

## Ep #47: How to Stop Procrastinating



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Desi Creswell**

## Ep #47: How to Stop Procrastinating

Hey designer, you're listening to episode 47. This is the one where I'm talking about how to stop procrastinating.

Welcome to *The Interior Design Business CEO*, the only show for designers who are ready to confidently run and grow their businesses without the stress and anxiety. If you're ready to develop a bigger vision for your interior design business, free up your time, and streamline your days for productivity and profit, you're in the right place. I'm Desi Creswell, an award-winning interior designer and certified life and business coach. I help interior designers just like you stop feeling overwhelmed so they can build profitable businesses they love to run. Are you ready to confidently lead your business, clients, and projects? Let's go.

Hello designer, welcome back to the podcast. I hope you are doing well. Today is the first day of school for my kids. I have a second grader and a fourth grader. And they are off and the house is quiet and I am loving it. I actually just outlined this episode sitting at my kitchen counter, basically just because I had the freedom to do that, the house not being total chaos. And I was just relishing in it.

I'm also going to go to yoga in the middle of the day and do it just because I can. There is no camp schedule or camp pickup to worry about, and so I'm going to just fully take advantage of it today. I hope for all of you that are listening that have school aged kids that you're getting into the rhythm of the school year. I know this is airing a little bit later, of course, than I record it. And even if you don't have kids that you're enjoying that back to school, back to business energy we all tend to feel this time of year.

Today we're going to be talking about procrastination. This is a topic that I cover so, so frequently with my clients, there is an entire module on it in *Out Of Overwhelm*. So I can't wait to dive into that. And also, if you're on my email list, you know that my new five week coaching intensive is now open for enrollment. I want to make sure that you are aware of that if you haven't seen the emails yet.

We kick off October 6th. And this five week coaching intensive is called *To Do To Done*, and it's an incredible value at \$447. And you can actually get \$100 off now through this Friday, September 15th using the code `done100`. You're even

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going to be able to apply the investment of To Do To Done to the January round of Out Of Overwhelm.

There are some great changes happening with Out Of Overwhelm, so stay tuned for more details on that. And know that I really wanted to make To Do To Done as accessible as possible for as many of you as I could because I believe that creating space for your business and taking consistent action toward those needle-moving activities in your business is really, really key to running a thriving design business. And that is what I ultimately want for all of you.

When I was thinking of topics that would be useful to share leading up to the start of To Do To Done on the podcast, I thought, okay, we definitely need to talk about procrastination. This is one of the biggest obstacles in your way to taking action on the projects you know would benefit your business that are currently on your to-do list, but we want to put them on your done list.

And before we dive in fully to this topic of how to stop procrastinating, I want to share the latest review of the podcast. This listener titled their review, every episode is amazing.

And they say, “Desi’s approach to guiding designers is so different than others in the fact that she tackles the inner dialogue and thought process before anything else. Even her most recent episode on approaching to-do lists is like a breath of fresh air and gives the freedom to take control of the narrative you set in your mind about your business. I couldn’t recommend her pod more, thank you so much.”

Well, thank you, listener. You’ve got a lot of letters in your user name, so I’m not sure how to pronounce it. But thank you, thank you, you know who you are. And, as a reminder, I’m hosting a giveaway right now where you can win a free private coaching session with me. And all you have to do is go to your podcast app wherever you listen, tap the five stars, leave a review and then you’re going to submit a quick form that’s linked in the show notes to be entered to win the free private coaching session.

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You do need to make sure to submit that form or I don't know how to reach out to you if you are selected as the winner. And I'm going to be randomly selecting the first winner this month. So get your review and entry in now. Don't procrastinate on it, the link is in the show notes.

Now, speaking of procrastination, let's talk about it. I heard from so many of you that you loved episode 35 on the later habit. And if you haven't listened to that one, que it up for next, it pairs really well with this episode. While latering is a form of procrastination, essentially putting things off until later, I think there is a difference between putting things off until some undetermined time in the future, an act of procrastination, which I see as being more in the here and now.

You've identified things you need to do or get done. Whether that's a system to make projects run more smoothly, getting a drawing set submitted for permit, sending out invoices. And there's active avoidance in the moment. I don't want you to get bogged down on if you're latering or procrastinating, I'm just sharing this for those avid listeners, like you, who loved the later habit episode and know that you're definitely going to get something new out of this episode here today.

If you look up the definition of procrastination, which you know I love to look up definitions, the definition is simply the action of delaying or postponing something. Notice how simple that definition is. And notice also how judgment-free this definition is as well. And we're going to talk about that later.

