

The DaVinci Dilemma (TM) Presents~~

**OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION FOR MULTI-TALENTED  
PEOPLE:**

**How to keep too many ideas keep you from getting things DONE**

By Lisa Rothstein

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## **Chapter 1. - WELCOME!!**

**But first, a few questions....**

Do you have so many ideas you have trouble making progress on any of them?

Do you spend time and energy beating yourself up for putting things off that you could be applying to your next creative or business project?

Do you have enough notes, scribbles, half-baked ideas and unfinished books to fill the Library of Congress?

If you answered “yes” to any (or all) of the above...I'm glad you didn't put off grabbing this book!

At <http://www.DaVinciDilemma.com> we've found that procrastination is one of the biggest challenges for so many multi-talented creative people. We should know...we're DaVincis too. I'm good at many things, but procrastination is one thing I wish I weren't such an expert in! Still, it allows me to share from my own experience what works – and what doesn't – for people like us.

**That's why inside, you'll find:**

- \* the reasons why multi-talented “DaVincis” suffer so much more acutely from procrastination than “regular people”
- \* the 7 faces procrastination likes to hide behind most
- \* tips and exercises designed to help multi-talented people like you deal with whatever sneaky form procrastination takes for you...and have more fun and peace in your life as you get more done

We'll also let you know how you can get even more support from the DaVinci Dilemma (TM) experts and your tribe of fellow DaVincis!

So get out a notebook or open a new file on your computer, because you'll want to not just read what's in this book, but put some of it into action right away. (As in NOW.)

Think of it as your first step in kicking procrastination in the pants!

Lisa Rothstein & Liisa Kyle, Ph.D.

*The DaVinci Divas*

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**Chapter 2. - What is the *DaVinci Dilemma* (TM)?**

Call it the mother of all time-management challenges.

Some special folks are blessed with a plethora of different talents. They're highly skilled at almost every creative field they try. Ask them to pick one, and they look at you as if you told them to drown all their children but their favorite. They're idea factories, with light bulbs going on over their heads on a daily – or even hourly – basis. In terms of gifts, they are the richest people alive. But there's a catch: Shirley MacLaine notwithstanding, we all still only get one lifetime.

People with the DaVinci Dilemma (TM) have a feeling of being pulled in many directions at once, and a tendency to have so many irons in the fire and balls in the air that they feel they're dropping more than they'd like. And they have excruciating difficulty concentrating on what they're doing in the moment, because their other talents are calling out to them, “Do me! Do ME!”

If this is you, you've probably been called a “jack-of-all-trades, master of none.” A “flake”, a “dilettante” or scatterbrained. People who don't get it will wonder why you don't just "settle down" and pick one thing. They've started to roll their eyes whenever you share your excitement about a new creative project or business idea. They suspect that you have A.D.D. or worse. But you're not sick, or crazy. You're simply too talented for your own good.

You're special, but you're not alone. The DaVinci Dilemma is a problem as old as human genius itself. Did you know that even the original Renaissance Man, Leonardo DaVinci, castigated himself for his many unfinished works? We remember his achievements, but he knew there were a lot more things that he never got around to, and it haunted him. Renaissance men and women through the ages have had to struggle with how to divvy up their time and attention, while dealing with a society that likes nothing better than to pigeonhole people into categories and job descriptions, and berate those who resist.

Yet, given the choice, few of us would trade our multiple talents for a sane and predictable life devoted to only one thing. Leonardo certainly wouldn't.

The trick is to learn strategies to harness and focus our talents so that they are in harmony rather than in conflict – and so that they add to your life and others', instead of stealing your sanity (and driving those “others” crazy too)!

If you're like us, handling your procrastination behavior is a huge step in that direction. This book is all about giving you the tools and strategies to allow you to do just that.

### **What's so terrible about procrastination anyway?**

One reason it's so hard to tackle procrastination is that its insidious negative effects fly under the radar. There's not much incentive in the moment to do a difficult, scary or unpleasant task when you can put it off till later. Just as eating the chocolate cake does not add inches to your thighs in fifteen minutes (though it can seem that way), putting off starting on a project doesn't immediately doom you to failure. But over time, it's just as damning. And by the time you look back and realize what's happened, it may be too late to fix.

