

Pt 2 AKRASIA EFFECT: Why We Don't Follow Through On What We Set On

by Samuel Adeosun - Thursday, November 01, 2018

<https://dhm.com.ng/pt-2-akrasia-effect-why-we-dont-follow-through-on-what-we-set-on/>

About 24hrs ago, we concluded that, our brains prefer instant rewards to long-term payoffs. It's simply a consequence of how our minds work. Given this tendency, we often have to resort to crazy strategies to get things done—like refusing to eat until you read that book, write that book or give yourself to prayers. But I believe it is worth it to spend time building capacities if your goals are important to you.

Aristotle coined the term *enkrateia* as the antonym of *akrasia*. While *akrasia* refers to our tendency to fall victim to procrastination, *enkrateia means to be “in power over oneself.”* Designing your future actions, reducing the friction of starting good behaviors, and using implementation intentions are simple steps that you can take to make it easier to live a life of *enkrateia* rather than one of *akrasia*.

The Framework You Need to Beat Procrastination.

Here are three ways to overcome *akrasia*, beat procrastination, and follow through on what you set out to do.

Strategy 1: Design your future actions.

Just as we've discussed yesterday, the moment Victor Hugo locked his clothes away so he could focus on writing, was the moment he created what psychologists refer to as a “*commitment device.*”

A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future. It is a way to lock in future behavior, bind you to good habits, and restrict you from bad ones. For example, *Daily Habit of Learning (DHL)* is what I've adopted to ensure my relevance in future. Hence, the need to know that there are many ways to create a commitment device. You can reduce overeating by purchasing food in individual packages rather than in bulk size. You can stop your private meetings with ladies if you know you've not mastered your emotions. I've even heard friends who have to stop eating at nights just to reduce their weight.

The circumstances differ, but the message is the same: commitment devices can help you design your future actions. Find ways to automate your behavior beforehand rather than relying on willpower in the moment of falling victim. Be the architect of your future actions, not the victim of them!

Strategy 2: Reduce the friction of starting and stopping. The guilt and frustration of procrastinating is usually worse than the pain of doing the work. In the words of Eliezer Yudkowsky, “On a moment-to-moment basis, being in the middle of doing the work is usually less painful than being in the middle of procrastinating.”

So why do we still procrastinate? Because it's not doing the work that is hard, it's starting or stopping the work. The friction that prevents us from taking action is usually centered around starting the behavior. Once you begin, it's often less painful to do the work. This is why it is often more important to build the

habit of getting started when you're beginning a new behavior than it is to worry about whether or not you are successful at the new habit. I tell you, forget about the pain and focus more on the future benefits.

You have to constantly reduce the size of your habits. Put all of your effort and energy into building a ritual and make it as easy as possible to get started. Don't worry about the results until you've mastered the art of showing up.

Strategy 3: Utilize implementation intentions. An implementation intention is when you state your intention to implement a particular behavior at a specific time in the future. For example, "I will pray for at least 30 minutes on [EVERYDAY] in [PLACE] at [TIME]." then draw a reason you must engage in prayer!

Conclusively, it seems simple to say that scheduling things ahead of time can make a difference, but as I have covered previously, implementation intentions can make you twice to thrice more likely to perform an action in the future.

End!

God bless you.