



# ***Gain Control of Your Day***

**Tools and Techniques for Personal Productivity**



## **A Productivity Hint: How to Deal with (and Overcome) *Procrastination***

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Thank you for choosing to receive this whitepaper from the specialists of **Personal Productivity** at ***Gain Control of Your Day***.™

As you can see, we have a lot of topics covered in this particular course. And again, if you want to actually sign up, enroll, and take the seminar online via the podcasts, then please go to the web site of **[www.gaincontrolofyourday.com](http://www.gaincontrolofyourday.com)**. The information is there and you can enroll very quickly.

Now this productivity hint is going to be a brief podcast because we're going to talk about one of the key problems that we have.

Hmmm...wait a minute. No... you know what?  
I'm not going to talk about it now. I'll put it off 'til tomorrow....

**Yes!**

That key problem happens to be ***procrastination*** - the inevitable delaying of things.

We have a hint and tip here that can be simple and easy to use. In fact, it could be almost downright silly when you think about it!

But, guess what? The fact is that *it works!*

It works and it has helped a lot of people. I only know of one individual who said that it did not work for him at that time when he was involved in a marketing and development job within the Fortune 500 high-tech companies.

In the **Personal Productivity** course and in the seminar, we talk about something called *The Wall of Resistance*. This happens to be those issues and those activities or that pillar that you reach whenever you are trying to start a task or activity or get something completed. And they fall into different categories. They are things like:

- a lack of planning, or
- other people, or
- fears that you have or the attitude you've got or
- problems that face you – both personal and professional,

or it could be other things like:

- a messy desk,
- a cluttered electronic environment,
- old bad habits that you haven't unlearned and
- the habits that you have *not* yet learned – like the habit of Time-Linking®.

And it could be inner conflicts or it could be dealing with interruptions or conflicting priorities. But most of us suffer from *procrastination*.

In one of the classes that I taught in this particular **Productivity Seminar**, I asked people “Who here does not procrastinate?” And guess what?

There were a couple of people who did not. They got their things done on time and without delay.

But for the majority of us--including myself----procrastination has always been one of those paper tigers that we try to tame.

***Procrastination.*** What is it?

Simply stated: It's putting off and delaying.

Now, in the seminar we talk about **choices** that we make. Some of the choices that we make throughout the day are by:

- conscious choice;
- pressure from others;
- And, in particular, we have one that is called ***By Default***.

Well, if you don't do something, then it's ***Total Default***.

But if you make a ***Partial Default***, it means that what you are trying to accomplish—e.g., the task that needs to be done, or the activity that needs to be completed--is being delayed or put off until a later time. Usually, it occurs because it is uncomfortable for you, or because of other reasons.

And when you do that, the *partial default* means that that reason isn't going to go away. That task and that activity still has to be done. If it didn't have to be done, it would be a *total default* and who cares? It was probably a low priority item or activity, and no one will probably miss it.

But if that activity is important in your life and it has to be completed--or if that task has to be accomplished--then if we delay it any longer or put it off it is called *partial default*. And *partial default* means it's just going to come back to bite you at a later time because it will turn into a crisis later on. Crisis-managers usually work on the hottest fires or the squeakiest wheels, or whatever is the crisis at that particular time--

instead of listing them in priority sequence, finding out what is the one that has to be done right now.

"What is the best use of my time right now?" said Alan Lakein in his book *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* (Signet Classics, David McKay Co., Inc., 1973). The procrastinators should be asking themselves that question.

But instead of doing that, they just work on whatever is the burning issue or crisis at the moment. They put out one fire only to realize that 10 others are growing and probably larger than the one that they put out because they are managing-by-crisis.

So when we talk about procrastination, you can see the dangers of procrastinating. They will loom into crises and they will drain you, and you will feel overwhelmed, and you will fall behind, and then you'll be suffering undue stress--that negative stress that we talk about in the seminar, which is "*distress*." And those are the ones that cause damage to your system, damage to your emotions, damage to your future and career and your family life, damage to you personally.

Anyway, when we talk about procrastination, we should see what are the causes of procrastination. Well, in the course we talk about four main causes. There could be more, but these are the four ones that we know how to deal with:

1. You either procrastinate because it's new or you're experienced; you don't know where to start in a particular project or a particular issue or an activity.
2. You could be a perfectionist. And if so, then you have to wait until everything is done, you have to wait and gather all the information, you have to wait and put your arms completely around it, understand it, grasp it totally before you begin. Well as a friend of mine used to say, "You don't need the other 20 percent to start the project and get going." In other words, progress, not perfection, is

what they want. So if you're a perfectionist, that could be also a reason for delay, and sometimes the delay is subconscious.