So, sorry...you need to feel some immediate pain, and, as Tony Robbins says, “get associated” to the negative consequences of procrastination. For better or for worse, humans are programmed to avoid pain even more than they are to seek pleasure. When you're clear on how bad procrastination really is for you, you'll have the natural impulse to want to defeat it before it defeats you.

Some or all of these may strike a nerve. Lean on whatever hurts the most. (You'll thank me later.)

\* \* \*

## **Chapter 3 - Seven Reasons Procrastination Sucks**

### **1. Procrastination makes you appear untrustworthy.**

Missed deadlines or constantly going down to the wire isn't a great way to bolster other people's confidence in you. The bitter irony is that you may have a huge, almost crippling sense of responsibility – but that's not how it comes across. Your reputation suffers, and people you want to work with don't feel as enthusiastic about working with you. Your talents are wasted when the attention goes to your unreliable work habits. Worst of all, it's really not who you are.

### **2. Procrastination makes you lose respect for yourself.**

If you hold the heavyweight championship for beating yourself up, you are all too familiar with this one. Every time you put something off or break a promise to yourself, the burden of guilt and self-reproach grows. Looking back over the ruins of days and weeks – even years – squandered avoiding a project or goal can really make you hate yourself. And it gets worse from here: A lack of self-respect affects your whole outlook, poisons all your relationships and severely stunts your quality of life. It's worth it to squash procrastination for this one reason alone.

### **3. Procrastination makes you miss opportunities.**

Aristotle said “Fortune favors the prepared mind.” When you procrastinate, you are not prepared to jump on fortune when it falls in your lap. When you bump into Steven Spielberg at the supermarket, it's better to be able to whip your finished screenplay out of your tote bag than to say, “well, I've been working on something for 8 years...can I send it to you when I'm done?” Or worse – you actually GET an opportunity, and you put off taking advantage of it. And the door eventually swings shut, as doors do. ARRGH. I hate when that happens, don't you?

### **4. Procrastination makes you get less done.**

Okay, so this is kind of obvious. But considering all you have to offer the world, it's really a

shame when you let procrastination rob *everyone* of your talents. No one else is going to write your play, create your comic book series, start your business or record the songs you haven't written. Who are you to deny us *all* a chance to enjoy the fruits of your abilities and ideas?

### **5. Procrastination diminishes the quality of your work.**

You may want to argue with me on this one. “But I do my best work under pressure,” you cry. You may think so. And there is, admittedly, a certain genius that comes with the intense focus that a terrifying last-minute deadline brings. But look at what you've *lost* in the process of procrastinating. You've lost time for essential research and allowing ideas to germinate. Worst of all, in your time avoiding the work, you've lost the connection to the passion that fueled the idea in the first place. A project done on adrenaline can turn out better than you deserve. But it's not going to be as good as a project done on love and a deep intimacy with your work. That's where the real genius is.

### **6. Procrastination sucks the fun out of everything.**

You may think you're having fun when you plop in front of the TV or go out drinking with your friends when you said you were going to work on your project. But you've probably noticed that the guilt that tinges your leisure time when you know you “should” be tackling your work makes it a lot less fun than it could be. Soon, even legitimate and necessary non-work activities, like sleep, feel unearned and somehow wrong. Now you're *never* really happy. Sounds like a pretty raw deal to me.

### **7. Procrastination robs you of the joy of creation.**

A bumper sticker when I was in college read “DON'T POSTPONE JOY”. But that's just what you're doing when you put off a creative project. It's a little like working out. Sure, it seems daunting before you get started. But haven't you noticed that once you're immersed, time and resistance disappear? As a creative person, this is what you were meant for. Every time you procrastinate, you separate yourself from this joy that is your natural state. Why would you do that to yourself?

### **How does the DaVinci Dilemma (TM) contribute to procrastination?**

We all know many people struggle with procrastination, from the graduate student delaying getting started on his thesis to the smoker who always plans to quit next week. But DaVincis face special challenges. As creative people, we may suffer more with self-doubt, perfectionism and resistance. And having multiple talents only magnifies these obstacles because we face them on so many fronts at once.

