise interventions

[Handbook of Wise Interventions](#) (Walton & Crum, Eds., 2020)

- Stanford University: research on ‘Wise interventions’
- Question:
 - How can we help people alter maladaptive interpretations of themselves or their environment for maximum benefit?
 - What specific circumstances allow these interventions to become self-confirming over time?“

‘Specific, brief psychological interventions can lead to a significant and lasting impact on health, well-being, academic motivation, and social relationships’

‘Wise interventions’

Short interventions can lead to important, lifechanging growth.

Changing beliefs about yourself, others and social situations, leads to important changes on problems we face as an individual and a society.

Research has been done on topics such as:

- Academic success
- Health
- Wellbeing
- Relationships

Examples of 'Wise Interventions'

For Individuals and groups

- **Growth Mindset** intervention on learning. (Ted talks, Carol Deck)
- **Growth Mindset** intervention on personality: online program on anxiety and depression for adolescents.
- **Happiness-interventions**: practice greatfulness.
- **Healthy** foods and taste: how do i already eat healthy?
- **Suïcidal** behaviour: a small note of the hospital after an attempt diminishes suicidality!
- **Stress-reappraisalinterventions**
 - Learn to appreciate stressreactions
 - ('how to make stress my friend' – Ted Talk)
- **Social belonging** intervention: normalising **belonging-uncertainty** improves students integration in the new environment and raises academic performance years into the future. Negatively stereotyped and underrepresented groups benefit the most!

4 Kinds of 'Wise interventions'

Direct labeling:

- New labels for experiences alters psychological effects. Ex: stressintervention, (view stress as a helpful tool), social belonging interventions, feedback -interventions

Subtly suggesting new meaning

- Providing new information through **questions, prompts**, ... allows healthier interpretations.
- Ex: Compliment intervention on student that is in time.

Fostering commitment through action: people see their behaviour as consistent and identify with it.

- Make people act according to new mindsets and they develop the new quality.
- Let people **teach** new behaviour and they will develop new qualities.

Active-reflection exercises:

- Guiding people step-by-step to independently reach new, constructive views of themselves, their relationships and the environment. (pos attribution)

Features of 'wise interventions'

The interventions are

- Specific
- Inbedded
- Supported by large context
- The changes are reinforcing
- Methodic: link with research

Why do 'wise interventions' last?

Small, timely psychological nudges yield massive, long-term impacts by changing how people interpret their circumstances.

Three Moving Parts:

1. Recursive Loops: The intervention starts self-sustaining cycles of engagement and success.

- **Ex:** Students reflect on the relevance of their studies → meaning and engagement → Higher success, more meaning, reflection becomes a habit

2. Domino Chains: one positive behavioral change triggers a cascade of unexpected benefits across lif domains.

- A linear chain of successive reactions, where one outcome directly triggers the next

- **Ex:** Procrastination intervention → better assignment → positive feedback & better relationship with prof → Success → Increased self-confidence → Less procrastination → Higher study motivation → Better relationships.

3. Internal Transformation: Shifts in identity and habit formation ensure the change sticks from the inside out.

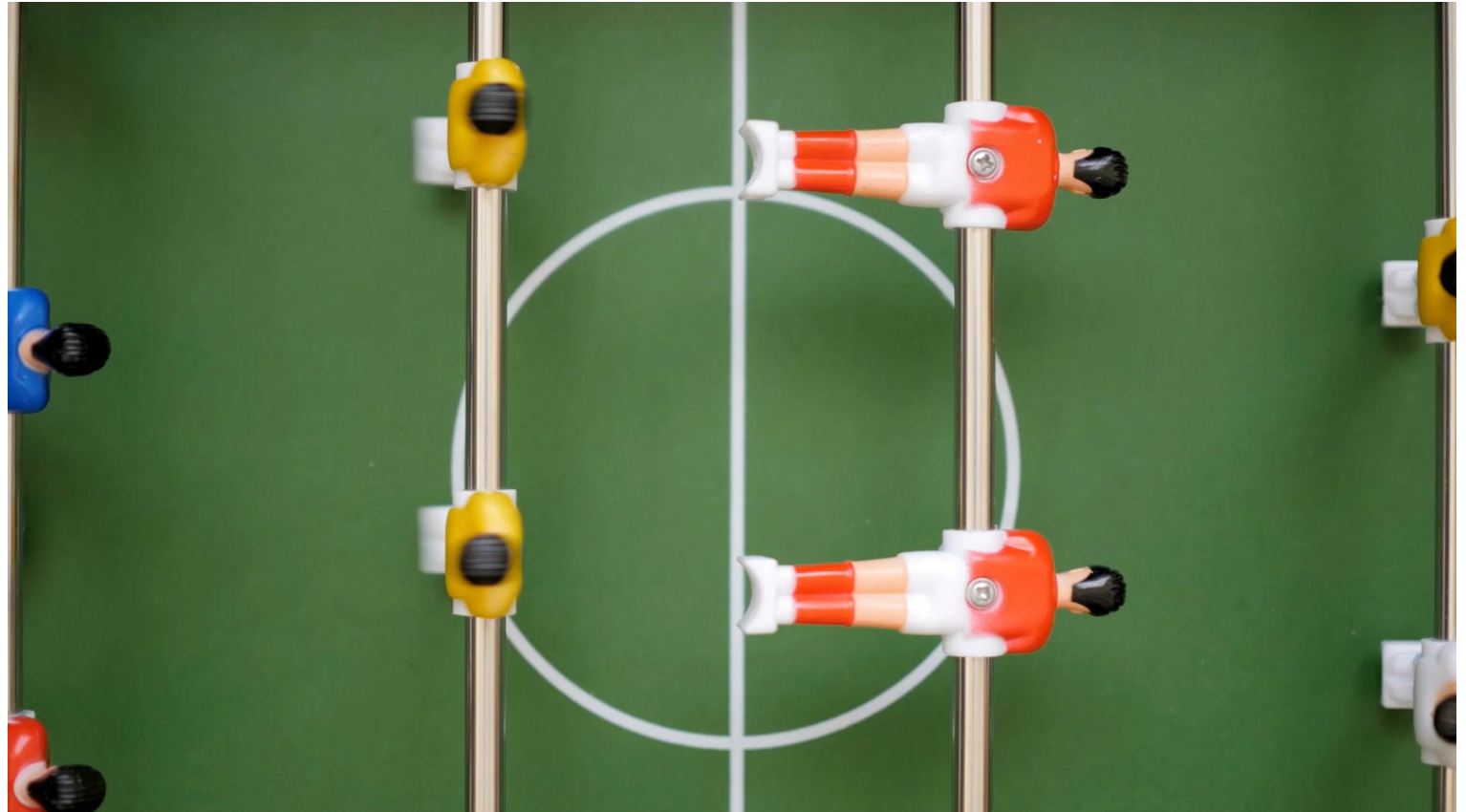
Consistent Change:

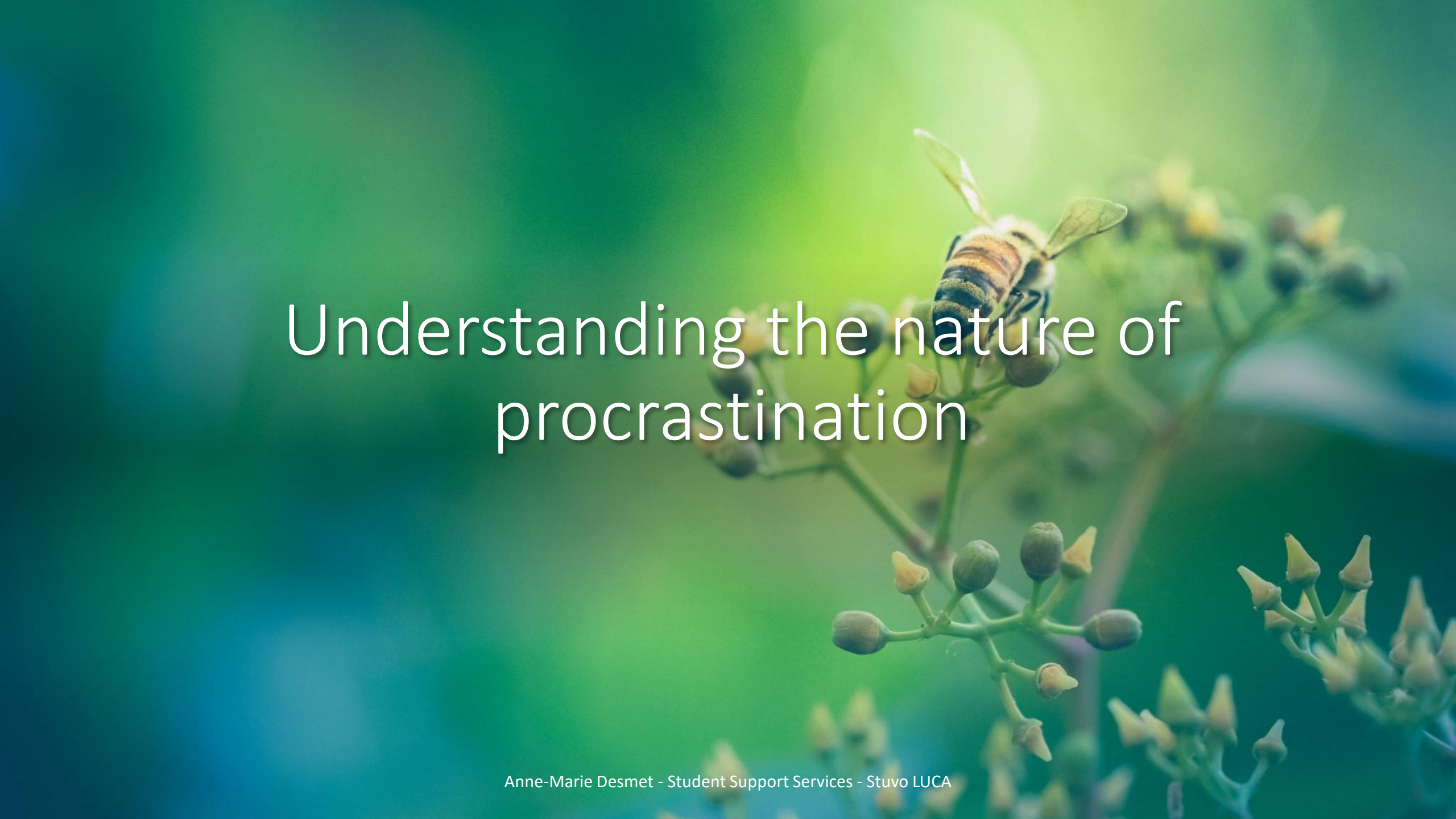
Development of long-term new habits, a shift in **identity**, transformation of core beliefs (e.g., developing positive attributions).

The Big Takeaway: Lasting change does not require continuous, heavy-handed external intervention; it requires changing the internal narrative just enough so the individual's daily experiences do the rest of the work.

On what other topics could we create simple interventions with low effort & high impact

What could be a
'wise intervention'
on procrastination?



A close-up photograph of a bee on a flower branch, set against a blurred background of green and blue foliage. The bee is positioned in the upper right quadrant, facing left. The text "Understanding the nature of procrastination" is overlaid in white, centered horizontally and slightly to the left of the bee.

Understanding the nature of procrastination

A problem of emotion regulation.

- Procrastination is **usually** an emotional regulation problem, not a failure of discipline or time management.
- Stress physically shuts down the brain's rational center.
- Relying on willpower alone asks the rational brain to overpower deep-seated emotional responses.
- This leads to inner conflicts, and unsustainable mental battles - so there is no energy left to finish difficult tasks.



Photo: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®: who has the peddles?

The problem with willpower

The Amygdala-PFC Conflict:

The Amygdala scans for danger & threat. Difficult tasks & pressure may be experienced as a threat.

Anxiety makes the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) go partly offline. The place of logic, planning, and willpower shuts down.

The more our rational brain tries to 'take over', the more we feel helpless and tired. It is a battle that is hard to win:

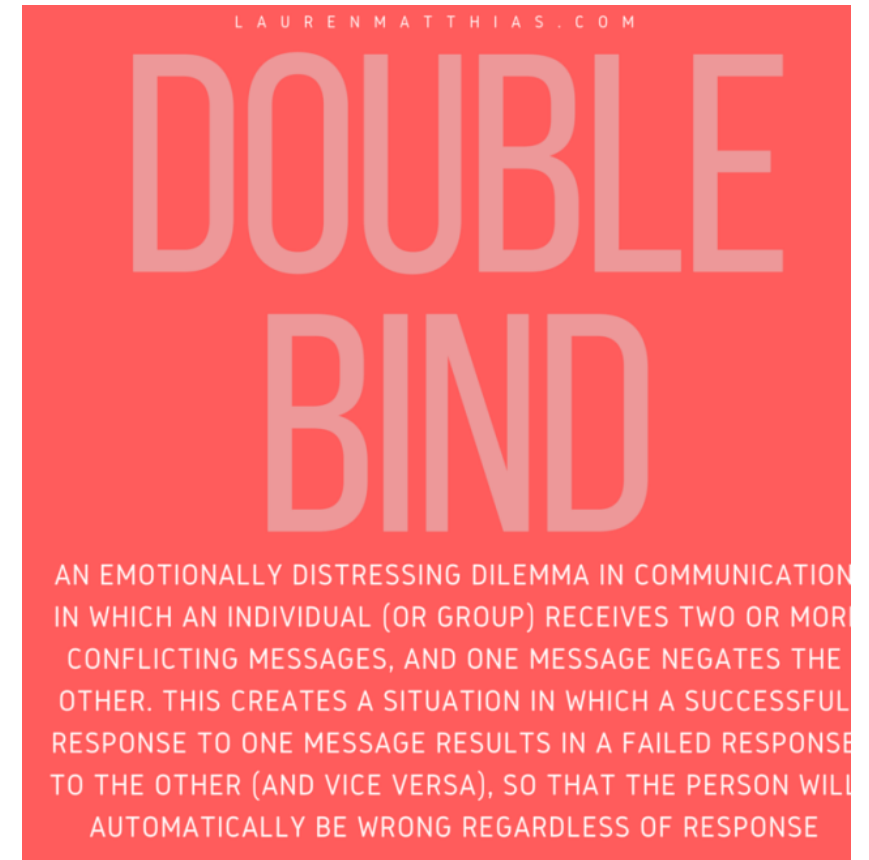
the boat may collapse!



Photo: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®: who has the peddles?

When people are stuck, forcing willpower traps them into 'double bind'

- Impossible missions
- 'You have to believe in yourself. '
- 'Yes, you can!'
- 'Procrastinator! Don't be a procrastinator!'
- The more people fight their negative identity, the more they identify with it.
- Self punishment doesn't work to let the rational brain do the work.



Solutions



Outsmart the emotional brain

(sneak the task in)

The "Micro-Step" Tool:

START BUTTON: 'your only job is to push the startbutton.'