3. The third reason is either the project or the activity or what's looming in front of you that has to be accomplished is way too large. It seems *overwhelming* to you. In other words, it's going to be so large that when you take a look at it, it will drain your resources. It will make you feel small. You will get the fear factor in you and you just want to avoid and hide it. So what's the easiest thing to do? It usually is to say, "I'll get to it tomorrow."
4. And the fourth reason--and this is the one we're going to talk about today because this is our brief Productivity Tip--it's *distasteful*. You just don't want to do it for whatever reason. It could be personal, it could be professional, it could be something in your past that you have as a negative experience. It doesn't matter what it is, but it is just distasteful and causes negativism for you. So let's talk about that one.

Perhaps what you've got on your to-do list in the morning are a series of "to-dos."

- One could be, "Prepare this overnight express."
- Another one could be, "Update the spread sheet that has the budget items."
- A third one could be, "I've got deadlines to meet, either for the production of this podcast or a production of a deliverable that I have to give to a customer."
- And the fourth one could be, "I have to work on this particular report, which requires a lot of thinking and requires focus." And this report is going to be very important because it could be either a bid for a government project, or it could be a proposal to a customer. Whatever the reason, this particular document or report is something that you do not like; it is very distasteful.

So what do you do? Well like all good people, you make your to-do list and then you assign a priority to them. Maybe the overnight express is a "B." Maybe the others are "A" priorities as well. But the top "A" priority is to complete that document or report. So you put down A-1 on your to-do list the night before, or in the morning when you're planning your day. And the others are A-2, A-3, and B-1.

Well what happens? When you start to execute your plan for the day, you look at you're A-1 task and the first thing that you sense is this uneasiness, negativism, that you say, "Gosh, I really don't want to do that. I just don't feel like doing it," because it is causing you the negative experience. So instead, what you do is take a break. Go get a cup of coffee. Do some other minute task.

When you come back, you look at your to-do list and you say, "You know what? I'm going to go to number 2." And number 2 may be, "I'm going to update the spread sheet for the budgets," maybe because you like dealing with numbers. You cross that out. You feel great. You feel euphoric because you've completed a task. It gives that uplift that everybody needs, that shot in the arm, that adrenaline of having completed an activity.

You go to item number 3 and you complete that task. And then you go to item number 4 and you complete the final task, even though it was a "B" priority of preparing the overnight express and shipping it. The end of your workday--whatever that is and whenever it is—occurs. And now you're ready to retire. And you look at your to-do list and say, "Well, I got everything done except for one." Yes, but that one was your number A-1. It was to complete that report or that document that was very distasteful for you.

So you put it off and you say, "Well, I'll do it tomorrow." And again, you put it as A-1. It is the most important thing. It's got to be done. And, by the way, this crisis is starting to loom. The sense of urgency to

complete that is growing greater because of the deadline that's approaching, but instead you put it off.

The next day the same thing happens. At the end of the day you have only one thing that you did not complete, and it happened to be that report. And so on and so forth.

And it can happen that whole week until it becomes a real crisis. And now you're in trouble because you don't have time to really work on it, give it due diligence, give it the focus, and so the work becomes less than quality. And it could cost you revenue; it could cost you sales; it could cost you disappointment in your job; it cause you to lose face in your professional appearance with others, depending on what the nature of your work is.

So how do we deal with this?

Well in order to avoid putting it off again and again and again, even though we try and put it on our to-do list so that it can be done the first thing, perhaps maybe we can do something that seems a little bit silly. It seems ridiculous, but it works. I'm talking about maybe using a technique where we can fool ourselves to get into the momentum of being able to overcome this terrible tiger of procrastination.

And how do we do that?

Well one of the things I can suggest is instead of putting that report or that deliverable that you had to do which is the distasteful one that's always the A-1 but never gets done, why don't you put it as A-4?

A-4. That's the fourth "A" activity that needs to get done.

Now, instead of that, you may get the other three things that are more enjoyable but are still important to do, like prepare the overnight express, prepare the spreadsheet, etc. Have those be your A-1, 2, 3, and

4 so that when the next day you actually come to your to-do list and you're planning for your day and you say, "Okay, now I've got to start my A-1 activity. I've got to -- here it is. A-1, prepare and ship that overnight express package with these documents." And you do. By crossing that activity out after it's completed, you feel euphoric; you feel that sense of adrenaline, the shot in the arm, and you're on a roll. You've got some momentum.

