



## **Five Steps to Stop Procrastinating** *The brute-force method to getting something done*

by Elizabeth J. Agnew, MS

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### **Step 1. Identify what it is you want to accomplish.**

Yes, I know this may seem silly. But moving from a vague sense of the task to knowing exactly what you need to accomplish by when will help it feel more manageable. If the task is huge, consider tackling only part of it at a time.

### **Step 2. Set up the infrastructure to complete the task.**

This may mean going to the website, opening a page in a book, opening the file on your computer, or looking up a phone number. Pretend as if you're going to begin the task. Tell yourself that you don't have to start yet, you're just setting it up so when you're ready to start, the supplies and infrastructure will be there.

### **Step 3. Procrastinate some more.**

Walk away from the task, and give yourself 10 last minutes to countdown before you go back and sit at your desk. Really enjoy these last minutes, and don't let yourself out of the task. Be careful, this time is meant for mentally preparing to sit back down in that chair, not for the give-an-inch-take-a-mile rule. It's up to you to not let this crucial step get out of control. In this step, procrastination is a tool to help you get used to that fact that you're about to suck it up and get this thing taken care of.

### **Step 4. Sit down and do only the very first part of the task.**

Now that your 10 minutes are up, force yourself to go back to your desk, or the place where your task will be done. Now coax yourself to begin by giving yourself permission to do ONLY the first teensy tiny part of the task, or put a 5-minute time limit on it. Tell yourself: "I only have to work for 5 minutes, then I can stop again", or "I only have to do this first part, then I'm off the hook for awhile".

### **Step 5. Repeat.**

Chances are, you will likely not even notice when your 5 minutes are up from Step 4 because you're so immersed in that task you've been putting off. Usually, it's beginning the task that is the hardest part, and once you begin you'll see it's not so bad and you'll like the feeling of progress. You've gained the momentum, and rather than stopping, you want to get through with it! If for some reason this is not the case, then repeat Steps 1 through 5! Maybe you need to break the task into smaller pieces, or set up a reward for when you finish.

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Liz works with individuals and organizations in technical fields needing tailored leadership development that speaks their language. Liz has logged hundreds of hours coaching individuals from companies such as Jet Propulsion Laboratories, Google, HP, SETI, Lockheed Martin, VNUS and Sun Microsystems. Her background includes experience in adult education, team facilitation, and public speaking. She offers complimentary coaching consultations – call or email today to schedule yours.