What is the smallest thing you can do? (Open Word and write 1 sentence.)

The 2-Minute Gateway:

Commit to working for just 2 minutes to eliminate the friction of starting.

Permit Poor Work:

Encourage a "terrible first draft" silence perfectionism & calm down.



*Find the
sparkle that
starts the
engine*



Foto: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®

If you start
me up ...
I'll never stop

[The Rolling Stones - Start
Me Up - Official Promo](#)

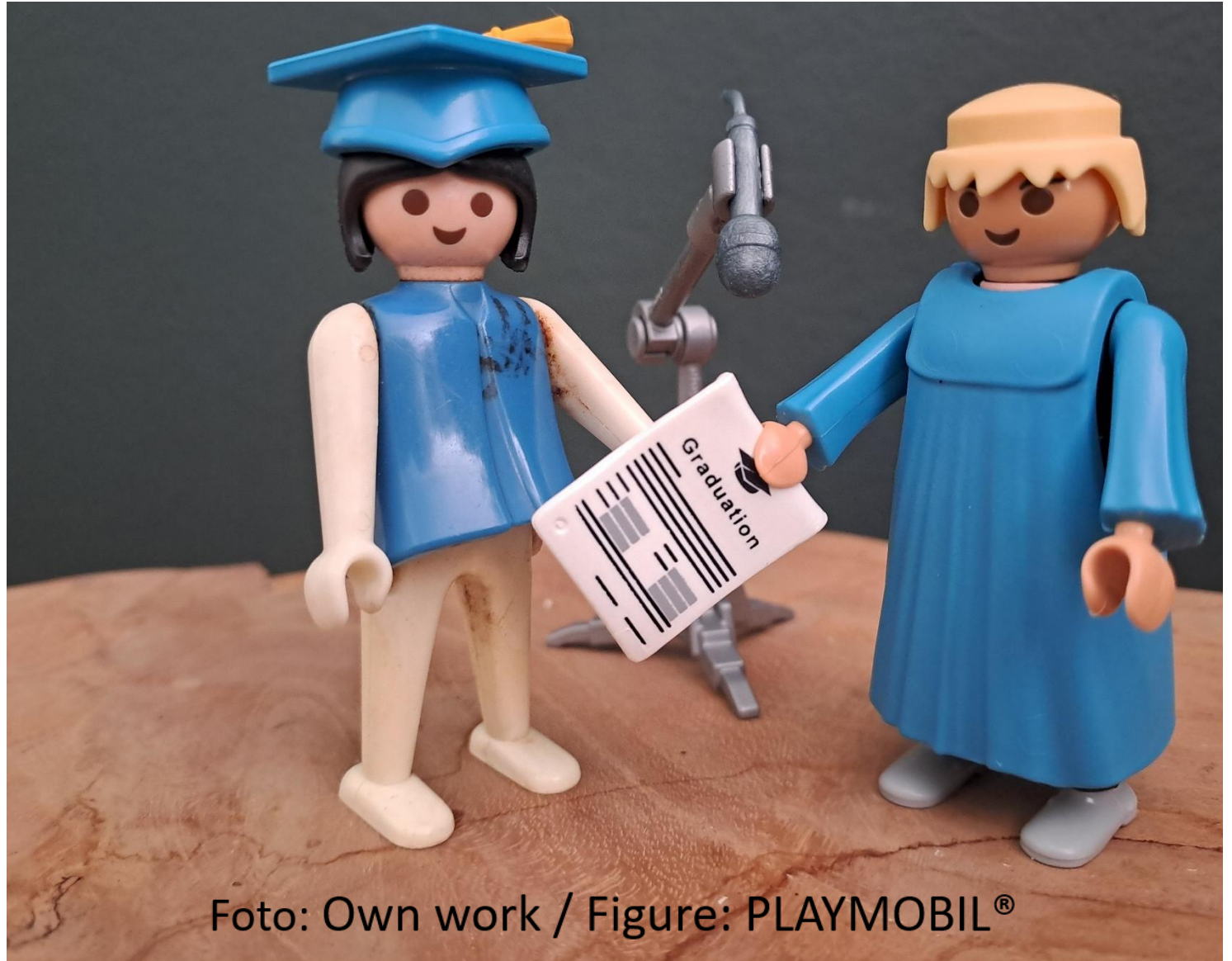


Foto: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®

Micro
steps:
Isolate this
one task!!



Micro
steps:
5-4-3-2-1:
START!



Micro steps: Carpaccio your tasks!

Prevent the amygdala from triggering an alarm, making tasks feel safe enough to start. We do this by

- lowering the emotional cost of starting.
- Breaking projects into micro-commitments: incredibly small, manageable steps.
- Slice them till you can look through them!



Foto: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®

Break tasks down: Behaviour Quadrant of Michael Hjerth

Look at 1: What did you list?

Scale how hard this is.

Start with the simplest task

Think: what could the effect be?

	IS NO FUN NOW	FEELS GOOD NOW
GOOD IDEA IN THE LONG TERM	1 BREAK THIS TASK DOWN START WITH THE MOST EASY TASK PERMIT BAD DRAFT WORK 5 MINUTES	2 ENJOY
BAD IDEA IN THE LONG TERM	3 STOP SELF-PUNISHMENT	4 FOCUS ON YOUR VALUES CALM YOUR SYSTEM DOWN



Permit poor work: What if their parents were perfectionists?

Yes, a terrible first draft is a good start!

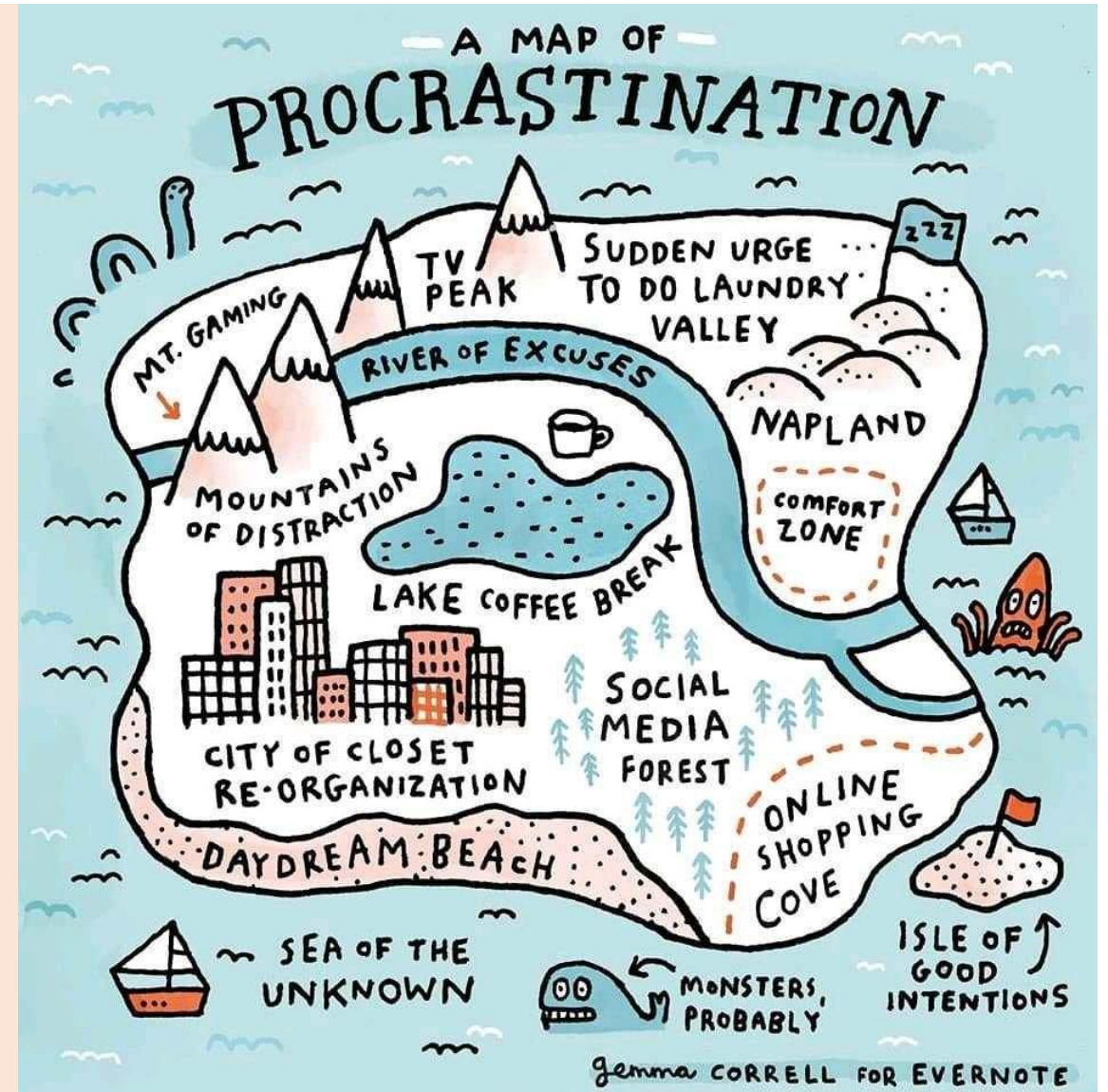
‘Make tasks feel safe again’

