



The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt-Free Play

Neil A. Fiore

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Learn how to overcome procrastination and enjoy guilt-free play! One of the most effective programs to combat procrastination, THE NOW HABIT has sold over 100,000 copies, has been translated into 11 languages, and is now revised and updated.

Featuring a new introduction and a new section providing strategies to understand and deal with the role technology plays in procrastination today, **THE NOW HABIT** offers a comprehensive plan to help readers lower their stress and increase their time to enjoy *guilt-free play*. Dr. Fiore's techniques will help any busy person start tasks sooner and accomplish them more quickly, without the anxiety brought on by the negative habits of procrastination and perfectionism.

The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt-Free Play Details

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From Reader Review The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt-Free Play for online ebook

Zack Ward says

I wish that I could recommend this book to my Freshman self, because the program is already working for me (Medical School Application).

Fiore puts forth the thesis that procrastination is a defense mechanism that people use to escape the anxiety they feel for large looming projects. They are afraid of producing inadequate work and they are afraid of being judged harshly for failing. It isn't laziness that drives the procrastinator to procrastinate, rather, it is the negative self-talk: the should've's and have-to's, the feeling of being trapped, an inability to accurately keep track of time spent, and a temporary reprieve from all of the suffering that the procrastinator must deal with.

So how does one beat procrastination, this learned behavior that we engage in to get away from self-imposed criticism and anguish? Fiore suggests starting with changing the way you talk to yourself. Always choose to do things because you choose to do them, not because you have to. You'll feel less trapped that way. Next, schedule all the things you do in a day EXCEPT the work you intend on completing (he calls this the Unschedule). This will give you a realistic glimpse of your day so that you don't schedule things that you are likely to fail to do. After that, compose an exhaustive list of all the tasks that you need to complete in order to complete the project, organize them by chronology, and write them backwards, starting with your finished product and working your way back to your current situation. This "reverse calendar" should provide a realistic roadmap to your ultimate goal. By breaking the project into small chunks, you are increasing the probability that you are going to get started on each task, especially if you build a "winning streak"

Fiore goes on to explain that we become most productive when we stick to a schedule of mandatory fun. By scheduling tennis, horseback riding, camping, frisbee, biking and other fun things, you structure your days around fun. You fit your work time around these fun things, trying to hit a certain number of work hours everyday. The goal is to START as often as possible, not finish. When you think of finishing things, you think of overwhelming and indefinite goals in the future, which can be self-defeating. It is better to think of work as a series of tasks with immediate and tangible goals, which is obviously more motivating.

Fiore also provides focusing exercises that I found helpful. They take about two minutes to do and leave you feeling invigorated right before you start to work.

I recommend this to anyone who is having trouble with procrastination. Totally worthwhile read.

Emma Sea says

original review Jan 13, 2013

The whole book was one big "THIS!!". Interspersed with a few "Fuck! I'm such a doofus" moments.

book +36 hours

- completed a draft of an article I've been avoiding since November
- emailed someone I've been dodging for ten days
- joined a gym and went once (this is a different kettle of fish from joining a gym and going a sustained 4+ times a week; please check back)
- Completed a work review I have put off since December
- completed a task due last November

update 21 Sep 2015

this book didn't make my life perfect, but it really did change me for the better.

I changed my job

I allow myself to have things that make me happy

I moved to my dream condo (I have a pool! I wanted a pool my *whole life* but figured I didn't deserve one.

Now I have one! Eeeeeee!)

I earn more money

I'm healthier

I completed several important personal projects

I still go to the gym

I restarted a recreational activity I love

I gave up ownership of some problems that were making me miserable and guilty

I still struggle with giving myself free time, because I don't feel I've earned it, but I keep working on it. I struggle with completing personal tasks, as I give priority to work tasks, but I'm working on that too.

I still give this 5 stars

Natalie says

Yes, I have read every productivity book in existence now, why do you ask?