Then number two: work on the spreadsheet and complete the budget. You do that and guess what happens? Now you feel even better. You are really on a roll now. You've got some momentum going and you're euphoric again and you feel stronger. You do you're A-3 task, cross it out, and as soon as you do, again you're on a roll.

You're really moving.

And then you come up to your A-4 item, which is to complete that deliverable report and, "Argh, well I really don't want to do it." Here comes the distasteful negativism again. Your first impulse is to delay it, put it off, not do it, make an excuse as you've been making. But instead, this time, you have built enough momentum—that euphoria and that satisfaction of having completed the three other activities have given you enough momentum to the point where you can say, "Well, I think I can try it. Let me overcome it."

So then you start working on the project and, yes, it may take you a little bit more time than you realize. It may be distasteful in what you're doing. It may be difficult. But as soon as you finish it, you've completed it.

And guess what?

That momentum that you had that allowed you to complete the other tasks--important as they were but not as important as that A-4 document or deliverable--by completing those three first it gave you the

momentum, it started you going down the hill, it started making you pick up speed to the point that, when you reached that A-4 task, instead of coming to a grind, instead of hitting the brick wall, instead of blocking yourself to a halt, you basically said, "I've got some momentum. I'm going to crash through that wall of resistance."

And guess what? You probably did.

And at the end, when you completed that task--maybe that deliverable, that document, that bid or that proposal which took so long to do and made you so very tired--you could just stretch and say, "Boy, I am drained, but guess what? I completed it."

Now the sense of satisfaction you got is twofold.

- Number one: you've got the euphoria of having completed this terrible tiger that you've been putting off, a tiger that's been hounding you, the monkey on your back--and that gives you one sense of satisfaction and euphoria and even increases momentum that you have.
- But the most important thing is the second factor. You look at yourself and I bet you that you think to yourself, "You know what? It really wasn't that difficult." Or, "It wasn't as difficult as I made it out to be. I was overstating, I was exaggerating the negative difficulty in getting that task accomplished."

Now the reason why that second factor is important is because the next time you come to this same document or this same deliverable or a task that's very similar to it and distasteful to you as well, you are going to be more apt to go ahead and confront it "head on."

In other words, you can say, "I've already faced this tiger. I've already overcome this tiger once. I can do it again. And, yes, it's distasteful, but now I know how." And so the stress and negativism and the delay that's caused by getting to that task and doing it is going to be less.

That does not mean that it is going to be completely erased or taken away; however, it will be less. And that means that the more that you encounter these types of tough tigers to overcome, all of a sudden you become a master of overcoming them and your positive influence and your positive experience will give you the self-confidence to say, "I know how to deal with this. I know how to overcome it. It's not an easy fight, it's not something I want to do or like to do, but guess what? I know how to handle it now. I've overcome it once. I've accomplished this task. I'm going to do it again."

And before you know it, the next time that you have one of these you will be able to complete it by starting and taking action to do the task and then getting it done even sooner because you've already had experience. And the self-confidence will allow you to focus by minimizing the stress and the time-wasting ability that you see in the course.

So successfully performing and completing other important tasks that are a little bit lower priority--but still need to be accomplished--will give you the momentum. It will give you the head start; it will give you the racing; it will give you the push and the energy to keep going and to start your momentum, so that when you get to that distasteful task, you will be able to meet it; you will be able to do it; you will be able to finish it, accomplish it, cross it out, and say, "I've completed it."

What a feeling of self-confidence!

So this is a small little hint and tip about how to deal with one of the four areas of procrastination--that area of dealing with a distasteful task that is always causing you to delay from starting the task and completing it, which will then loom into crisis.

Remember: if you procrastinate, what you are really doing is making a choice for a *partial default*. That choice for *partial default* is going to generate itself into a burning fire that's going to simmer at first but then

start sparking yourself and start burning you later on, until the fire becomes a crisis. And that will only cause more negative stress, which will then cause time-wasters and negativity; and then you'll really feel yourself behind and you'll feel yourself stressed out.

Remember, what we're intending to do in this course is to give you hints and tips that will allow you to accomplish more, in less time, with better quality, and with reduced stress.