Design your own ritual!

1. Honour your procrastination part and give it a reward for working so hard to protect you!
2. Look for the ‘pathetically simple task’ to start with!
3. Only focus on starting!
 - It is not allowed to finish the task today!
 - Count down (and don’t give your brain the possibility for procrastinationexcuses)
 - What is your startsong?
 - The more difficult it gets, the shorter you make it: ‘I will work 10 minutes.’
4. Devote yourself to poor work!



A country we all
know



Lets's play!

Probably a wise intervention -
Finding ways to calm down the brain.



Ingredients:

- Theory of 'wise intervention'
- Internal Family Systems
- PLAYMOBIL®



An Internal Family Systems Approach

We all have parts
(subpersonalities)

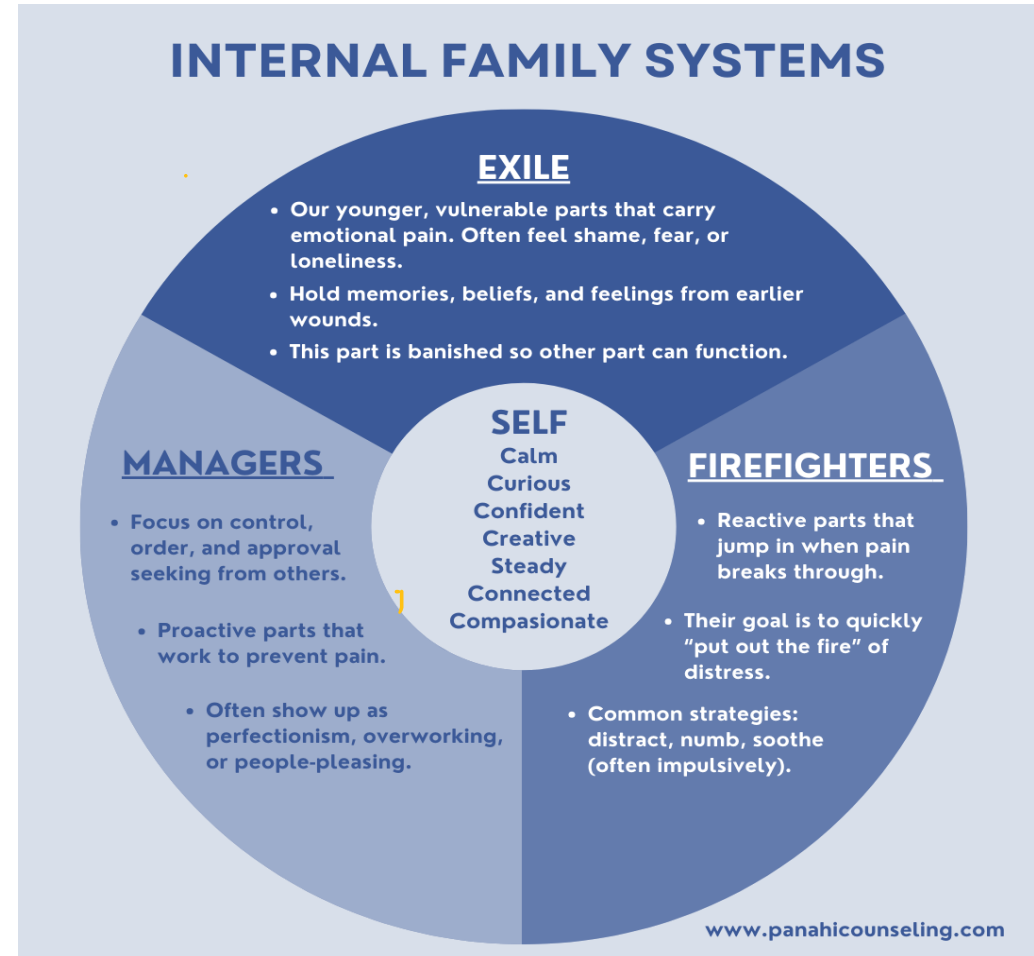
Parts want to be seen
and recognized for their
hard work

Parts have good
intentions but are not
necessarily updated.
They may use
destructive strategies.

Parts do not disappear. .
they transform: change
strategy if they are
valued by 'self'.

Conflicts between parts
drain our energy

Fighting the parts
doesn't work,
understanding them
does



IFS: Our mind is
made of different
parts or
subpersonalities

Self:

Our sacred, unharmed, balanced part

Self is calm, curious, courageous, creative,
compassionate, clear, connected, confident,
present, patient

Protectors:

Parts that keep us safe from emotional pain.

Usually the procrastinator is a protector that
shields you from judgment or wants you to feel
good

Protectors keeps you away from your exiles

Exiles: (ball)

Vulnerable and 'forbidden' parts holding fears of
failure or shame. The feelings, thoughts,
memories people don't want to identify with.

Think of it as pushing a beach ball
underwater.

Meet my
friends!
PLAYMOBIL®.



Foto: Own work / Figure: PLAYMOBIL®



PLAYMOBIL®.

- Figures that love to play parts
- Probably secretly designed for it.
- Magic agents of change!
- If only the CEO had procrastinated the exciting (outsourcing) of the production in Germany after this congress!



playmobil **WESTERN**



Procrastination is an emotional shield that trades short term comfort for long term health crises

Let's have some fun and play!



- Step 1: the task you are avoiding
 - Pick your Procrastinator – the part that wants to avoid this. (3 mins) – Pick one figure that represents your Procrastinator – part
 - Does it look tired? Angry? Distracted? Is it wearing armor? What do you feel in your body?
- Step 2: put the figure on the table
 - Look at it, and ask: 'what is it that you want to do for me?'
 - By looking at it, you are no longer in it. You are now the 'Self' looking at a part of you."
- Step 3: The Interview (3 mins)
 - Ask your figure: What are you trying to do for me? How are you trying to protect me?
 - 'What are you afraid will happen if I start working/finish this task today?'
- Step 4:
 - Pick the "part that is protected by the procrastinator (2 mins)
 - This is the vulnerable part being protected (e.g., a small child, a stressed worker).
 - Place is behind the protector
 - Thank the protector part for doing all the hard work
- Step 5: Pick a part for 'self'.
 - What do you need from your wise part? (curiosity, courage, connectedness, calm, creativity, confidence, clarity, ...)
 - Ask the part what it can do for you and feel how it looks like when this part can manage

Set up exercise: externalizing the procrastinating part

- Look at the Playmobil figures on your table.
- We will use them to see our inner world visually.
- There are no right or wrong choices.
- Trust your intuition and have fun.