This one was quite different from most of the others I've read - most of the books out there are, essentially, GTD and how to stick to it. This book was actually very psychological - I could identify with a lot of the stories about insecurity, especially as he kept going on and on about students who couldn't finish their dissertations. xD While I liked the idea of the Unschedule, and understand the concepts involved, I felt the book was a little light on the do it, do it now mentality that I've found helpful out of most productivity books. I also felt like the Power of Habit more actively helped me to understand what would work about forming new habits. While this book says to reinforce your good behavior with rewards and encourages you not to beat yourself up if you fail, it didn't point out that this is not necessarily enough and how to change your routine if your new habit formation fails.

Anyway, good book, especially if you're constantly drowning in self-doubt and low self-esteem, and realize

that system just isn't working for you. As someone with a deeply ingrained terror of success, I found many aspects of Fiore's anecdotes helpful.

Mikal says

I listened to this book on Audio CD throughout the month of March. It's a practical approach to identifying and understanding the habits of procrastination.

Early in the book the author shattered one of my previously held myths. I believed that procrastination was the problem, now I have come to understand that procrastination is not the problem, its the symptom.

This audiobook (not lengthy) offers a solid viewpoint into why we procrastinate. This makes it useful for individuals who struggle with procrastination and managers or colleagues of constant procrastinators.

Prior to reading this book, I didn't view procrastination as one of my major challenges- but much of this book resonated with me and I will take it as an opportunity for personal improvement.

A quick note: in this audiobook there are a number of unexpected silent gaps for you to meditate along with the reader. -- I'm not sure why the producer took this approach as it's unlikely you are listening to this audiobook at a convenient time or place to close your eyes and meditate for ten minutes.

I will purchase this book in ebook format as well.

Jerry says

I wanted to write this review, but have been putting it off. That's a joke. If you read the book, you know what I mean.

I do suffer from putting things off. Not everything, just those things that, for some reason, hit me as complex and time consuming. Dr. Fiore not only helped me to better understand the nature of my reasoning, but to also realize that I am not broken. He goes even further in offering specific tools and techniques to get yourself out of those bad habits.

For me, there are a couple of elements that have made a world of difference. First, is learning to focus on starting, not the finished product. In doing that and giving myself 20-30 minute work spaces followed by a break to do something I want to do is the second tool I use most often. There are many more tools provided, but those two made an immediate impact for me.

It has made a change in just a few weeks in both my attitude and productivity.

Not bad, if I say. For that, and that alone, I rate this 5 stars. If you are already a person who successfully juggles a lot of things, then you may not get much from this book, but if you still have halting performance in prioritizing your life and getting things done, then this book will have something in it that you will be able to use.

Cara says

Most books that claim to help you with procrastination boil down to: get organized, make a list, get off your butt and do your work. Unlike those, this book is very helpful. It starts by explaining why people procrastinate. It's not because we're lazy, it's because procrastination rewards us in one way or another (ex. if you delay a task, sometimes it will turn out not to have been necessary at all, so not doing it saved you some pointless work. Goofing off is more fun than work. If you wait until the last minute, if your work isn't perfect, you have a built-in excuse to not consider that a reflection on you--you would have done better if you had had more time). So the trick is to find a way to make work less scary and more rewarding than procrastinating.

5 blocks to productivity:

- "I have to..." No, you can choose to do it or choose the consequences of not doing it. Same with "I should..." Forget that--make a decision, do it, or don't do it.
- "I must finish." Don't think about that, it's too overwhelming and far off. Instead, think about how to get started on one little piece, any little piece. And forget worrying about the perfect starting point, just start somewhere. Start at the next possible opportunity. Keep starting more and more little pieces, and eventually they'll add up to progress.
- "This is too big." Again, stay away from the big picture if it scares you. Look for one small step you can take next.
- "I must be perfect." No. I can be human. Nobody is perfect.
- "I don't have time to play." Actually, you'll do better work if you take care of yourself and make time to play. Replace this with "I must take time to play."