With this definition, delaying or postponing the action, it might mean that you are choosing to do anything but work. You're choosing to watch a movie, read a book, run personal errands, text a friend, stop for food or maybe grab a snack. You had something you were going to do, either with your client projects or to move your business forward, and now you're not doing it. That's one way procrastination might show up.

The other way I see it show up is through procrasti-working. Procrasti-working is just a word I made up, but it accurately describes what I see happen. And it might be that you're doing something in your business that makes you feel productive, and you might even be able to argue it's something that needs to get done at some point.

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This could look like answering emails, organizing samples, working on a project that has a deadline farther out in the future when you know you need to get a presentation done for this week's meeting. Procrasti-working is essentially doing, but not doing the most important things, or avoiding the things you decided ahead of time, if you follow my process that I teach for intentional planning inside Out Of Overwhelm, that you deemed were important or that have a deadline that's coming up.

I know what I'm about to say can sound kind of harsh, but when you're procrastinate working, you're usually lying to yourself in those moments about your productivity, what's urgent, and why you're doing the thing that you're doing instead of the other thing you were supposed to be doing.

If you feel called out in these examples, I want you to know something before we move on. There is nothing wrong with you. Everyone procrastinates and procrasti-works at times, even me. Our human brain is wired to seek pleasure, avoid pain and do the easiest thing. The act of procrastination often fulfills all of those desires in the moment.

Now, on the back end it creates problems. But if you're operating your business with this more primitive part of your brain, that part of your brain doesn't really care about the issues created an hour or a week or a year from now. It's most concerned with this current moment and sees procrastination as a solution to whatever it is that you're trying to avoid.

What I really want you to hear is that procrastination happens and that you don't need to be ashamed of it. What I'm here to do today is to empower you with tools so that when it happens, you can notice it and stop it much more quickly and build the mindset and tools in how you structure your day so that procrastination happens far less frequently.

I hope we've got that cleared up and now we can move on to what do you do to stop and reduce procrastination? We're going to talk first about the mindset component of procrastination and then move into the strategies that you can use to get yourself in motion.

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The very first thing is to just notice when you're procrastinating or wanting to procrastinate. Often, clients will talk about procrastination like it's this thing that just kind of happens to them. And I know that it can feel like it's happening to you or that it's out of your control, but that's only because you have the behavior pattern established.

It's a habit and you aren't aware of it and recognizing your agency that you always have in that moment. There's always a moment where there's a choice to do the thing you said you were going to do or make a choice to not do that thing.

Just recognizing the moment when you make a choice to do or not do, to procrastinate or not procrastinate, can be so powerful. And then you can ask yourself, hey, is this really the choice I want to make right now? And if I make the choice to procrastinate, then what am I choosing later? Because it's always a choice you're making.

This might be working late or missing out on dinner with your family or a workout class you wanted to get to. Or becoming behind on deadlines that you need to meet. Or possibly clients emailing you wondering where their stuff is. You're always choosing something, so let's make it a conscious choice.

When you're aware of the act of procrastination and see the choice that you have in it, you can get clear on why you're procrastinating in the first place. The why behind the procrastination is what you really want to solve for in order to truly solve for the behavior that you're trying to eliminate. I could be on here and just give you the advice, "Well just stop procrastinating, be more disciplined." But we all know that's not how it works.

And that's precisely why my coaching always addresses the mindset with the strategy. If you're putting something off because you're afraid to ask for help and you really need some information or clarification to move forward, or you're afraid of failing and taking the wrong action, me telling you to just do what you say you're going to do is going to fall very flat. You have to understand why you don't want to do the thing or why you want to put it off, and address that to clear up the behavior.



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I'll also say that this is a good opportunity to look at if you're actually procrastinating. Sometimes clients will tell me they're procrastinating, but they're actually just choosing to set something aside for the time being and then still telling themselves they should be doing it or they should be getting to it more quickly. So be aware of that one too.

Once you see your procrastination patterns, and that might be certain times of day, certain tasks, or even with certain clients, then you can take a look at what your specific procrastination tactics are so that we can develop solutions.

Take a moment to reflect right now and ask yourself, what are the things you tend to do to procrastinate? Or when do you tend to procrastinate? And how can you make it easier to not do those things or to not have those circumstances set up for yourself?

A lot of times, it can be checking social media as one of the behavior patterns, or checking email. And one of the ways you can make this really easy for yourself is just sign yourself out of these accounts or put your phone in another room, or close out of the browser tab. I'm always thinking about how can I make this easier for myself? Often there's a pretty simple solution.

Sometimes making it easier not to procrastinate is giving yourself an actual break. For example, if you notice that after three hours at your desk, or shorter or longer whatever your span is, that you're just fried, plan for a true break. Not a procrasti-break or a faux break, more words I'm making up. But take a walk around the block. Listen to a podcast. Read a few pages from a book. Flip through a magazine. Do something that will actually fuel you and allow yourself to enjoy it.