Step 1: befriend with your procrastinator-part

- Think of **one specific task** you are avoiding right now.
- Look at the box of Playmobil figures.
- Pick **one figure** that represents your Procrastination. (a part of us is always procrastinating something)
- Place it on the table directly in front of you.

Step 2: engage with the 'procrastinator'

- Look at your chosen figure with curiosity.
- Realize this part has a positive goal for you.
- Realize the intention of parts does not equal the effect.
- Ask the figure:
 - "What are you trying to do for me/ to protect me from?"
 - "What are you afraid will happen if I do this task?"
- Listen to its answer (fear of failure, boredom, judgment, ...).
- If you can: THANK THE PART FOR WORKING SO HARD AND FOR TRYING TO PROTECT YOU

Step 3: choose a part for: 'self'.



- Ask yourself: 'what quality do I need?'
- Concentrated, clear, calm, creative, connected, courageous, playful, patient, present, ...?
- Pick one figure that represents that part
- Engage with 'self' – remember that 'self' is compassionate!
- Feel what energy/mindset this gives and remind yourself of times you were in that energy.

Step 4: ask your procrastinator for space

- Talk gently to your procrastinator part.
- ‘I thank you for your investment and hard work’
- ‘Would you be willing to relax?’
- ‘Would you be ok if I also use the ‘self’ part and let it inspire me?’
- ‘Would you be willing to let me work for 10 minutes from ‘self’?’
- ‘I promise that I will check in on you.’
- ‘Would you consider taking up another role to help me with this?’

Future Self

- Pick a figure for future self and relate to it.
- How can you be friendly with it?
- How can it inspire you?

OR



Step 3: The Hidden Part

- Your Procrastinator is a protective shield.
- Pick a second figure from the box.
- Place this second figure behind the first one.
- This is the vulnerable part (the exile) being protected.
- What does this hidden part need to feel safe?

Step 4:

- Thank your Procrastinator for trying to keep you safe.
- Recognize the hard work it does for you.
- Do not force it away
- Negotiate with it
- Ask for just 10 minutes of calm, focused action. Ask if it wants to look or cooperate with your other part. Promise that you will check in with this part after doing this.
- Be kind to your vulnerable parts.

Step 5:

- Pick a part for 'self'.
- What do you need from your wise part? (curiosity, courage, connectedness, calm, creativity, confidence, clarity, ...)
- Feel the quality
- Ask the part what it can do for you to help you with the task and invite it to help you to do this.
- Wat kind of an energy do you feel?
- Check in with the procrastinator part, what did it learn? Is it willing to give the space to the other part now and then? Is it willing to change?

Reflection

- What surprised you? What was new?
- What new information did you get?
- What were differences in the states you experienced, connecting to the different parts?
- What is in general the effect of this exercise for you?
- What could be the effect on the task you were focusing on?
- What does this do on your selfefficacy?
- What is the effect on your capability to feel Calm / Creative / Concentrated / Confident / Clear / Connected /

Remember:
play calms
people
down!

- **Calms** the brain's alarm system for fear.
- Play signals to the amygdala that you are safe, which stops the "fight-or-flight" response.
- **Activates the vagus nerve:** Gentle, playful movement stimulates this nerve. It tells your heart rate to slow down and your muscles to relax.

Could this be a 'wise intervention'?

Walton en Wilson: wise interventions stimulate new *meaning-making*

Direct Labeling: a new, constructive label is offered for an experience that is previously experienced as negative. (protection versus laziness or ineffectiveness.)

Subtly Suggesting New Meanings: The new label is not presented, but a context is created where people find their own new interpretations.

Fostering Commitment Through Action : People are stimulated to behave a little bit different. (explain how you will start the task)

Invitation for reflection:

start engaging with the new identity

Other links with 'wise interventions'

- It shifts procrastination from a character flaw to an emotional survival mechanism.
- The psychological principles behind this method could work to overcome avoidance
- **Separation of Self and Part:**
 - Observing the part practices "defusion"
 - To realize "I am feeling avoidant" rather than "I am lazy.", separates the dread and shame from the core identity
 - Moving out from feeling the threat into the objective observer state, activates the cognitive functioning.
- **Addressing the Underlying Fear:**
 - Procrastination is almost always a defense mechanism designed to shield a vulnerable part of you from failure, judgment, or overwhelm. Interviewing the procrastinator teaches and validates its protective role. Once the protector feels heard, it no longer needs to be on high alert.
- **Reclaiming the Wise 'Self':**
 - Instead of forcing motivation through willpower (which often triggers resistance and leads to inner conflict)
 - You can step into the natural capabilities of your core self.
 - By consciously activating and leaning into states like curiosity or calm, you change your internal chemistry, making action feel natural and effortless.

More brief interventions



Exhibition of Procrastination excuses

Students share their
favorite excuses

The one with the best story wins a startbutton!

- First i have to design a plan, a good plan is everything! It may take a day or 2 to plan!
- First, i have to feel better so i'll watch **one** episode on Netflix
- I am a little bit tired today, if i sleep now, i will perform for two, tomorrow!
- If the morning is not ok, it's better to wait untill the next day.
- I don't really understand it so it's better not to make the exercises.
- Maybe this is not really a good studychoise.
- If the startidea is not perfect, i should wait untill a better idea comes.
- A clean desk is essential, and actually the whole house should be cleaned before starting!
- ...

Game: The (corrupt) court

1. "I work better under pressure, so I will wait until midnight."
2. "I need to feel inspired : first I need to be in the right 'creative zone'."
3. "I don't have enough time to finish it today anyway, so why start?"
4. "I just need to quickly research one more thing on the internet"

BRIBE THE COURT WITH SWEETS!

1. "No, you just start under pressure. You actually work with high anxiety and create when you re not at your best."
2. Quote: "inspiration finds you working"
3. You have 15 minutes. You can either write three sentences now, or write those exact same three sentences while crying at 3:00 AM
4. You have been reading Wikipedia articles about the history of the potato for 40 ', stop hiding!

Possible questions

The power of Instant gratification

- **The Limbic System and Dopamine:**
- The limbic system governs primal emotions and desires, prioritizes instant gratification and short-term comfort over long-term goals. When you delay a task to scroll social media, the brain receives a quick dopamine pulse, rewarding the avoidance behavior.
- The "Relief" Habit Loop: Neuroscientist Dr. Judson Brewer notes that procrastination functions as a habit loop. Avoiding the task provides immediate emotional relief. This relief is registered as a reward, the avoidance habit is strengthened.
- Willpower fails because the motivational circuits shift away from stress toward reward.

Emotional intelligence

The more you bring students in touch with their emotions, the less they will procrastinate!

- Have fear, don't be fear!
- Normalise feeling bad while working. Just acknowledge your feelings.
- Monitor emotional reactions. Scale the emotions!
- Understand and accept your emotions and reactions.

People that do not procrastinate are not afraid of their negative feelings. They look into the future and imagine how they will feel when the work is done!

