



Top 10 Mistakes Coaches Make When Coaching Someone Through Procrastination

1. **Just Do It** – Although this is the motto of a famous shoe company, very often people who have problems with procrastination don't really understand why they *can't* "just do it." To use this with one of those people can be very disempowering. Try getting under the procrastination first.
2. **It is just a matter of Time Management** – Time management is a misnomer. There are only 24 hours in a day... we can't manage time we can only manage ourselves. It is imperative to examine if the problem with procrastination is indeed an issue with systems and time or if there is something deeper going on like fear of success?
3. **Prioritize your "To-Do" list** – To do lists never seem to stop growing because the items on it are unrelated. You never really get around to the low priority items usually. Mark Forster, author of *Get Everything Done and Still Have Time to Play* suggests working from project checklists. Ask yourself "What do I need to do to do a GREAT job with this?"
4. **Trying to convince a procrastination client why what they are doing doesn't make sense** – Trust me... this argument is already going on in their head. You will probably become a source of disempowerment if you "argue" your point. Try instead to look for how their procrastination *makes perfect sense*. The procrastination is a wonderfully constructed system that serves something in their life. Get to that point with them instead.
5. **Seeing all procrastination as equal** – There are many different types of procrastination. I like to lump them into 3 types: How We Are – (i.e. how we are biologically wired to respond to what feels most immediate – the brainstem or reptile brain); How We Think (thoughts/ fears / beliefs / assumptions – cerebral cortex - logic); What We Do (how what we do works for us on some level – even when it doesn't.) It is the interplay and the relationship between these three factors that effect how we complete things and follow through. If you coach everything from just one perspective, you fail miserably.
6. **Coaching the symptom without coaching the fear underneath** – The same set of symptoms can have opposite root causes. If we try to set up systems without examining the fear and coaching that, we are doomed to create another series of "failed attempts" for the client and then make it even harder for them to succeed.



7. **Seeing "resistance" as the problem** – Sometimes we can use our resistance to a project as a compass point pointing where we need to go. Using resistance that way can help us order our day.
8. **Coaching towards a vision without coaching thru the fear under procrastination** – Many coaches love vision work. It is amazing and can reorient a client and their priorities. That being said, if you try to get a client to do vision work as a remedy to procrastination you may be in danger of putting the cart before the horse. Chances are the fear will cloud their ability to see a vision for their future and thus if they come up with one it will probably end up in their piles of "incompletes." Test procrastination for its roots first.
9. **Seeing "I'm too busy" as a time management issue and not seeing if there is avoidance procrastination** – Mark Forster (see above) says that we do busy work very often because it is easy. It doesn't require much risk. Often a procrastinator will whip themselves up with trivia to avoid fear and risk. Look there first.
10. **Seeing procrastination as bad** – We all do it. Remember there are many different kinds of procrastination and sometimes it is giving us vital information that a certain course of action isn't right for us. Seeing procrastination with an eye to the wealth of information it provides makes it our friend. We let go of the judgment of ourselves and we become detectives. Isn't that more interesting than seeing it as an enemy?