Besides, when it comes to the concentration required to see a project through to completion, we DaVincis are our own worst enemies. It's one thing to turn off the television or log off of Facebook, but quite another to turn off your own mind and its constant flow of ideas. Daydreaming is one behavior of many people who procrastinate. DaVincis daydream on steroids.

\* \* \*

## Chapter 4 - The Seven Signals of Procrastination for Multi-Talented People

It's so frustrating when we're intelligent people and we know what we want to do but simply don't do it. For children, it often comes down to an inability to delay gratification; that is, they want to watch TV NOW, and do their homework later – or better yet, never. This is the most obvious and literal form procrastination takes. But DaVincis have multiple ways and means of not getting things done. And our procrastination, while maddening, is often merely signaling one or a number of other things we're not fully aware of.

### 1. *Too Many Foci*

While many people struggle with procrastination in its many forms, this one is the unique province of the DaVinci. We have so many talents and ideas and projects, so many things we could be doing, it pulls us away from the one thing we "should" be getting done.

We don't *mean* to put it off, but we allow ourselves to become distracted with other goals and new ideas, and this has the *effect* of delaying something that needs doing now. Soon, the delay snowballs into full-blown procrastination, complete with all the guilt ("I should have started on this long ago"), overwhelm ("I'll never get it all done in time now!"), and self-recrimination ("WTF's wrong with me?!") all the while still looking over our shoulders at all the *other* things we feel need attention. In fact, we may be procrastinating on a whole range of projects simultaneously, trying to drive so many trains at once that none ever gets far from the station.

If this sounds like you, turn to the procrastination-blasting techniques of '[Fearsome Focus](#)' in the next chapter.

### 2. *Perfectionism*

DaVinci himself said in one of his notebook/diaries something like: "I am an affront to God and to man, because my work did not achieve the quality it should have." Wow. If that's how you're going to feel about your work, why *ever* start that project? As creative people, we are constantly judging ourselves and our work, usually more harshly than the public would. We hesitate and plan and tweak until it is just right...which of course, it never is. And so, a lifelong habit of procrastination is born.

If this sounds like you, try the procrastination-blasting techniques known as '[T.A.R.L.](#)' described in the next chapter.

### 3. *Fear*

Related to perfectionism is fear: Will it be good enough? What if it isn't? What if others judge

me harshly? Worst of all, what if by doing this I find out the hideous truth I've suspected all along...that I *suck*? If I don't play the game, I can't lose. And maybe if I delay long enough, the opportunity will pass. Then I'll never have to step up and find out my work didn't measure up. This line of thinking is the path not only to procrastination but to a lifetime of regrets as a bonus.

If this sounds like you, try the procrastination-blasting techniques of [‘T.A.R.L.’](#), [‘The Work’](#) and [‘Worst Case Scenarios’](#). All are described in the next chapter.

#### 4. *Resentment/Resistance*

You don't want to *have* to do anything, even if you are the one who has made the choice to do it. If you had a dominating, controlling parent or two, this is probably a big one for you. The minute you set a goal or make a promise to yourself, it becomes a prison you need to break out of, or an authority figure you have to thumb your nose at. "Make me," you challenge. If only you could.

Plus, as a creative soul, you'd probably rather be playing than working. The grindstone is your least favorite spot in the world. As long as you frame your work this way, it won't be as good as it could be even when you do force yourself to do it. And you'll certainly have less fun.

If this sounds like you, I can't wait to introduce you to the procrastination-blasting technique called [‘The Unschedule’](#) that I'll describe in the next chapter.

#### 5. *Burnout*

You're just tired of doing what you used to love doing. You feel you've said and done all there is, and you're out of gas and out of ideas. Or, perhaps, you're simply so exhausted from burning the candle at both ends with so many projects that everything seems too hard. You need a rest and a break...but when the break turns into months, we're into procrastination mode. It's time to decide whether you are still committed to doing this, and if so, what it will take to regain your passion and energy for it.

If this sounds like you, try the procrastination-blasting technique of [‘Visualization’](#) described in the next chapter.

#### 6. *Overwhelm*

Dread of taking that first step up what seems like an enormous mountain. It's too big, too much work, it's going to take too long and we can't make any meaningful progress right now ....so let's think about something else instead. Now you're not only not taking that first step, but maybe even adding something *else* to your plate as a way of avoiding getting started on the first thing. Now you've got something new to procrastinate about! Not exactly what you needed.