Working on identity achievement is bringing people in touch

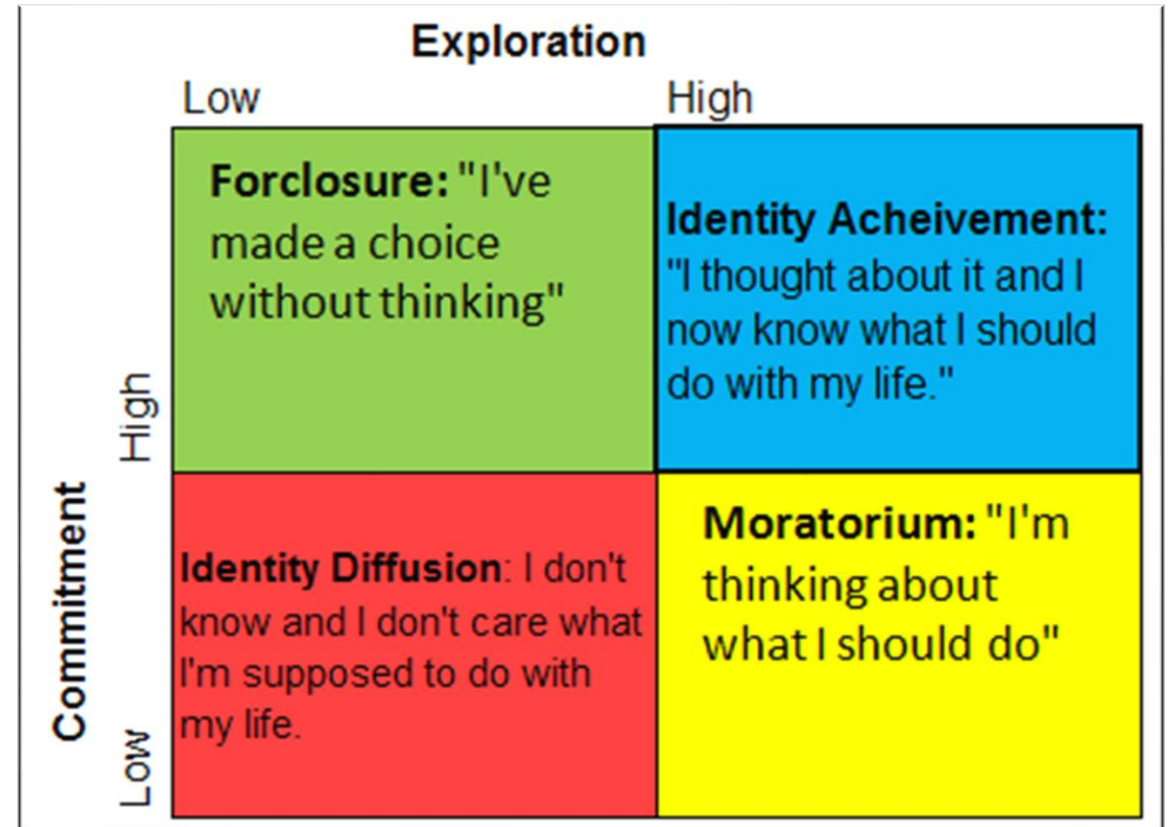
- With their values
- With who they want to be: a positive identity.
- Design a life according to who you want to be
- Intrinsic motivation = living according your values.

Adolescence and identity-achievement

Pre-frontal part of the brain develops till 24:
procrastination is developmental

Identity achieved → more sense of agency
= ego-executive (direction) + ego
synthetic (meaning) functions

To develop an identity, adolescents need
moratorium: take your time but explore!



Positive identity: Be the Sherlock Holmes of 'successes/experiences':

Good questions and 'small talk' restore selfimage

Be a detective, secretly in search of succes and talent.

Look everywhere! Hobby's, previous positive experiences, accomplishments in the family.

Validate by generalizing this.

Keep schtum - ask any question that provokes a selfcompliment.

Mumble: good that you come NOW

Look for the exceptions of procrastination.

Don't say: I told you you can do it.



Research on Procrastination

Cause of procrastination

Fear of failure & Perfectionism
Self-regulation failure: lack of discipline and agency



Function of procrastination

Temporary reduction of stress and anxiety
Psychodynamic: dealing with internal conflicts
Ego-protection: avoiding negative evaluation

Keep in mind: The effect of procrastination on selfconfidence.

The power of wanting to 'feel good now' wins, and leads to feeling insecure, guilty, worthless because of the procrastination. The confrontation with situations becomes more and more difficult.

The circle of guilt and shame, leads to social anxiety

Denial, with underlying feelings of worthlessness, makes students lose contact with the own strengths.

The coping-strategie is avoidance, the harder the fight, the more people feel powerless.

Don't fight, learn to calm yourself down and work slowly towards change!



Don't side with the inner critic.

The internal critical voice is the 'solution' that aggravates the problem. It works like putting out a fire with gasoline. The final effect is stagnation.

The punishing internal critical voice

- sets unrealistic goals
- destroys selfconfidence
- Leads to panic and pathology
- Looks for solutions in the wrong place

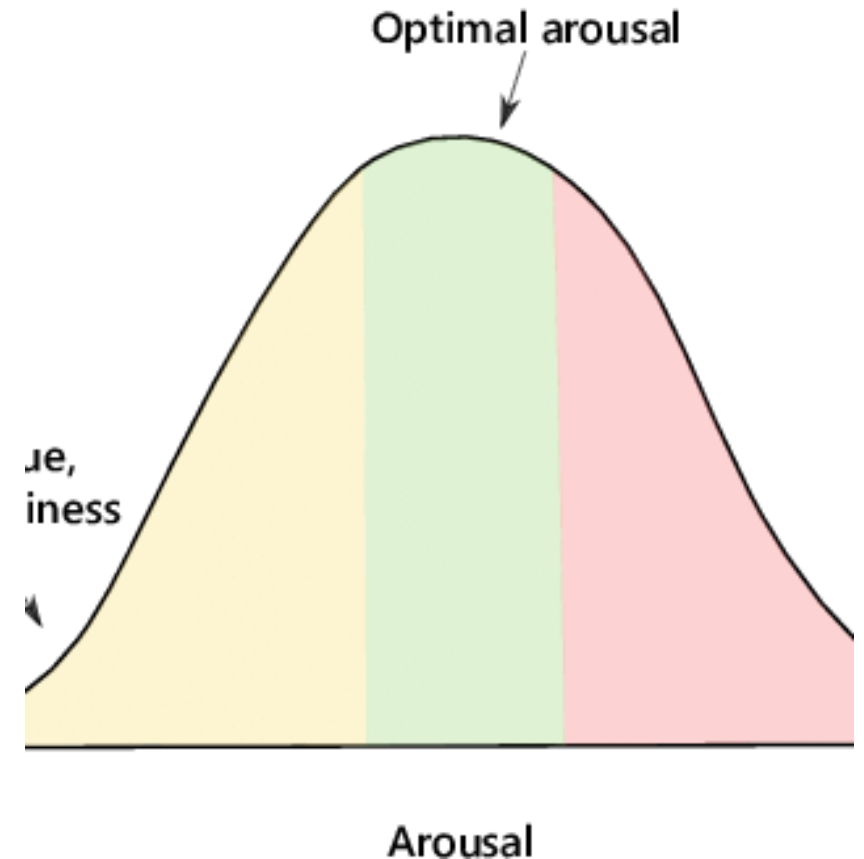


What people think and believe: Challenge verbal rules that cause problems

- 'To work a lot of hours means that you are motivated, willing and grateful for the opportunity you get.'
- 'Suffering while studying means that a person is willing, perseverant, and respectful towards the school and authorities that pay the study'
- 'If it doesn't go so well, you have to try harder.'
- 'First you have to believe in yourself, then it will work.'
- 'Perfectionists are superior people.'
- 'Perfectionists don't start from an incomplete idea.'
- 'If you have to work hard, it means you are not that intelligent.'
- 'First you have to gain willpower, then you will stop procrastinating.'
- 'Try to feel better, then you will find the energy to work.'
- 'People who only do the things that they can do perfectly, are to be admired.'

