

choose to procrastinate. The sooner you accept that, the better you'll be able to overcome procrastination.

Tip # 2 *I want NOT to procrastinate anymore*

In line with tip # 1 above, once you accept that procrastination is your weakness, the next step is to eliminate this weakness. Your desire not to procrastinate anymore should be sincere. You need to demonstrate that determination through small daily gestures.

Tip # 3 *Mea Culpa-Take Responsibility*

You've accepted the fact that (a) you're a procrastinator, and (b) you have a sincere desire to change. Now tell yourself that if you fail to achieve a particular goal or a given task, it's because you procrastinated. *Mea culpa*. Admitting guilt is a giant step. Note, however, that there is a huge difference between admitting guilt and being too hard on yourself. Admitting guilt is taking ownership of your actions. Being too hard on yourself is unjustified self-blame. Continue from where you left off.

Tip # 4 *Ask: In what ways do I procrastinate?*

Ask yourself, "In what ways do I procrastinate?" Sit down with pen and paper. Writing them will help you focus and identify them more clearly. Here are some ways where people procrastinate:

- paying bills

Tip # 16 Encourage them not to replace old junk with new junk

It can be a vicious cycle. Just as we managed to clear the house of unwanted bric-a-brac, in come new ones. Explain to your family that there was a specific reason for clearing junk. Old clutter should not be replaced with new clutter. Encourage them to think twice before acquiring additional material possessions. Examples:

- Will I consult this book more than once, or is it just for one school assignment? Maybe I can borrow it from the library instead?
- The hubby loves tools. He spends his weekly allowance on them. He just filled up an entire year with all kinds of tools. Ask him which ones he hasn't used for 6 months and ask him to throw them away.
- The clothes in your closet. Which of them have you not worn for six months? Call the Salvation Army or the recycling center.

As soon as the closet is half-full, and you can finally see the wall of your closet, you'll be inspired to re-organize your whole bedroom: dressers, commode and night table drawers – shoe racks included!

Tip # 17 Don't let your house budget stick out like a sore thumb

Budgeting for house expenses is a chore people put off indefinitely. They know something is wrong with the budget; bills pile up and

Tip # 19 *Divide and delegate house chores*

Obviously you can't do it all. So it's time for a strategy: plan a nice dinner for your family on one long weekend, and tell them in advance that you have something to announce. Cook them a special dish or two and whip up a dessert that everyone will adore.

At the end of the meal, tell them that you want to make some changes at home. Say that you've been procrastinating in doing some important chores around the house because you lack their support.

Bring up your divide and delegate plan, ask them for suggestions, and get everyone's commitment. Your concrete, well laid-out plan will get you the results you want.

Tip # 20 *Set up chore chart after division of labor is decided*

As the initiator of the plan, you must be the first to set the example. If you committed to re-organize the cupboards and clean out the fridge once a week, do it. When everyone sees you're doing your part, they'll do theirs.

Set up a chart in the kitchen or in the TV room where everyone can cross out the task once it's completed. Check the chart once a week; tell them how pleased you are with their progress. If some members have been delinquent, ask them why. Don't scold, give them another chance. This chart is an effective way for you to identify who the biggest procrastinators are, and you may need to supervise them more closely.

Tip # 33 Break that huge term paper into small parts

Students dread term papers. They take forever to finish and you hate footnoting. You're not alone. Term paper phobia is as common as a fear of heights.

If you tend to put doing term papers, one way of avoiding procrastination is to divide the project into small parts. When you've set up the outline, pick out the sections you think are the most difficult and begin your research. You can leave the easy parts for later.

Breaking a job into tinier segments is an effective way of taking immediate action instead of postponing it for later.

Tip # 34 Turn that cell phone off

Your parents bought you a cell phone so you can call if you find yourself in a bind or need a lift or simply need to let them know if you'll be late for dinner.

It's a good idea to keep the cell phone with you especially on those nights when you have to stay in the library till late at night. But don't use it to keep you from doing what you're supposed to do.

If you talk too much on your cellular, you're not only using air time, you're using it to procrastinate from attending to that pressing academic project. Allocate 30 minutes during the day to stay in touch with friends, but try not to go beyond that time.

Tip # 62 Don't procrastinate in ensuring a smooth transition for your successor

Your successor deserves a smooth transition. Schedule your departure intelligently. Tie up loose ends so that you can hand over your files and pending matters to whoever is taking over your job.

Help her succeed by not procrastinating. Type out an information sheet resembling a Frequently Asked Question list and give it to her.

This way, when the actual transitioning takes place, you don't waste time addressing routine questions, leaving you more time to show her the key aspects of your functions.

VI. Procrastination and Human Relationships

Tip # 63 Okay, so you're not impulsive but...

"I want to think things more. I don't want to hurt him." How many times have we heard that before? Men and women say they don't want to do anything – especially end a relationship – impulsively.

The problem is, you're the problem. Admit it. The relationship's been going downhill for the last 12 months. You've craved for freedom frequently, but you still can't get to tell your mate that love's gone out the window.

