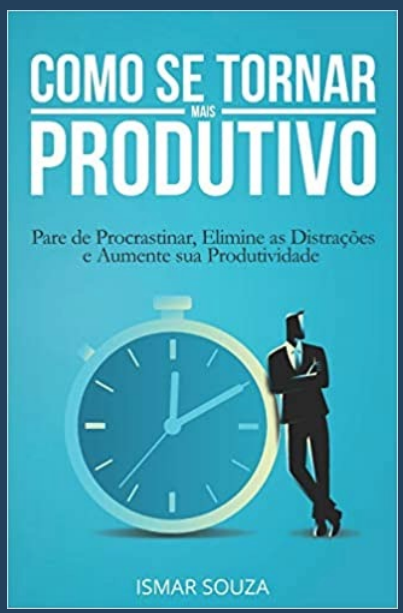
Como se Tornar Mais Produtivo



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For Ismar Souza, procrastination can be defined as “the act of putting off an action or a project”. He brings up the fact that about three out of four people put off at least one task a day.

Think about all you had to do and all you have done today. If you are one of these three people, keep reading this summary and you will learn a series of methods, thought changes and life habits that can help you stop wasting your most valuable capital: time.

But if today you find yourself in the other 25%, don't put off reading this summary until tomorrow! You don't want to start procrastinating now, do you?

Main ideas of the book

- Perfectionism can be a harmful habit, because perfect exists only in the imagination;
- Managing your time is the key to success, because being busy does not mean being productive;
- Doing a little constantly is better than doing a lot once in a while;
- It is necessary to know how to balance your priorities and the moments of relaxation with those of production.

To whom is this book indicated?

This is ideal reading for perfectionists, those who are gripped by their fears, those who can't decide what is a priority in their lives, or those who need a guide to change harmful habits. They will find the help they need in "Como se Tornar Mais Produtivo”.

By reading this summary, you will learn how to better organize your occupations to promote a more fruitful experience not only at work, but also in relationships, home care, and even so hobbies.

Overview of the book

Procrastination is always emotional

The book begins by defining what resources must be used to achieve productivity: **energy, attention, knowledge, tools, human and financial resources,** and **time**.
In contrast, we have the main fears that limit productivity.
The **fear of making mistakes** can be corrected by understanding and internalizing that mistakes are natural. The example given is by Thomas Edison, who, by making hundreds of mistakes until he invented the light bulb, claimed that he just discovered hundreds of ways not to produce a light bulb.
To deal with the **fear of imperfection**, one must know that the perfect time, person, or place does not exist. Doing the best you can, with the tools available. This is the definition of excellence.
People who strive for excellence are not driven by the **fear of being judged**. But those who are affected by this should keep in mind that all people will defend the choices they themselves would make in each situation, so judgment will always exist.
And this generates procrastination as a consequence. There are three reasons why someone procrastinates:

1. Not being sure about what you need to do;
2. Not having a clear vision of the results;
3. Trying to avoid pain or discomfort.

The first step to changing this situation is to admit that it happens. To remedy it more immediately, it is important to identify the most crucial weak point and just start working on it little by little.
Maladaptive perfectionism can be one of these points. Almost impossible goals, high contrast thoughts (either everything is very good or very bad), self-esteem problems, not recognizing others' efforts nor one's own results are some characteristics of people with this behavior.
Celebrating progress, however small, releases dopamine, which is called the motivation hormone. This can help these people deliver more results.
Performing several tasks at the same time is also harmful. According to a study conducted at the University of Utah, only 2.5% of people can actually do this with a satisfactory result.
Those who have difficulty saying "no" may end up wasting time on activities that do not add value. The author teaches three strategies to deal with this:

1. Ask for time to give the answer, and think about the reason for not doing it;
2. Praise the activity, deny, and thank the invitation;
3. Make a counterproposal, if you are willing to perform only part of what is asked of you.

The great differential in the search for results is the intention. That's what makes you believe it's possible. To increase the level of this strength, Ismar highlights the following points:

1. Focus on results rather than process details;
2. Filter out negative thoughts and comments;
3. Imagining yourself already having reached that goal;
4. To feel, as realistically as possible, the scene imagined in the previous point.

