

The Procrastination Doom Loop—and How to Break It

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The Atlantic:

When I woke up this morning, I had one goal: Finish this article by 11 a.m.

So, predictably, by the time it was 10 a.m., I had made and consumed two cups of coffee, taken out the trash, cleaned my room while taking a deliberately slow approach to folding my shirts, gone on a walk outside to clear my head, had a thing of yogurt and fruit to reward the physical exertion, sent an email to my aunt and sister, read about 100 Tweets (favorited three; written and deleted one), despaired at my lack of progress, comforted myself by eating a second breakfast, opened several tabs from ESPN.com on my browser ... and written absolutely nothing.

What's the matter with me? * Nothing, according to research that conveniently justifies this sort of behavior to my editors. Or, at least, nothing out of the ordinary for writers, as Megan McArdle has explained on this site. I'm just a terrible procrastinator.

Productive people sometimes confuse the difference between reasonable delay and true procrastination. The former can be useful ("I'll respond to this email when I have more time to write it"). The latter is, by definition, self-defeating ("I should respond to this email right now, and I have time, and my fingers are on the keys, and the Internet connection is perfectly strong, and nobody is asking me to do anything else, but I just ... don't ... *feel* like it.").

Read the whole story: [*The Atlantic*](#)