If this sounds like you, try the procrastination-blasting techniques of [‘The Unschedule’](#) and [‘Chunking & Baby Steps’](#) described in the next chapter.

#### 7. *Adrenaline Addiction or ‘Last-minute-itis’*



Many of us are addicted—not only mentally but physically -- to crunch time. Writers are famous for this. Are you incapable of getting started until it's almost too late? Have you pulled a lot of all-nighters in your life? Are you forever rushing breathless into meetings late or nearly late? Are you the last one on the plane, lurching down the aisle in a sweat while other passengers glare at you for holding them up? It's not that you have less time than the 24 hours a day allotted to everyone. It's not even just that you have more to do than most people, though that can contribute to it. If this is a regular habit, it's just that you've become accustomed to the artificial energy that comes from going down to the wire. It's the only way you can focus and get things done. While this energy seems helpful, it also creates unnecessary stress and robs you of time you could have used to do a much better job. Coffee can help you wake up and start your day ... but if you *need* it simply to function, there's a problem. It's the same with your last-minute adrenaline rush.

If this sounds like you, try the procrastination-blasting techniques of [‘The Unschedule’](#), and [‘Being Early’](#) described in the next chapter.

**Do you recognize yourself in one or more of these?**

*Activity:* Take a moment to review the list of the Seven Signals of Procrastination. Which sound most like you? Which are your typical Procrastination Signals?

*Activity:* Turn to the next chapter to read about specific tips, remedies and activities recommended to address *your* Procrastination Signal(s).

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## **Chapter 5 - Procrastination-Blasting Tips, Activities & Remedies for DaVincis**

### **Procrastination Blaster # 1.: Visualization:**

Think back to a time – it could be last week or last year -- when you enthusiastically said "yes" to something you are dragging your heels on now. (Now here, I'm assuming that you DID have a moment like that. If you never did, if you began the project without enough passion or purpose, burnout comes sooner and is a lot harder to reverse.) What were your reasons for doing it? What did you expect to come of accomplishing this? Is it still true for you, or could it be? If the answer is yes, now you need to rekindle the flame. The best way to do this is vivid visualization.

Imagine your project completed. What does that look like, feel like, taste like? Who or what new people or places do you now have access to? What does it lead to? What does having completed this project now free you up to do? What are the reasons – the Big Why -- you absolutely want to finish this thing? What do you love about it? How is your life different and better now that you've done it? Make sure you feel a real state change. Get associated to the

love and passion you felt at the beginning, and feel it in the present as you imagine the future.

Now record your feelings and mental images so you can further explore them, make them "real", and easily access them later. I like [creating a vision board for this](#).

**Activity:** Gather supplies such as colored paper or board, glue stick, scissors, magazines and some good photo paper in your printer. Put on some music you love. Think of one of the ideal outcomes you'd want from your talent or project. Now create a collage that tells that story. I like to include not only pictures but words – encouragement others have given me, or words or phrases of my own to remind me of how I feel about the project and what results I expect from it.

Taking time out to visualize what you really want isn't just not a waste of time...it may be the catalyst that lets you create exactly what you need, in a lot less time than you thought possible. Give it a try! You may be surprised at what other fresh ideas about your project spring up to stoke your flame as you do this. Don't worry if you don't get an instant epiphany...but don't ignore it if you do!

Of course, visualization does not have to be all visual. Some people just don't "do" pictures -- more verbal/auditory people rekindle their passion by talking or writing about their dreams and projects in detail in a journal. Kinesthetic-oriented people get juiced by getting physically involved in an activity.

Find out what method works for you and once you do "go back to visit" your compelling, juicy vision often. Work you love is never hard. When the love and excitement around your project is more present and real than the drudgery and resistance of the work, you'll be pulled to completion rather than having to push yourself.

### **Procrastination Blaster # 2.: T.A.R.L.**

A mentor who calls himself Bob the Teacher and loves acronyms recently wrote a book called *Take Action, Revise Later* (which he abbreviates as T.A.R.L.) It's the "Just Do It" of business and creative work. There's a famous expression, "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" Well, what if you viewed all feedback, positive *or* negative, as just that -- feedback? Then there is no failure, only learning -- learning how to improve, or learning what projects are and are not worth your time. That's the essence of T.A.R.L. You can still make it perfect. Just recognize that perfection takes trial and error.

