



# Cairn

One step at a time

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Welcome to all new subscribers since last month.

I've checked my email, cleared out the spam, I've done the washing up, I've had a cup of coffee ... checked in with Facebook and my other online network, read some of my latest book, picked my first ripened, home grown tomato. I've even taken a call from a journalist but that's another story and yet another distraction. I haven't quite resorted to housework but almost, so now I have no excuses but to get on with it and get this newsletter written. Sound familiar? Take a look at this month's main article.

Summer finally seems to have arrived after a very wet June with a very hot weekend, plenty of sunshine and slapping on the factor 20. I've been making the most of it and managed to cycle into town four times last week – good exercise but hot work.

I recently ordered several books from Amazon, so I've got plenty of summer reading to keep me going. Mostly work related but I'm also provided with a steady supply of books from my neighbour after she's finished reading them.

Something else I did last month, was to sign up with Facebook – along with quite a few of us oldies (i.e. anyone over the age of 25), usurping the youngsters and taking advantage of yet more opportunities to network and socialise in a fun space. Just make sure you don't get sucked in too far and spend more time than you should taking the latest quiz, turning your friends into Zombies or growing your virtual garden. I actually prefer to be out in my own garden.

My best friend's dog died last month. Sad, not only for the family to lose a well loved pet but also sad for me as I've known Bella since she was a puppy and she always greeted me when I arrived for a visit. Less enthusiastically as she got older but she was a lovely, affectionate dog. I've house-sat for them when they've been away on holiday, in fact I was due to house-sit this month so they didn't have to put her through the stress of going into kennels as she had cancer but sadly she got worse and they finally decided to have her put to sleep.

You can catch up on the rest of what I've been up to on my blogs.

Enjoy the rest of this newsletter.

- Procrastination – The Art of Putting Things Off
- What On, What's New
- Recommended Reading
- Website of the Month
- This Month's Quote

## **Procrastination – The Art Of Putting Things Off**

One of the key challenges that people raise more often than most with me is procrastination. If it's something you'd like to deal with better, here are a few strategies to help you deal with it.

I came across an interesting definition for the word:

Procrastinate: to defer action; delay: to procrastinate *until an opportunity is lost.*

## **The main types of procrastination.**

- Leaving tasks until the last minute when they become urgent or just can't be put off any longer.
- Don't want to think about it right now - "I'll leave it until tomorrow".
- Hoping it will go away, no one will notice or someone else will do it.
- Put off more important tasks for the easier, less important tasks. (How much housework gets done when you know there's something more important to do?)
- Not ready to make the decision - may not have all the facts and figures or just can't decide.
- Put off something mundane to focus on something more interesting.

## **Why procrastinate?**

First, understand the reason behind your procrastination. Why are you putting off a particular task? What is it that you're resisting? Take a few minutes to think about it - overwhelm, fear, lack of knowledge or skills, poor planning. Looking at the reason can help identify ways in which to stop it from happening or at least to start dealing with it.

There must be a benefit to procrastinating, some pay-off the person gets from putting something off. This can be positive or negative but the advantage of procrastinating outweighs the disadvantage of actually getting the task done.

People will naturally tend to do something that is more interesting, exciting or that they feel more comfortable doing, in preference to the more difficult, mundane or boring tasks. However, these can be equally important and are likely to become critical or costly if left too long. Like putting off doing your Tax Return, paying a bill. Not that I don't enjoy writing – I do, but somehow it always seems like a BIG task. However, breaking it down into

Not all procrastination is bad. Sometimes people procrastinate because something doesn't 'feel right'. How many times have you had a decision to make or something that needs doing and by delaying the need disappears or the decision becomes clearer? If you hadn't procrastinated you'd have ended up doing something you didn't really want to do. That's not an excuse to procrastinate, just an indication to look at where the resistance is coming from and why.

## **What are the effects of procrastination?**

Procrastination results in a waste of time and effort. The person worries about the task they're putting off without actually doing anything about it. It makes them feel guilty, easily distracted. It can affect their sleep pattern, eating habits and if it goes on for too long increases stress and can cause depression.

The person is always tending to re-act to the urgent tasks because they've left things so long that now it HAS to be done.

A certain level of stress is good and having put something off for long enough - the buzz and relief of finally getting it done feels great but this is not a good pattern of behaviour to have.

In financial terms (especially for the self-employed) what is the procrastination actually costing them.

The fear of actually doing something is usually far worse than actually doing the task itself.

## **How can procrastination be combated?**

There are several techniques I use depending on the task and the reason.

Spending just a few minutes each day planning what needs to be done will make a real difference to how productive you are for the rest of the day. What's the most important thing you need to do in order to achieve your objective and your longer-term goals?

Prioritise what's important - be honest. Is it really important or just a 'nice, fun thing to do', when there's something more important that needs doing? Take your biggest, most important task and make sure you do it first, before anything else distracts you. Nothing else is more important and once you've done it, you can move on to the next thing.

Ask yourself – “Is what I'm doing now the most important, best use of my time right now?” Making sure the outcome of each task is aligned with your goals, whether it's business or personal, otherwise it's wasting further time and effort. Plan time into your schedule in advance – especially if you're in the habit of leaving things until the last minute.

