Hep C Healthy Habit Session 7: How to Win the Battle of Procrastination

May 11, 2016 By Connie M. Welch

Procrastination, a destructive habit which starts out small but leads to enormous wounding effects. Procrastination comes in many forms but the damaging effects can penetrate every area of our lives, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally, professionally, financially, in every regard.

Procrastination is a form of denial and most often when confronted with the issue it's met with excuses, frustration, and sometimes anger at others and disappointment in ourselves.

Procrastination stops us in our tracks from moving forward in making progress. In order to win the battle over procrastination we need to take an honest self assessment, pay close attention to our self-talk when we're up against a project or decision.

When we are faced with a decision or project, what is our default action? Listen to what we're telling ourselves. Listen for faulty or negative thinking that sets us into a procrastination cycle. It's a "put off" mindset.

"I don't have time for this," "I'll do it later," "I don't want to do this," "I don't care," "I deserve ____," "I'll get around to this when _____," "Someday when I have more time or____I'll get this done." These are just a few common things we tell ourselves, can you relate?

The common denominator in procrastination is the feeling of being overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the feeling of not having enough time, resources, or even feeling overwhelmed by perfectionism, a strong desire that if we don't have all our ducks in a row, then we can't move forward.

So how do we win the battle of procrastination?

Patience and Perseverance. This is not an overnight, flip the switch process. Quite often change does not come until the procrastinator has suffered a loss or experienced regret, and sorrow, or faced with an issue that forces change.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We all suffer from various degrees of procrastination. We can take proactive steps to help us get unstuck and break the cycle of procrastination.

The key to winning the battle over procrastination is applying this simple principle, AAA (Alert, Awareness, Action) in these steps:

1. Acknowledge the problem and desire change.
2. Pay careful attention to what we say to ourselves (self-talk).
3. Make an immediate plan to take steps forward.
4. Take Action: Do it!

Charles Hummel once stated this enormous truth in The Tyranny of the Urgent over the Important,"Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important."

Ponder that a moment. What's urgent to you and what's important to you? We all have things on both lists. We need balance to be productive with the urgent and important.

Jim Rohn coined this great truth about procrastination, The Law of Diminishing Intent which states, "The longer you wait to do something you should do now, the greater the odds that you will never actually do it."

John Maxwell shared in his book, The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth, "When I was a kid, one of my father's favorite riddles to us went like this: Five frogs are sitting on a log. Four decide to jump off. How many are left?

"The first time he asked me, I answered, "One." "No," he responded, "Five. Why? Because there's a big difference between deciding and doing!"

There it is right there, we can have super smart goals and a tremendous plan of action, but unless we PUT the plan into action, the results will only be good intentions without results.

Years ago I was on a committee with a working Mom who had a good balance between taking care of the urgent yet making time for the important. I observed her habits, she took care of the immediate to eliminate the pile up of to do's.

If something needed to be picked up and put away, she did it immediately. If a letter needed to be drafted and mailed, she took the time to get it done right away instead of putting it off.

She either took care of a task immediately without putting it off or set it immediately in her schedule so that it would be taken care of in a timely manner. She didn't put off and therefore saved herself a lot of time and energy getting bogged down by procrastination.

She knew how to balance her schedule by saying "No" when she needed to and prayerfully giving her best Yes when it was something she knew was right for her to do.

I admired her ability to recognize that "not everything someone asked her to do was right for her to do." She knew when to say Yes, and when to say No. She took time to work and time to "not be on a set schedule, with flexibility," which I greatly admired.

In short this simple principle was applied. AAA (Alert, Awareness, Action).

When I applied these same principles and habits in my life, it was amazing how much more I got done and the relief I experienced. It took practice to develop this habit, but once I continued to do it over and over, the pay off was huge.

So to avoid procrastination on a small or large scale, when something needs to be done, I quickly evaluate it, I mindfully listen for any “put off” self-talk , and I take action.

A simple AAA: Going through the mail. Shift through the important (bills, etc…) and the junk mail, I shred and toss immediately in the trash in order for it NOT to pile up. Boom, it’s done.

A simple AAA: De-Clutter project. Break down into doable Action Steps (like using the Power of 15 Minutes each day) to eliminate the clutter one step at a time. Make yourself a Target Goal card titled (DeClutter Room) and write dates that you will check off each day to work on this project. Put this out where you will see it daily and do it.

A simple AAA: Do you need to save $1000? Keep an envelope in a safe location. Place $25 a week in an envelope. Write the date and balance on the outside of the envelope each time you put money into the envelope. You’re saving $100 dollars a month and in 10 short months you’ll save $1000. Whatever the amount, it adds up quickly.

Do you see how this simple AAA principle works? There are things you CAN DO right now to break the cycle of procrastination. Alert, Awareness, Action. Practice this consistently and you will experience a positive change in the right direction. You can apply this simple AAA principle to every area of your life.

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