Writers know that they have to allow themselves to do a bad first draft, just so they can have something to work on. "Writing is rewriting," the saying goes. Or, as one of my writing mentors says, "Bad is the road to good."

The computer software industry gets it...that's why there's a version 2.0, 3.0 and so on. If everyone delayed release of any product until they had perfected version 7.0, we'd all still be using wax tablets and abacuses. I'd rather have a buggy system that exists than a perfect one that doesn't. Bugs can be fixed. Dead air cannot.

**Three reasons to ditch your perfectionism and fear, and to T.A.R.L instead:**

1. *You can only learn so much in your ivory tower.*

Until you get some real world feedback, you're creating in a fool's paradise. You really can't ever make it perfect in a vacuum. Get your work out there when you can see how it really works, and learn how to make it better.

2. *Action creates energy, and vice versa.*

A body in motion tends to stay in motion. A body at rest tends to head to the sofa for Haagen-Dazs and re-runs of Seinfeld. Doing *anything* gives you a burst of momentum that feels good and can lead to more action and new ideas.

3. *The people you are hoping to help or enlighten are waiting.*

You're doing them no good with your dithering. Only you can do what only you can do. Do your fans, customers and the rest of the world a favor and give them *something now*. Chances are it will be more than good enough. If not, there's always the second edition or Version 2.0.

**Activity:** Get your hands on a copy of [Take Action, Revise Later](#). Then:

Pick one project you've been "working on" or "revising" for a long time.

Make a plan to go public with it and put the date on your calendar. Whatever state it's in that day, it goes.

Treat it as a learning experience and get curious as to what will happen.

Decide how you will gather and measure feedback -- ask friends to give a critique, do a survey, institute analytics to measure clicks and sales. How will you know what's working and what isn't?

### **Procrastination Blaster # 3.: The Unschedule**

In his book *The Now Habit*, Dr. Neil Fiore outlines his time-planning designed to turn Procrastinators into Producers. He calls it 'The Unschedule' because it turns traditional planning on its head. In the reverse psychology of The Unschedule, you're not even *allowed* to schedule time for that thing you've been putting off until you've *first* blocked out time — including one full day off per week – for Guilt-Free Play.

You're thinking, "I don't deserve to *play*, I only deserve to be chained to my desk, with tormentors (who strangely resemble my mother or my second-grade teacher) whipping me until I get my %^&#! thesis/novel/speech/fill-in-the-blank done!"

But that's where The Unschedule is genius. It forces you to *be good* to yourself. You not only get dessert, you are required to put it on the menu first. Knowing you have good things to look forward to short-circuits martyrdom, resentment and resistance. Before you even think about your project, you've planned time with friends, a tennis game, a massage, your favorite TV show

and a whole day off on Sunday relaxing with your spouse and *The New York Times*. Suddenly, this week doesn't look so bad.

Next, you put in all your everyday activities like sleep, meals, commuting, errands and exercise, appointments, day-job stuff and meetings.

Now, like magic, you clearly see that, rather than “having all week” to work on that dreaded project, all you *really* have left is two hours on Monday, an hour on Wednesday, an hour on Thursday, 45 minutes on Friday and half of Saturday.

This has two important effects:

1. If you need to be under the gun to get things done, The Unschedule shows you that the “last minute” is sooner than you think, and ...
2. You realize you only *have to* work for a limited time, during the short slots available. In fact, The Unschedule tells you to give yourself credit or a reward for every 30-minute block of uninterrupted, quality work you do. Chances are, once you get started, you'll stay at it for longer. But even if all you do is 30 minutes, you win. That feeling of accomplishment is a lot more motivating than the guilt you've been goading yourself with.

*Activity:* Pick up [\*The Now Habit\*](#) at the bookstore or library. But even if you don't have the book yet, you can try elements of The Unschedule.

**Get out your planner,** calendar or draw a chart where you can see a week at a time with each day broken down into hours. You can also download a weekly Unschedule page [here](#).

**Choose and schedule your Guilt-Free Play.** Pick out some things you really would enjoy doing this week, such as lunch with a friend, yoga class, seeing that new movie. Block out time for these in your schedule. Also choose one full day that you will take off.