If you have a large overwhelming task, break it down into smaller tasks. What's the very first thing that needs to be done? Do that. This might be as simple as writing down a few notes on paper, making a phone call or sending an email. Now you're ready for the next step. Just get the ball rolling. Once you get started it's surprising how much easier it can be to keep going.

Quick bites - putting off a pile of filing which just builds up and up and gets worse the longer you put it off ... just spend 10-15 minutes on a task. Putting a time limit on tasks - increases the rate at which you work so you actually get more done. Also, only 10 minutes doesn't seem as bad as having to tackle the whole pile in one go!

Just Do It! Putting something off like a phone call or an email? Instead of saying to yourself, 'I'll do it in a minute, or I'll do it later ... do it now! Just go for it and get it out of the way and then you can move on and stop worrying. I find this technique works really well. Catch yourself putting something off and just do it.

Get someone else to do it. If you hate cleaning, filing, admin, doing your books, mowing the lawn, you're probably going to put these tasks off until you absolutely have to do them. If you can't afford a cleaner - get the family to help out. Get a book-keeper to do your books once a month - etc. Is it better use of your time to do the task yourself or pay someone else to do it?

Put systems in place to make life easier and remove the excuse for procrastination. Pay all your bills by direct debit. Organise paperwork as it comes in. Do your filing on a regular basis. Keep your work/living space clear and uncluttered, so other things that 'need doing' don't distract you.

Set a date and make yourself accountable - tell a friend, colleague or mentor (or coach) what you're going to do and you're more likely to get it done. If you tell someone else about what you need to do and when you're going to do it, not only are you more likely to achieve it. It will keep you motivated and they can help to keep you on track.

Give yourself a pat on the back - reward yourself as you go. Do some of the fun tasks AFTER you've done the most important one. When I've completed X I'll take a break for a coffee or sit and read my book. When I finish project Y, arrange to meet a friend for lunch to celebrate or book a weekend away, depending on the size of the task and effort involved.

Celebrating with a trip to the theatre or concert may be a good reward for completing your Tax Return or finishing a report. Book it in advance so you have a timeline to work towards.

If a job's worth doing – do it. If it's not, then just let it go and stop worrying about it.

If you'd like to find out more then just give me a call or send an email to [info@clareevans.co.uk](mailto:info@clareevans.co.uk)

## What's On, What's New

Up-coming teleclasses, workshops:

**Intro Teleclass: Get Control of Your Money** - Would you like to be more organised in managing your money? Discover a few simple ways to save your pennies and start making your money work for you. Register for the Money Management Teleclass on **Tuesday 21st August**.

**Intro Teleclass: Find Time For Your Marketing** - Find time to market your business more easily and effectively. Find the key strategies you can use to be more effective, focus on what matters and get real results. Register for the next Marketing Teleclass on **Tuesday 18th September**.

**Intro Teleclass: Get Control of Your Time - Do you need to do more in less time?** Discover the importance of planning and prioritisation. How to avoid things becoming urgent and focus on the important tasks. Learn key tips and strategies to help you use your time more effectively. Register for the next Time Management Teleclass on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**. (Not yet updated on my site.)

**More Haste, Less Speed Workshop** - If you're in the Brighton/Sussex Area, I'm running a group coaching session during September, in central Brighton on Time: Deal with Priorities, Avoid Distractions and Maximise Your Income – contact me for further details. I'll also be running this as a teleclass - so if you're not in Brighton you can still take part.

**More Month Than Money E-book** – If you're dreading the credit card bills after your summer holidays or you'd just like to be better off financially, get your finances organised and start creating some good money habits. Find out where your money goes each month and start saving and investing for your future. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll see the results.

**Ecademy – Business Networking – free 30-day NetworkPass.** If you use networking as part of your marketing strategy then come and join me on Ecademy. It's a great place to make contacts, promote your business, share your expertise and find useful advice and information to improve your business. They currently offer a **free 30-day NetworkPass**, so you can try it for yourself but only if you sign-up by clicking [HERE](#).

## Recommended Reading: Eat That Frog – Brian Tracy

This book was recommended to me a while back but I've only recently got hold of a copy. It's a very quick and easy read. Many simple tips that you can use to improve your time management and summarises very nicely the key points I work on with clients. Fits nicely with this month's article.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0340835044/clareevans-21>

To see my previous Book Recommendations – click [here](#).

## Website of the Month: Laws Of The Universe

All the favourite laws in one place – some serious but mostly not so serious.  
<http://www.scs.uiuc.edu/suslick/laws.html>

## This Month's Motivational quote:

*It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop [Confucius]*

If you're looking to make changes in your life and would like some motivation, focus and accountability to help you do it, don't hesitate to contact me and arrange for an initial exploratory session over the phone.

If you were forwarded this issue of the newsletter you can register to receive your own copy each month by sending a blank email to [claresnews@aweber.com](mailto:claresnews@aweber.com).

Have a great summer and enjoy your holiday if you haven't yet been away.

Clare



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