



Procrastination Worksheet

I am procrastinating about (select a task).....

.....
.....

Procrastination is a strategy that meets needs we feel (perhaps subconsciously) will be endangered if we advance with the activity we are avoiding.

Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' model offers us a categorised list of human needs. Maslow's theory posits that higher level needs can only be met when lower level needs are first addressed.

Procrastination may occur when we seek to take action at a higher needs level (often at the level of self-actualization) whilst failing to acknowledge and address a lower level need or needs.

Self-actualization: the need to fulfil one's potential.

Aesthetic needs: the need for beauty, harmony, order.

Cognitive needs: the need to know, explore, understand.

Esteem needs: the need to achieve, be approved of/recognised.

Social needs: the need to connect with others, to be accepted (loved).

Safety needs: the need to feel secure and safe, to be free of danger or harm.

Physiological needs: our fundamental survival needs - for water, food, shelter etc.

Consider what happens when you succeed in procrastinating about the task you have identified above. The results of your procrastination provides clues as to which lower level needs are being denied or demeaned.

What results from procrastinating about this task	The need this meets



Now consider alternative ways you could meet the needs you have identified. Be creative. Ask friends, family, your Coach for ideas.

As an alternative to procrastinating about

I can meet the need for

by ...

Examples:

As an alternative to procrastinating about that bully at work, I can meet my need for physical safety by having the conversation in public or I can send an e-mail outlining my concerns.

As an alternative to procrastinating about ending the relationship with this girlfriend, I can meet my need for love by strengthening my friendships (I'll do this by getting more honest with John and spending more time with Krystyna).

As an alternative to procrastinating about asking for a pay-rise from my critical boss, I can meet my need for esteem by listing my work successes.

As an alternative to procrastinating about effectively disciplining my child when s/he misbehaves, I can meet the need to understand their behaviour by asking my Coach to suggest a book on human behaviour and I'll also sign up for that class on child psychology

As an alternative to procrastinating about getting my office refitted, I can meet my need for order by taking my holidays whilst the builders do the work.



Next, identify the stages necessary to achieving the task you were procrastinating about. Alongside each stage of the task identify an alternative route to meeting your needs. Then identify when you will carry out each of these actions.

Stage of task	When I do it	How I provide for my need for ... (insert need and planned response)	When I do it

Example:

Preparing for potentially difficult phone call.	Before tonight's call.	I can meet my need for approval by developing a phone call 'plan' that seeks a win/win conversation.	Today 4.30pm
Make call	7pm	I can meet my need for approval by meeting with a trusted friend after (so that I can reflect on what happens and what I can learn from it for the future).	8pm

Ready? Great! Now, take action!

Remember, if you delay action until you have met your lower level needs fully, it is likely you will be delaying for a long time! Consequently, aim to **start** meeting your lower level needs – **then** take the higher level actions you have been procrastinating about.