**Block out day-to-day time.** Eating, sleeping, morning routines, that dentist's appointment -- stuff you know you have to do. Be realistic as to how much time these really take. If your last staff meeting went all morning, don't just allow an hour.

**Ask, “when's the next time I can start?”** In *The Now Habit*, Dr. Fiore says that ending procrastination isn't about finishing things, it's about just getting started over and over. When's the next time you can start on your project and put in that 30 minutes of quality time.

Try these, and you will be amazed at how you can have more fun *and* get more done every week.

#### **Procrastination Blaster # 4.: Chunking and Baby Steps**

*Q: How do you eat an elephant?*

*A: One bite at a time.*

Many DaVincis, who love the immediate gratification of a new idea, and have not trouble generating hordes of them, are stopped in their tracks when faced with the work that a large or long-term project entails. Because they can't imagine ever doing it *all*, they do *nothing*...and the guilt and time pressure only grows as they put it off.

A classic cure for this is chunking down your work into baby steps, each of which you can immediately see is "do-able". Here is how:

*1. Think backwards from your goal. What does completion look like?*

What has to happen immediately before that? Before that? Go through this exercise until you arrive where you are today. Figure out what the first step is, for example: "Schedule times this week to work on my thesis."

*2. Divide all your steps into small, do-able actions.*

If your steps are things like "complete book proposal" or "Write Act One," you're going to want to break these up into smaller pieces that you can imagine completing in one sitting. So instead of "write Act One," you may like to have a step called "write four pages" that you repeat on six days until Act One is done. No one step should be overwhelming.

*3. Remember to reward yourself and yourself credit for each step.*

One thing that feeds procrastination is the idea that you don't get to feel good until the entire thing is finished. This is robbing you not only of joy along the way but also of momentum need to propel you to the finish line. Figure out an appropriate reward or acknowledgment – your version of a gold star -- for each baby step you complete. It can be the same every time, or different. For example, you could make a list of things you like to do and pick one to give yourself each time you complete one step. You might also create a "Ta-Dah List" and list or journal your accomplishments as you do them.

Think the steps are too small to be meaningful? It's not Pollyanna-ish to say that any progress is huge. Think about it: just writing four pages a day, you'd have a 120-page screenplay in a month. If you only wrote ONE page a day, it would still only take you four months.

### **Procrastination Blaster # 5.: Fearsome Focus**

In his time management program *The Time of Your Life*, Tony Robbins singles out three types of distractions that commonly eat up people's time: dealing with emergencies in our lives, meeting other people's demands and escapes (TV, web-surfing, video Scrabble, etc.) to get out of stress. DaVincis can add another big distraction: their own plethora of ideas and creative projects. One idea leads to another and before we know it, we're down a rabbit warren that's led us from what we had planned to work on...and have lost hours in the process.

I've heard this blue-skying referred to as Bright Shiny Object Syndrome or even ADD or ADHA. But for most of us, there's no need to put a medical lable on it. We're not sick. Our creative muscles are must better developed than our 'discipline' ones. We haven't yet accepted

that avoiding distracting ourselves with our own ideas is a smart thing to do.

**Activity: Build your focus security system.**

*1. Set your intentions for the day first thing.*

What do you really want to accomplish today? Why? Remember to have no more than three main intentions. One is just fine. Put these and ONLY these on an index card. Make sure to do something on this before exposing yourself to your pile of bills, your to-do list or worst of all – your email, which is bound to be full of other people’s demands or dramas. These can and must wait.

*2. Big Rocks First. (closely related to #1)*

Many of you will know the famous story of the professor who show filled a glass jar with fist-sized rocks and asked the class if the jar was full. They answered “yes”. He said, “really?” and proceeded to dump a bucket of gravel into the jar. The gravel filled in the spaces. He then asked again if the jar was full. This time the class wasn’t sure. He then dumped a bucket of sand into the jar. He used this as a metaphor; had he filled the jar with sand first, there would have been no room for the big rocks. The big rocks are what’s truly important to you. Once you determine what those things are, make sure they get done before the minutia. Otherwise that itty-bitty sand and gravel will bury your life.