I notice, for me, that when I'm doing something that's really intellectually challenging, I'm creating a new program or new training resource, after I have that intense work period my brain just needs a break. Or I'll see this during a week where I'm really executing on a lot of projects and I need a break towards the end of the week. I need a little bit of a lighter schedule.

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And when I don't give myself that, that's when I have the tendency to want to procrastinate. Procrastination is trying to give you a break that you know you want. A common source of procrastination really can be a lack of pleasure in our lives. And for the clients I work with, they are stretched thin and joy and fun have been squeezed out for more and more work. And at first they think there's so much work, I don't have time to do something I would enjoy or give myself that true break.

When I say give yourself a true break, what I mean is something that when you do it, or after you've done it, you actually feel refreshed, not more drained. And the reason I suggest this is because the lack of true breaks and really wanting one or needing one and denying it to yourself is actually a reason you could be procrastinating.

The last thing I want to share with you about stopping procrastination is something that I have seen transform the way my clients work, both on client projects and on CEO projects that will up-level their business. And that is knowing how to create and execute a doable plan using my project breakdown process.

If you have something that you're setting out to do and it does not feel doable, if you don't know where to start, what finished looks like, how to prioritize, how long it's going to take or how you're going to fit it in alongside your client deliverables, you will for sure procrastinate. What I mean by doable plan is it's very clear, it's specific, and it's broken down into bite-sized mini results, as I call them, that can be taken action on in 15 to 60 minute chunks of time.

When the objective or plan does not feel doable, that is when I see so many of you putting off things that you know would improve your business. Things like creating systems or developing a marketing plan. Or updating your website to attract best fit clients. Or getting your finances in order to understand where you can be more profitable.

These are all things that you probably know you need to do, but you're procrastinating on. And often it's because you don't have a doable plan. And what I want to stress here is that you do not need a ton of time to make progress



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on these things, on these things you've been putting off. But you definitely need a doable plan.

And that's exactly what I'm going to teach you how to do in To Do To Done. You're going to learn that project breakdown process that's going to help you navigate around those urges to procrastinate on these projects that you know you want to complete. You're going to learn how to actually prioritize a needle-moving project in your business, I'll help you select one. You're going to plan out that project and actually execute it during the five week intensive.

And I'm going to be there to guide you through the process. We're going to meet as a group every week for five weeks. And those meetings are going to include both focused work time to make progress on your project and also coaching where you can ask me your questions, I can give you feedback, and I can help you get through any of those mindset roadblocks that you're having. And then you're going to also have community, along with me, for accountability.

If procrastination is an issue for you, I really want you to sign up now. You're going to be learning a skill that is repeatable and will apply to anything you want to get done in your business. And right now you can get \$100 off. So that's five weeks of coaching for only \$347. And that discount code is done100. But it's only good through this Friday, September 15th. So you definitely want to go to the show notes right now and sign up.

This is an excellent opportunity to tackle something you've been procrastinating on and get my support. When you learn to stop procrastinating using the methods you've learned today, and also when you join To Do To Done, you're going to be more efficient, more profitable and have more capacity, both in your business to serve clients and in your personal life to bring in more of what you're really craving when you're not working.

Whether that's time off, engaging in a hobby, or feeling more connected in your local community. Whatever that version of success looks like for you. As the CEO of your design business, you lead yourself first and foremost. And part of that is changing these procrastination behavior patterns so that procrastination no longer holds you back from the business and life that you really want.

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That's what I have for you today. In the next episode, I'm going to have a guest on the show, Katie McFarlan, where we're going to be sharing some common myths that are preventing you from creating systems and processes to support your design business, whether you are newer to the field and newer to business, or you've been in business for a long time and really want to streamline things.

I know a lot of you are going to want to work on systems in To Do To Done, so this will be a great jumping off point. I can't wait to have Katie on the show. Be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you don't miss our conversation. And until then, I'm wishing you a beautiful week. I'll talk to you in the next episode.

Have you ever wished I could be your coach? If so, keep listening. For a limited time when you leave a rating and review for the podcast you'll be entered to win a one on one coaching session with me. I can answer your questions and coach you on your unique challenges.

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Just click the link in the show notes to submit your review so I know how to get in touch. I can't wait to select a winner and it might be you. I'll talk to you next week.

Thanks for joining me for this week's episode of *The Interior Design Business CEO*. If you want more tips, tools and strategies visit [www.desicreswell.com](http://www.desicreswell.com). And if you're ready to take what you've learned on the podcast to the next level, I would love for you to check out my signature group coaching program, Out of Overwhelm.