The procrastinating monster rears its ugly head in between the dark recesses of your closet that's looking more like a huge wasteland.

Tip #69 "Come with me shopping..."

Or "let's go see a movie." "Let's bar hop tonight." "Can you go with me to this concert?" "Join me for dinner at my step mother's. I don't want to be alone with her."

Do you have friends who seem to want to include you in all – and we mean all – of their activities? Is it their constant need for company, or simply a case of not having a backbone? If you're not capable of a firm but polite no, you'll receive a lot more invitations you can handle.

Friendships have to be nurtured, but this is overkill. Shed off your procrastination habits and tell your friend politely you can't go out with her anymore. She'll survive, or she can find someone else to drag along.

Tip # 70 Butt out of my kitchen!

One woman was lamenting the fact that her mother-in-law always seems to drop in around the time she's preparing dinner for her husband.

This woman endured her mother-in-law's unwelcome visits – not to mention her acerbic words - for six months, but feels she's come to the end of her rope.

Tip # 78 Did you make it to the list of 10 worst dressed this year?

It's been ages since anyone complimented you on your wardrobe. You walk along the office corridor and you notice people turn away.

Perhaps you're imagining it but they seem to be suppressing a giggle every time they see you. Okay, you've never been vain about your appearance, but we're not sure that's exactly a good thing nowadays, especially if there's so much press coverage about the oft-repeated concept of "dressing for success."

Not sure you're wearing 21st century attire? Not sure your make-up isn't more appropriate for the circus? Not sure the colors match? Do your shoes look like you haven't stepped into a shoe store for the last 15 years?

If you procrastinate about seeing an image consultant, you may not even make it to the first step of the corporate ladder. Your brains and experience got you this far. Are you going to let your image set you back a few light years? Don't hesitate. Image consultants would give anything to turn a project into a success.

Tip # 79 That turbulence inside...

Thank goodness for the 21st century. We have cosmetic surgeons, image consultants, and we also have...psychologists. You sure deserve an "A" for appearance: you're the envy of your friends, the campus belle, and the office "beauty and brains" who's loved, hated, loved.

For instance, if you do volunteer work three times a week at the home for battered woman, how about diminishing the frequency to once a week.

Your daughter who was being physically abused by her husband finally had the courage to pack her bags and leave him. She's now come to you for help and you know it will be a lengthy recovery period. Charity begins at home. Don't create two different sources of stress. Decide which is more important and take action.

Tip # 83 "My name is Tess, and I'm an alcoholic"

Alcoholism is a SERIOUS problem, no two ways about it. And it can be criminal, if you drink and drive and hit someone. If you're drinking everyday and you're feeling helpless and desperate, and these feelings are leading you to drink more, you need help. Don't delay. There are humanitarian organizations in your community that will provide referrals. Or go on the Net and begin your research into recovery.

Tip # 84 "Hi, my name is Ted...no sorry...it's J...J...Jed...and I'm on drugs."

Drugs are bad news. You could destroy not only your future, but also your family's future. Drug rehabilitation clinics have mushroomed all over the country. That's why you're not alone, and that's the good news.

Stop procrastinating and see a drug counselor in school, or ask for your doctor's advice about where you can go. It's best to invest in

Tip # 94 Cuisine: win his heart back

You might be taking a risk with new, sexy underwear. Why don't you follow the oldie but goodie rule: win his heart through his stomach.

Even your friends say they won't eat what you cook. Admit it's your major failing and take cooking lessons at your community's recreational center. A new hobby is food for the soul, a drug-free stimulant for the mind. When you graduate from the course – kudos to you for not procrastinating – you may just bring the old lover back.

Tip # 95 Cuisine: show off the gourmet cook in you

Your local paper has been publishing requests for recipes. Delight readers by digging old recipes from grandma's time and you could be a winning author! Submit your recipe entry and keep your fingers crossed.

Some women have "accidentally" started food and catering businesses because they weren't shy about sharing an ingredient or two. If you think your recipe deserves a Pillsbury prize or whatever other prize is being offered, don that apron and go for it!

Tip # 96 Environment

Is anyone paying attention to the Kyoto accords? How does one NOT procrastinate in doing what's good for the environment?

The owners, who didn't really care about making a profit because they were going into a retirement facility shortly, were only asking for \$200,000.00.

By procrastinating, the individual missed out on the property because someone else – who was less of a procrastinator – grabbed it. The property is now appraised at \$450,000.00, up \$250,000.00 from four years ago. Now you know the truth - procrastination is an expensive mistake.

Tip # 99 Real estate: clean up before the doorbell rings

Your real estate agent already warned you once before: don't wait until the last minute to clean up the yard and tidy up the house. The open house is going to take place any day now. You've put it off until the day before, and the cleaning up is taking longer than you thought.

Next day, the doorbell rings, and the weeds were not pulled out, the shrubs not trimmed, the hallway not cleared of clutter, and the kitchen faucet is leaking. The closets are unrecognizable. The books on the shelves are covered in dust. The flowers are wilting. And you forgot to do this...and that...

The buyers said thank you anyway, and looked at another house.