**Activity: Pick & Park**

Once you've picked what you want to get done, having a place to park those random great ideas will help you feel better about not addressing them right now. In his seminal book *Getting Things Done*, time management guru David Allen advises keeping a “Someday/Maybe” folder or list for those ideas that you don’t want to lose, forget or let go of...but that don’t fit into your schedule right now.

**Activity: Practice Fearsome Focus**

This is a term I learned from marketing guru Dave Lahkani. When concentrating on one of your Big Rock outcomes, make it a point to focus ONLY on that for a set period of time and allow absolutely no distractions or interruptions. Lahkani does 50 minutes on task, followed by a ten minute break. Use whatever period of time words for you. Maybe start with thirty minutes, as outlined in [The Unschedule](#), and work up to fifty minutes. Hang a virtual “Do Not Disturb” sign on your brain during that time. Assemble everything you need before you start and remove everything from your desk except materials related to your focus activity. If possible, turn off your phone and whatever you do, *don’t look at your email!* Absolutely NO multitasking allowed. You’re probably really good at it, and you’ve become addicted to doing a lot of things at once. However, studies have showed that people’s actual performance is of lower quality when they multitask. Plus the habit absolutely invites brand new distractions to come a-knocking. Give yourself the gift of doing only one thing at a time.

Focus doesn’t happen by accident for anyone, and for us DaVincis it really needs to be

intentional. Those focus thieves will always be lurking — but now you'll be ready for them.

### **Procrastination Blaster # 6.: "The Work" of Byron Katie**

Much resistance a procrastination masks fear. Unchallenged, this fear breeds unfinished projects and guilt while masquerading as things like a lack of time, endless revising or pondering and scorn ("I didn't really want to do that anyway").

Author and coach Byron Katie developed a very simple but powerful practice that is an amazing antidote to that free-floating, sneaky and paralyzing anxiety.

Our thoughts are accepted directly into the back door of the subconscious when not identified and challenged. "The Work" brings these thoughts out in the open and forces them to defend themselves.

#### **Here are the steps:**

1. State your fear or disempowering belief. "I'm afraid that \_\_\_\_\_". (Examples include: "I'm not good enough", "There are too many people doing this already", "The field is too competitive", "I don't have a chance", "No one will like it", "I'm too old/too young/too undisciplined/too busy", etc.) What you filled in the blank is the thought we'll work with.
2. Ask the question, "Is it true?" Answer yes or no. If the answer is no, skip to #4.
3. Can you *absolutely know* that it's true? Or in other words, is it possible that this might not be true? Is it possible that something else might be true?
4. How do you react when you have that thought? How do you treat yourself and others when you believe that thought?
5. Who would you be without that thought? How would you live your life differently if you did not believe that thought?
6. Turn the thought around. For example, if you wrote, "I never finish anything", write "I finish everything that matters". List as many turnaround thoughts as you can think of.
7. How is the turnaround thought as true or truer than the original thought?
8. For each turnaround thought, find two genuine times the turnaround has been true in your own life.

How sure are you now that your fear is real? Is it possible that your fear is really that famous acronym: False Evidence Appearing Real?

### **Procrastination Blaster # 7.: Worst Case Scenarios**

This is another great technique for combating anxiety:

1. Ask "what's the worst that could happen?" Come up with one or more answers.
2. On a scale of 1-10, what is the likelihood that these things actually would happen? How are your odds?
3. If against all odds the worst *were* to happen, could you handle it? Imagine it. Would it kill you? If the answer is no, you could handle it.
4. If the worst were to happen, what could you do to improve your situation or mitigate the downside? List everything that comes to mind.

Now you have a plan for the worst case, which will most probably never happen. Put this away where it's safe but where you won't see it.

### **Procrastination Blaster # 8.: Being Early:**

People prone to last-minute-itis tend to schedule things so they'll fill up every available minute. They're just in under the wire or they're late. The concept of doing something before it absolutely has to be done is totally foreign. They don't know what it feels like, so there's no incentive.

Why not try it just for a change? Think of it as an experiment:

For one week, plan to do everything early. Arrive at appointments at least 15 minutes early, turn in that report a day before it's due, call your mother before your usual day. Experience the feeling of peace and control, and the delight (or shock) of others that you're ahead of time.