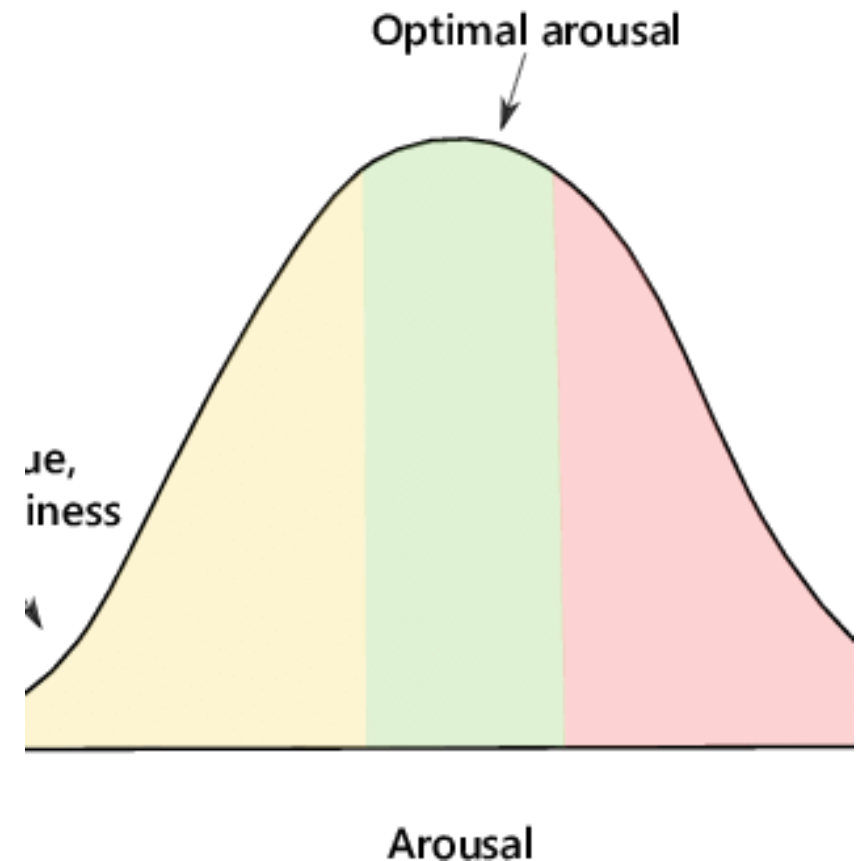
Challenge non helping verbal rules.

- The Yerkes-Dodson Law illustrates the relationship between pressure and performance.
- It explains how to find the optimum level of positive pressure at which people perform at their best. Too much or too little pressure can lead to decreased performance.



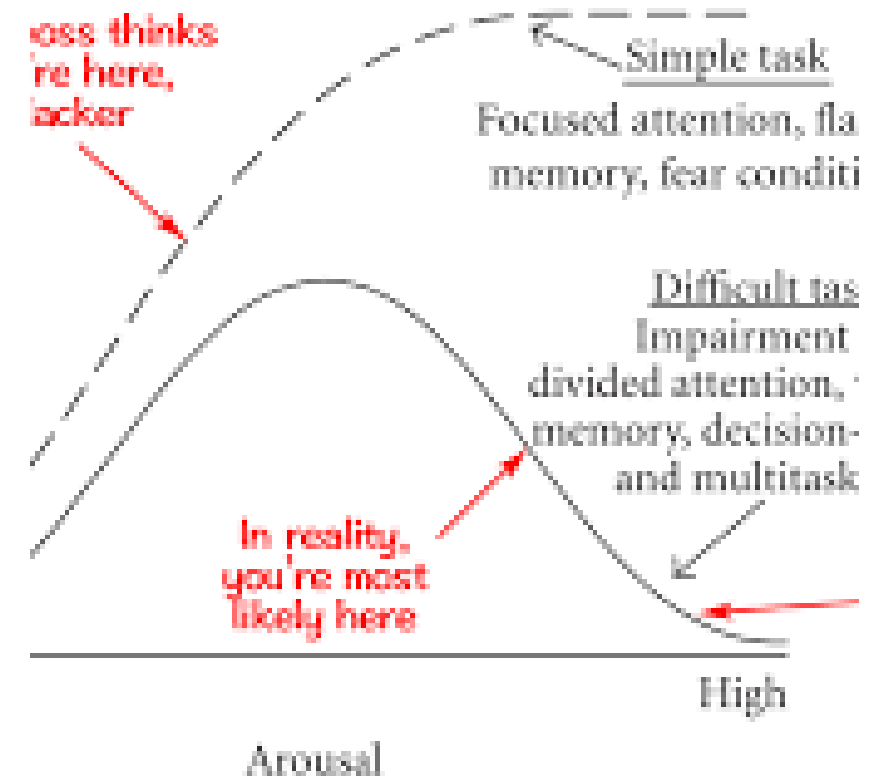
Challenge false beliefs

- Studies are 'too' important
- Previous experiences with failure
 - Fixed mindset
 - 'I must prove that I am smart.'
 - Previous performances
 - Bad luck, illness, bad choices...
 - Ineffective advice by parents
 - perfectionism
 - ...



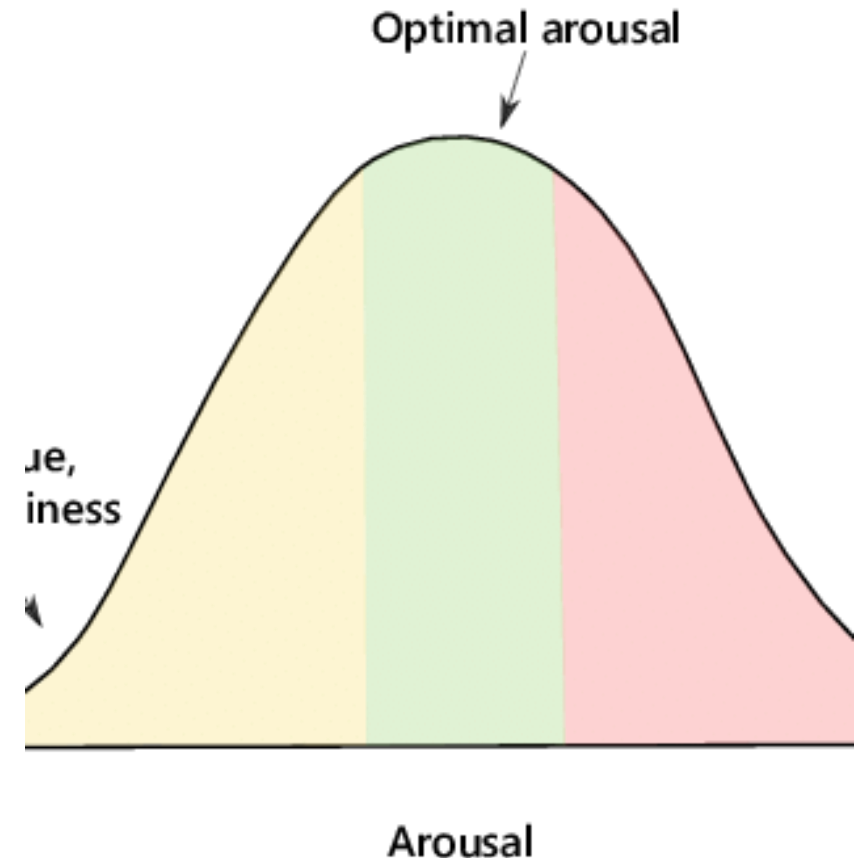
Difficult task needs more self-care

- Something went wrong
- Self-confidence decreases, stress level: high, concentration: low.
- Procrastination is a short-term way to calm down but in the long run, it increases arousal and leads to more procrastination.
- The more a task is difficult, the more self-care is important!