To summarize, make a schedule for the week. Don't write any time for work in, just write in all the time you have blocked off for lunch, sleep, commuting, taking a shower, exercise, meetings, and fun stuff. Block off all that time--it is unavailable for work. Then, as you go through the work day, every time you work for half an hour uninterrupted, give yourself credit for that on your schedule. Also note what you did with the rest of the time, and use that information to see how you could manage your time better. But the keys are

- don't write work on the schedule until you've done it
- reward yourself with a little break or something every time you finish a good half hour
- pepper the schedule with stuff to look forward to
- do not work more than 5 hours a day or 20 hours a week

Great stuff--has really helped me.

Deepthi says

One of the most practical books in the Psychology of Procrastination that I have read. The cliched advice 'Just do it' is not a sustainable adage for procrastinators to live by. Procrastination is not the problem, it is a symptom a deeper underlying issue regarding fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of success or generally feeling overwhelmed by grand plans and pressure. This book uses a combination of great tools like reverse psychology, introducing guilt-free play into one's schedule, meditation to stay centred and growing each day by cultivating the psychology of love rather than fear.

I am not usually a fan of positive psychologists that use the 'Ra Ra Ra' method of motivation;- I find it to be unscientific and usually unsustainable beyond the initial high that all that rara-ing creates. Neil Fiore's book is based on a very deep understanding of human nature, psychology and positive reinforcement. A great book that I highly recommend to create sustainable habits

Jason says

I'm not usually one to read a bunch of self help sort of books, though I occasionally will run through one on a recommendation, such as the odd finance book about getting debt under control. But, despite other problems that I have in life the single biggest, hands down, is procrastination.

People who don't procrastinate will look at a procrastinator and see only that that person is either not working hard enough or putting off work. They don't procrastinate and as such don't understand the motivations and reasons behind why someone would. So they demand "get to work" and "just do it" and "work harder" which more often than not will just cause more procrastination.

This book is the first I've ever come across that actually understands procrastination. Reading through its pages I found myself nodding my head a lot because it described my internal struggle with work almost perfectly. And more importantly, the methods and exercises it provides for battling procrastination seem perfectly valid and easily doable. I've already started changing my habits by simply recognizing when I'm headed toward procrastination and being able to head it off before it happens.

And most importantly, this book isn't just about working harder. It's about working better and integrating play into your schedule because it recognizes the single most important element to procrastination - the reason we get bummed out and piddle around is the prospect that work is going to take away time from play. So by putting play on your schedule first and building work around play, you flip the whole thing on its head.

The only hesitation I had in giving this 5 stars is that the last couple of chapters delve into the sort of hippy zen breathing chanting mantra type stuff that I tend to loath in self help books. But up until that point it was an excellent book, and really you can ignore that part and still get a lot out of it.

Katie Bananas says

I'm glad I got to read this before the year ended. I think it will be very useful to incorporate these habits into my 2017 resolutions and goal settings, and hopefully taking each to full use as the year flows. I'm happy I read this to see where my pestiest habits are obvious to have time and room to correct them and start with a kick off of motivation, a burst anew!! :)

Erin says

I don't think of myself as a huge procrastinator, but I think all of us are in some form or fashion. I'm messy. I'd rather read than do dishes right after I make dinner. I leave my shoes everywhere. I'm on Facebook too much. And I'm trying to streamline things that I do, make my life a little easier by getting on the ball. I think

had interesting things to say as to why we procrastinate, and how to get around it. The most intriguing one is the Unschedule--you only get to "treat" yourself after you've done 30 minutes of uninterrupted work, and once you've done that work, put it on your calendar. So your calendar doesn't fill up with tasks you dread (11am--work on Jones report), but AFTER you've worked on the Jones report, you put it on your calendar, thereby a) giving yourself a tiny gold star, and b) being able to track how long it REALLY took to finish the Jones report. I think often I'm not honest about what I'm actually doing or how long that thing actually takes, and then the day just fritters away. I'd probably be amazed at how much or little time I spend on certain activities that could best be spent some other way. Seriously, if you could figure out how much actual, concentrated work you do a day (and shut up, it's not 8 straight hours daily) I think we'd be much more productive. I'm going to try out a few of these habits and see how they do for me.