If you're chronically late to meetings, rehearsals, appointments, etc. you may feel you're wasting time that could be used productively. This is easy to fix: bring your work or reading material or letters to write with you. Save calls to make from your cell phone at your destination, instead of before you leave. You'll still use every minute, but you'll save yourself the stress and guilt of being late. Instead of coming up with creative excuses, you can save your creativity for your work.

The bonus is that you'll send the message to others and to yourself that you can be counted on. Procrastination will no longer be so completely "in character" for you, so you won't keep expecting it of yourself and creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Last-minute-itis is just a habit. So is being early. Once you experience the benefits – including less stress, more choices, more confidence, snagging the best seats, building better relationships -- you may decide to become addicted to that feeling instead of the adrenaline.

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## Chapter 6 - , What's Next?

Like what you've read? Think you've got some new tools to short-circuit procrastination and do more with your talents? Well, there's more!

Sign up to be the first to learn about updates on future releases, and become part of the Da Vinci Dilemma (TM) community here: <http://www.DaVinciDilemma.com>

Perhaps you'd like even more personalized help to blast through your procrastination challenges and make the most of your talents? Great news: you can work one-on-one with your own DaVinci Coach! Treat yourself to a complimentary introductory consultation with Lisa or Liisa - go to <http://www.DavinciCoaches.com> and book yours online.

For a limited time, readers of this book receive 20% off any DaVinci Coaches (TM) coaching package or service...so don't put this one off!

Read on to learn more about your DaVinci Coaches.

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## Chapter 7 - Who Are We?

**Liisa Kyle, Ph.D and Lisa Rothstein** are two creative people, authors & coaches who live the joys and challenges of [The DaVinci Dilemma \(TM\)](#) daily. Their collective passions and expertise cover: psychology, creativity, fine art, film, theater, writing, graphic design, music, public speaking, comedy, analytical thinking, communications, organization, research, marketing, social media, education and many arts and crafts. They are experienced, professional storytellers who tell compelling, entertaining tales in print, radio, film and digital media. Helping other multi-talented people make the most of their talents and their lives is the mission and purpose of The DaVinci Dilemma (TM) community, coaching practices and body of work Liisa and Lisa are creating. **Please visit us at <http://www.DaVinciDilemma.com>.**

**Lisa Rothstein** began her series of creative careers as a street performer in New York City. Later she became a top Madison Avenue copywriter & creative director at such firms as Young & Rubicam on brands like IBM and Hanes. Today, as a certified Life Purpose(TM) Coach, sought-after marketing consultant and freelance copywriter, Lisa helps other creative entrepreneurs and companies communicate their brilliance and turn their "[\*creativity to cash\*](#)".

In true DaVinci style, Lisa is also a professional choral singer, cartoonist, watercolorist and stand-up comedian. An award-winning screenwriter, Lisa is represented by agent Caren Borhman and manager Andrew Kersey. She is a graduate of Brown University in Communications.

To learn more go to: <http://www.TheDaVinciCoach.com> & <http://www.YourWriterForHire.com>.

To connect with Lisa Rothstein online:

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/yourwriterforhire](http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourwriterforhire)

Facebook: [www.LisaRothsteinOnFacebook.com](http://www.LisaRothsteinOnFacebook.com)

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/davincidiva>

**Liisa Kyle, Ph.D.** coaches smart, creative people who want to overcome challenges, get organized, get things done and get more out of life. She's an internationally published writer/editor/photographer who co-authored *Happiness Awaits You*. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Michigan. As an international consultant, she has coached individuals, facilitated groups, and delivered inventive workshops on four continents.

Liisa's artistic pursuits include working in metal, glass, clay, textiles, paper and more. Her creative works have been featured in galleries, art fairs and juried exhibitions. She's also a royalty-earning lyricist. Liisa's volunteer activities have focused on adult literacy and fostering/training Guide Dog puppies for the Blind.

For more information or to book your FREE 30 minute consultation, please visit <http://www.CoachingForCreativePeople.com>.

To connect with Liisa Kyle online:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/liisakyle>

Selfgrowth.com: [http://www.selfgrowth.com/experts/liisa\\_kyle](http://www.selfgrowth.com/experts/liisa_kyle)

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