Challenge the targetshift: The function of panic and suffering.

- The shift from working to suffering
- To suffer becomes 'language' for 'I take this seriously', i do my best'
- Targetshift
- The goal changes
 - From working to suffering
 - Suffering is ultimate proof of my motivation
 - I study all the details but not the essence, I start all over again & again
 - Selftorture gives entitlement I suffer so I'm entitled to get good scores



Tools to undermine non helping verbal rules:

- “You can’t get much done in life if you only work on the days when you feel good.” – **Jerry West**
- **Inspiration finds you working**
- <https://dariusforoux.com/sciencebehindprocrastination/>

If all this
doesn't
work ...



Procrastination works 'better' for the self-image than the cure

Example:

The idea that I study hard and have no certainty about success is unbearable to me. So I work less hard.

So instead of studying, I help my grandparents when I have too much stress.

I stay in bed because if I don't, I am seduced to go out and help people. I do this only for the exams that give me stress.

I am really not happy with myself!



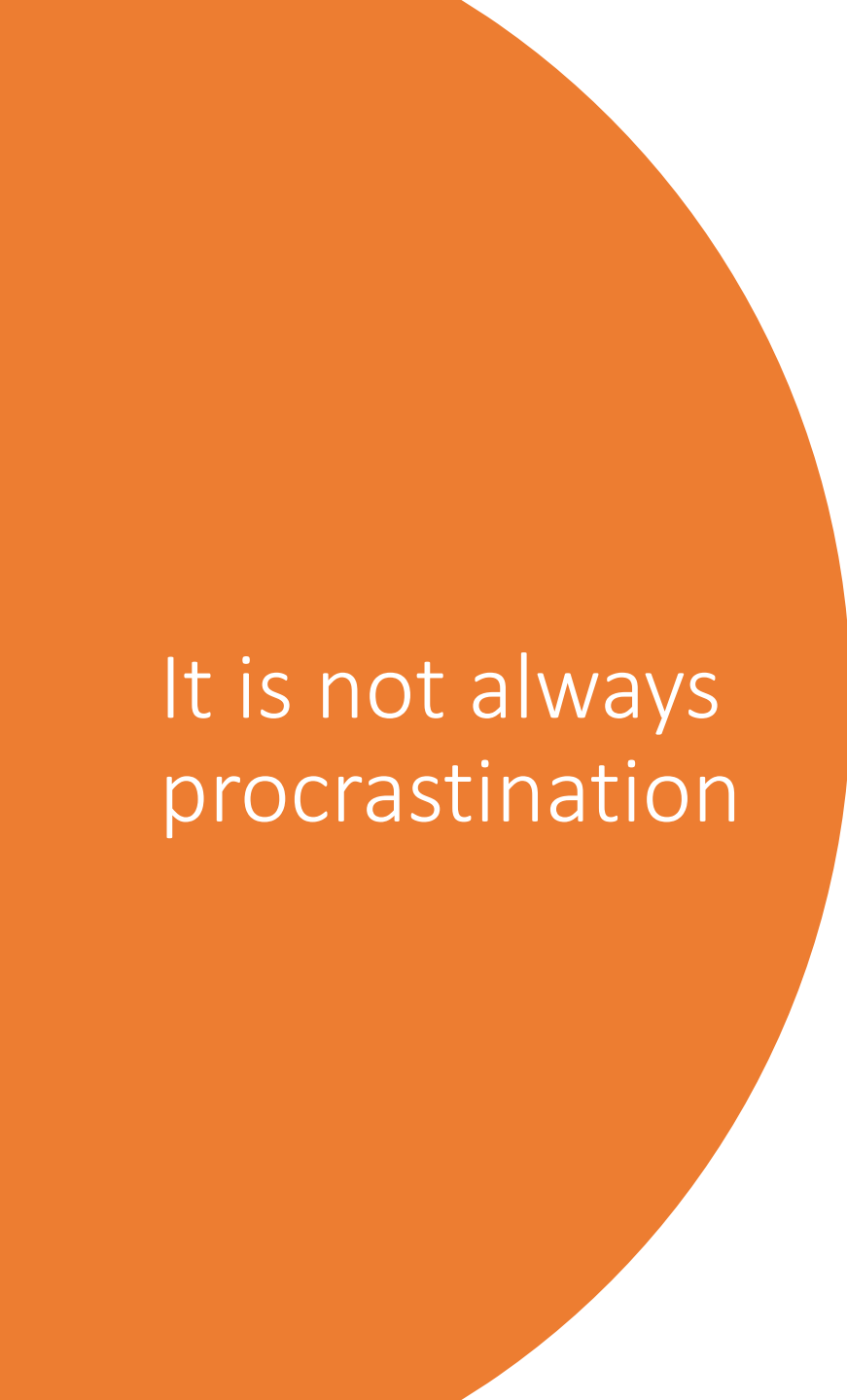
When you're stuck!

- Stop procrastinating → confrontation with damaged self image
- But procrastination is what I don't want!
- Circle of selfpunishment



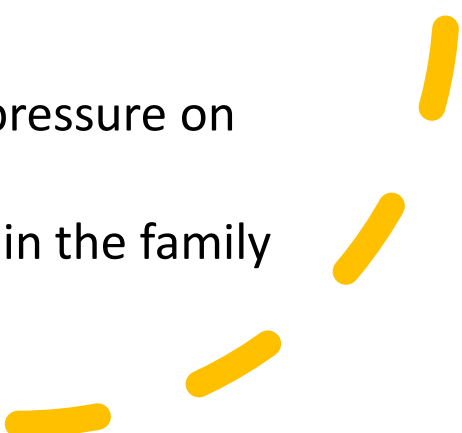
The ultimate tool: Install a positive 'double bind'

- Every time you procrastinate, eat a chocolate.
- The confusion can lead the student out of the circle of selfhate and selfpunishment



It is not always
procrastination

Procrastination or ...

- Wrong choice of subject or studyfield
 - Time-management or planning issues
 - Context demands other priorities
 - Burn-out, Depression, OCD and other psychiatric disorders
 - Not wanting to graduate because graduation will put the student in a difficult position
 - Ex: Forced marriage.
 - Fear of becoming more independent
 - Poverty, or social problems that put pressure on 'leaving-home'
 - Loyalty issues: Being the only person in the family that can study
- 

And of course, there are reasons to procrastinate

[\(87\) Ian Dury and The Blockheads – Reasons To Be Cheerful, Pt. 3 \(Official 4K Music Video\) - YouTube](#)

- Procrastinating to send angry mails leads to socially inappropriate behaviour.
- It helps you to have fun in your life.
- It can be very efficient: situations can solve themselves.
- You give other people the possibility to win.
- It helps you with difficult choices: you choose in a passive way.
- It can be a form of selfdisciplin if you want to lose weight.
- Active procrastination = while procrastinating unconsciously focusing on the task