Sound mind, sound body

Brain and physical performances also depend, of course, on biological issues.
Nutrition is a key point. The author mentions the main elements that should be included in the diet, such as proteins, lipids, and complex-chain carbohydrates, as well as omega-3s, flavonoids, and saturated fat in small portions.
A colorful diet is also highly valued. Foods with tryptophan maintain the body's vitality and help produce serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood and sleep.
With so many things to consider, it is best to look for a nutrition specialist to guide you through the process.
The **practice of physical exercises** is just as important in the process.
To encourage constant practice, Ismar recommends studying about the exercise to be practiced. Another facilitator is the **anchoring of habits**. The model to follow is "After I (anchor), I will (new habit)". In this way, the body connects an already established behavior to the behavior one wants to acquire.
Breathing is one last point that interferes with peak performance.
Regular meditation helps to increase emotional stability, creativity and joy, develop intuition, and have more clarity. For those who are not used to the practice, focusing for a few minutes only on the air being inhaled and exhaled is a good start.
The **"4-7-8" technique**, practiced by ancient Oriental cultures, also uses this involuntary mechanism to help you get a good night's sleep.
It consists only of inhaling through the nose for 4 seconds, holding the air in the lungs for 7 seconds, exhaling all the air for 8 seconds, and repeating the process until you fall asleep.

Only what is necessary

The widespread culture in society that, to be successful, one must produce more and more, incessantly, is not true.
Confirming this, here the author uses Steve Jobs's authority, saying that "*deciding what not to do is just as important as deciding what to do*".
To put it into practice, there is the **EDO model**. **Eliminate** the useless activities, **decrease** the frequency or intensity of what brings little return, and **outsource** what can be done by someone else.
Parkinson's Law states that "a job expands so that it fills all the time available for it". Decreasing your own deadlines more and more, until you reach the limit, will help you not to spend more time than you really need.
The concept of **Minimum Effective Dose (MED)** preaches exactly that. If water boils at 212 °F, 210 degrees will not be enough, and at 230 there will be a waste of energy. Applying the **minimum effort** necessary to accomplish a task promotes consistency in work.

Methodology

Everything we experience is part of a project. Making a detailed one makes it easier to track progress.
Projects are composed of actions — which, in the author's analogy, would be bricks —, goals — a room, composed of several walls, made of several bricks —, and the objective — the big house, with several rooms, that grows over time.
Well-defined goals directly influence the motivation to carry out that project.

The **S.M.A.R.T. method** is widely used for this definition. The acronym stands for:

- **S**pecific: the goals need to be clear and detailed;
- **M**easurable: the goal can only be tracked, if it can be measured;
- **A**chievable: neither too easy, nor too difficult;
- **R**ealistic: the goal result must bring some advantage;
- **T**imely: define a start and end date for completion.

Another way to prioritize the truly essential things is to use the **Pareto Principle**. It preaches that 20% of the activities take up 80% of the time. With this, to know what to prioritize, there is the **Eisenhower Matrix**.
There are four quadrants to distribute everything that consumes your time.
In the first one, important and urgent tasks that must be accomplished on time.
Quadrant 2 is the main quadrant, that should be given the most time. Here is what is important, but still on schedule.
The third is where that feeling of unproductivity is concentrated and therefore needs to be very controlled, with actions that have no importance, but urgency.
Finally, everything that has neither importance nor urgency is expendable and can be converted into time to be invested in quadrant 2.
Another method that the author indicates to improve work is the **Pomodoro Technique**.

Trigger, routine and reward

Three to four weeks. This is the time the author indicates is necessary for you to be able to create a new habit, according to studies.
And for him, the first one is the hardest. So bad habits need to be replaced by better ones. It's easier that way than trying to cut them out for good.
Habits are made up of trigger, routine, and reward. For the first, the environment needs to be restructured, so that it does not remind you of what leads to the bad habit.
The routine decreases the amount of decisions to be made, resting the brain. A morning routine that wakes and prepares the body, such as yoga practice or a quick read, boosts the mood. At night, not using electronic devices an hour before going to bed helps to relax after the day's work, for example.
And for unpleasant obligations, balancing it out later with something pleasurable is motivating and encourages you not to give up.
Sharing your goals and giving authority to a trusted person to correct or warn you when you get off track is also a good tactic.
Keep in mind that procrastination will come, one time or another. At this point, direct this behavior to the posteriorities — the opposite of what is most important — that you have defined using the methods you have learned.

What do other authors say about it?

Tamara Myles teaches, in her book "The Secret to Peak Productivity", how to set priorities, better manage your time, organize your space and even your electronic environment.

In the book "Produtividade Para Quem Quer Tempo" ("Productivity For Those Who Want Time, in english"), the lecturer **Geronimo Theml** presents other techniques to increase productivity, especially for people who always feel too busy.

And in "Essentialism", management consultant **Greg McKeown** helps you identify which activities are priorities and which are expendable, also as a way to improve the use of time.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

- Identify what is holding you back;
- The important thing is to take the first step. The result comes in small, steady steps;
- Avoid negative thoughts and people who only complain;
- Look for nutrition and physical education professionals. Keeping the body healthy directly influences the ability to produce;
- Remember to turn the negative into the positive, even procrastination can be productive leisure;
- Use the task management techniques learned here.

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