



## Start 2020 by Busting Buts

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Pretty much *everyone* avoids tasks or procrastinates at some point. Here are helpful suggestions for gearing up and getting back on track.

### **DEVELOP A SENSE OF PURPOSE**

*“Take control of your actions and attitudes. You can choose if you want to change them. You can learn to understand your feelings, improve your skills, and even alter your circumstances. You can do all these things, and more.” ~ [Bust Your BUTS](#), p. 1*

**Calm down.** Pause and collect your thoughts. Take stock of what needs to be done—and when. Formulate a simple plan for moving forward.

**Confront challenge.** Become more aware of how you respond to challenges. Figure out what works for you. Let your previous experiences, and especially your successes, inform your actions, and also your attitude about being more productive.

**Confidence is a game-changer.** Have faith in yourself. You may not be able to do everything, but you can surely do some things—and do them well if you put forth effort.

**Communicate** – Listen. Chat. Share ideas. Ask questions. Be open to discussing procrastination, and to suggestions for overcoming or managing it.

**Choose to be proactive.** There are MANY different reasons why people procrastinate. What to do about it will depend on what underlies it. However, deliberately choosing to act is a solid first step. And remember, there’s usually more than one way to get somewhere or to get something done!

### **PREVENT AND ELIMINATE PROCRASTINATION**

**Three tips for procrastinators who put things off for *personal reasons*:**

(These might include risk aversion, fear of failure, lack of self-confidence, or feeling overwhelmed.)

1) Start by building upon what you already know and can do. If need be, readjust your thinking about your capabilities and what you can achieve. There's more in life we *don't* know than we *do* know, so don't be too hard on yourself for being at the "cusp" of knowing—or for possibly not excelling. Don't let that cause you to limit your actions.

2) Deciding to do something can be a forerunner to change, and change can be unfamiliar, upsetting, or scary—which is why some people procrastinate. Anticipate what might lie ahead so you can plan accordingly. Move forward slowly, stay focused on your plan, and perhaps revise it as needed. You will feel more relaxed and prepared.

3) Consider how your accomplishments might shape your future, have a positive impact on others, make a difference, contribute to the greater good, bolster your confidence, or inspire you further. Possibilities for learning and personal growth are endless! But procrastination can be self-defeating, so a positive frame of mind is important. It can strengthen your intent, and help you become more alert, responsive, and tolerant of frustration, thereby keeping procrastination at bay.

### **Three tips for procrastinators who put things off for *skill-related reasons*:**

(These might include disorganization, time management issues, difficulty with goal setting, or problems prioritizing.)

1) Declutter. Streamline. Simplify. (While you're at it, get rid of mental clutter, too, so you can concentrate on what matters.)

2) Develop routines to get things done. Use itineraries, checklists, apps, schedules, visual activity maps and trackers—there are loads of these on the market. Select the best option for you. Try to put aside a regular time each day for purposes of organizing.

3) Set reasonable expectations. They should be attainable, fair, specific, and doable in a timely manner. Be flexible about revisiting goals for comfort and productivity— especially if, along the way, a goal turns out to be too easy, lofty, or unsuitable.

### **Three tips for procrastinators who put things off for *external reasons*:**

(These might include distractions, tech device overload, friends, or lack of structure.)

1) Remove temptations. Theodore Roosevelt said, *“With self-discipline, most anything is possible.”* Unplug devices. Pull the window shade. Set aside break times for snacks, exercise, or recreation.

2) Give yourself some space. Especially from other people who procrastinate, are naysayers, drag you down, or interfere with your productivity. Shake off negativity. Take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes. Visualize success. Pace yourself.

3) On the other hand, many people are reassuring, understanding, and helpful. A supportive circle can be invigorating. Let family and friends help you believe more strongly in yourself—and you, in turn, can encourage them. Embrace the dynamic! By broadening and nurturing relationships, you can foster fresh perspectives, extend collaborative options, and increase task commitment.

## **LAST WORDS**

*“If a task has meaning and relevance for you, it will help you resolve to start, and to see things through.”* ~ [\*\*\*Bust Your BUTS\*\*\*](#). p. 70.

May 2020 be a year of clear vision, meaningful pursuits, resolve, and progress!

**For additional information about Dr. Joanne Foster—and to learn more about her award-winning books and many articles on intelligence, creativity, productivity, and well-being—go to [www.joannefoster.ca](http://www.joannefoster.ca)**