However, I did try a simple habit last week of immediately doing something (dishes, putting away the shoes) as soon as I saw/thought about it, and it made me feel so much better! I didn't feel guilty about relaxing. Fiore is big on "guilt-free play", so schedule your time to get the annoying stuff out of the way first!

Jaidee says

4.5 "helpful, systematic, encouraging" stars !!!

2017 Honorable Mention Read

I am a closet procrastinator. My friends do not know that I am., but my partner and family are well aware of it. Procrastination has become quite severe over the past three years to the point that I am tired much of the time and needing more and more rest despite not really increasing my productivity.

This book was immensely helpful to me and I am already turning things around and hope to continue doing so. Through reflection and implementing these strategies I have discovered that I am not lazy or unmotivated but rather have way too many demands and most of those are self-imposed.

I am not a perfectionist either but the fact of the matter is that all the projects that I am involved in both work and leisure spheres are not necessary to my well-being and in fact are causing unnecessary stress. This book has helped me come up with a plan to get my time under control, prioritize my tasks, schedule in more free time and most important helped me understand that I can let many things go in order to improve my quality of life. I do not need to have both a full time job and a side business. I do not need to have the income as we have everything we need and can greatly cut down on our expenses so that we don't have to work as much.

In a few short weeks, my sense of ease has increased and my knowledge that what I set my mind to do I can accomplish while letting a lot of other obligations and time wasters go.

The book takes the reader through a wide variety of strategies, examples and explanations that will be helpful to anybody that procrastinates from an occasional basis to those that are heavily oppressed by this very difficult human problem.

My one small issue with the book is that all of his case studies tended to be those that work in business or sales and it would have been helpful to have a wider variety of occupations and professions looked at.

There is also a very helpful chapter for managers in how to deal with procrastination in their employees as

management styles are often the main culprit in procrastination in subordinates.

This book was mildly life-changing for me and for that Dr. Fiore I am very thankful !!

Volkan says

Pretty good companion to "Getting Things Done." While GTD teaches you how to apply behavioral methods to boost your productivity, "The Now Habit" explains the mental processes that block action, and how to overcome them using a combination behavioral and psychoanalytical tricks. The toolset includes some behavioral tools, like the Unschedule (a schedule where you fill in the fun stuff first), guilt-free play and the reverse calendar. If you are just starting out with the program, I found that there is no such thing as guilt-free play. And the most potent critic of this program is the fact that fear is always a better motivator than pleasure. Fear narrows down our options while pleasure tries to amplify them. When you are trying to narrow down your focus and boost up your concentration there is nothing more effective than self-inflicted fear, which is a more benign version of the artificial terror induced by an organizational culture. If I never had any reason to fear falling short of my goals, I'd never start anything, but once I knew I had to start it, then I can find the right mental frame to pull me in the direction of the goal. That's the problem I see in this book's emphasis of pleasure over pain. While you can say "I choose to" rather than "I have to," as the book tells you to, you are really choosing because you have to, unless you can change your life goals and strategies every single day, which is not realistic. Once you commit to a life goal, you make a choice, but then every task that follows from that choice becomes a "have to." Otherwise, you are really fooling yourself thinking there is a choice when there isn't.

Petra X says

Oh my gosh, I'm in such a quandary. I know I never get round to things and overthink things to the extent that action become a distant concept. I need help. I recognise that. This book looks like it could help.

But before I found it, I was checking out this one, The Thief of Time: Philosophical Essays on Procrastination and now I don't know which one to get. I'll have to think about it and hopefully decide before next week's book order goes in. Or the one after that.

Maybe I should look for more books on the subject, see if any of them can help me make up my mind.

That's something to think on. I'm going to make a cup of coffee.

Update I did buy several books on procrastination for the shop, but couldn't make up my mind which to take home to read. It was very anxiety-producing. Luckily I sold them and didn't reorder. Can't handle that kind of pressure!

Katie Alender says

I need all the help I can get.

The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?Misericordia? ?????? ✨*♥♥ says

Quite cool.