Confront those stressful, negative, distasteful activities head on, and by doing so you will gain the self-confidence. It will reduce that stress, and you will be more positive and more confident.

And guess what? You will save time.

It will be part of the time that you save, in addition to the technique of Time-Linking®--which is discussed in the **Personal Productivity Seminar**, which is offered in the podcast course of *Gain Control of Your Day™*.



## About Matrix Solutions Corporation

Matrix Solutions Corporation is a firm in Austin, Texas and has been in business since 1994 and has always provided web-based solutions for small business owners, entrepreneurs and individuals.

Originally, Matrix Solutions Corporation had delivered web page design and development solutions. With personnel certified by several firms in the area of Personal Productivity, Customer Service training and Time Management, Matrix Solutions Corporation has been delivering education, training and skills to a multitude of firms in the United States, Canada and Mexico. And the the feedback from the onsite training and classes has always been extremely favorable and described as “**outstanding.**” The company is also a certified trainer of *the Q4 Systems, Inc.*, course on **Personal Productivity**.

The company has also provided services in Podcast Consulting. It has helped other firms in the small business and entrepreneur environments to plan and produce their company podcasts.

Matrix Solutions Corporation now provides the lifelong skill-building course and training sessions via podcast for online marketers, podcasters, entrepreneurs and small business owners.

You may contact us via email: [MatrixSolutionsProductions@gmail.com](mailto:MatrixSolutionsProductions@gmail.com)

## **About the other podcasts**

The podcasts sponsored by Matrix Solutions Corporation are:

- *The Struggling Entrepreneur*
- *Gain Control of Your Day*, and
- *Arriba! Folklorico Music and Dance of Mexico*

### ***The Struggling Entrepreneur Podcast***

*The Struggling Entrepreneur* is a free podcast series that deals with the issues, challenges and problems of the individual who wants to be an entrepreneur, but who encounters a somewhat difficult path and appears to be struggling. However, this podcast series also addresses the opportunities that await an inspiring and dedicated individual who wants to be an entrepreneur, along with recommended resources.

This podcast series consists of interviews of individuals who have struggled due to obstacles, but overcame them to become successful entrepreneurs. The stories from these individuals serve as lessons learned, templates for “*best practices*” and models for the upcoming Entrepreneur. In addition, resource lists will be provided each month for additional information to point the Entrepreneur where more assistance and help can possibly be found.

### ***Gain Control of Your Day Podcast***

This is a complementary podcast series, also sponsored by Matrix Solutions Corporation. This podcast deals with Personal Productivity tools and techniques used in Business, but with a focus on helping the online marketers, entrepreneurs, podcasters and small business owners—from the web site of [www.gaincontrolofyourday.com](http://www.gaincontrolofyourday.com). It will provide free techniques and tips, as well as audio customer testimonials and references from those who have increased their productivity or have taken their small business to the next level.

These tools and techniques are included in a seminar that can help you increase your productivity so that you can:

- accomplish more and do more;
- in less time;
- with better quality, and
- with reduced stress.

Small Business owners and Entrepreneurs who are involved in online marketing, podcasting or teleseminar marketing can significantly increase their productivity and free up time to devote to the high-priority, meaningful objectives both in their professional and personal lives. Results from research will be given to measure productivity increases.

## ***Arriba! Folklorico Music and Dance of Mexico*** Podcast

This podcast is an educational and cultural look at the history of the Mexican Folkloric Music and Dance, from the pre-Columbian times to the modern era. The style is entertaining, and samples of authentic music are played during some of the actual performances. Included in this podcast series is an interview from the *Immigration Tales* podcast.

### About the Author

Fred Castaneda is a certified trainer and educator for Personal Productivity, Time Management and Customer Service programs from several firms that offer seminars—including Q4 Systems, Inc. Fred is currently the President of Matrix Solutions Corporation and has been its Chief Executive Officer since 1994.

Fred has over 30 years of experience in Corporate America in Marketing, Sales, Training, Podcasting, New Media and Integrated Marketing Communications. He has led several start-up firms since 1981. He is currently a PhD. Candidate in International Business, while he received both his M.B.A and B.A. degrees at Loyola University of Los Angeles. He also studied Law at Western State University in California and was a Juris Doctor candidate.

Fred is a veteran of the U.S. Army, having served several tours of duty as a paratrooper with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. He was an educator and instructor for the Airborne's Recondo School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. His overseas service included a tour of duty as a combat infantryman during the Vietnam War.

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