

OREGON LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Get it Done! Mind Hack Tips from Lifehacker

[Lifehacker](#) is one of my favorite Web sites. It is a little bit of everything, with an emphasis on tips, tricks, technology, and getting things done. Two posts in May really caught my eye. The first was about to-do lists. Here is an excerpt:

To-do lists are just a nagging reminder of all the things you need to do, so actually inspiring yourself to do them isn't always easy. Michael Pantalon, Ph. D, writing for Psychology Today, suggests that you're more likely to accomplish these tasks by including *why* you should do them as well. Creating a "why do" list, as he calls it, can help you remember why you actually want to do something and avoid thinking that you *have to* do it. When creating your lists, just make a sublist under each item filled with all the reasons this is something you really want to do. Don't include items for the sake of including them, but instead focus on the things that make you excited about this task. (From [If You Want to Actually Finish the Tasks on Your To-Do List, Include Why You Should Do Them.](#))

This advice may be more applicable in personal than professional life, since I suspect many would answer "why do" with "if I don't, I'll get fired or my client will sue me." And let's face it, not many people get excited about drafting a complaint, summarizing a deposition, or working on an appellate brief. Still, I like this idea. If you are a busy person with a lot on your plate it is easy to get overwhelmed by your to-do list. A little reflection and thought about "why do" might not be a bad idea, and if applied to your personal life, may help tremendously with prioritizing personal and professional demands on your time.

The second post that caught my eye was about a closely related subject, procrastination:

A study conducted by Michael J.A. Wohl at the Carleton University examined students who procrastinated and, specifically, whether or not they forgave themselves for it. Those who pardoned their procrastinating ways ended up better off: The key finding was that students who'd forgiven themselves for their initial bout of procrastination subsequently showed less negative affect in the intermediate period between exams and were less likely to procrastinate before the second round of exams. (From [Want to Stop Procrastinating? Just Forgive Yourself.](#))

Chronic procrastination can be debilitating. I have witnessed lawyers who are literally in the red because they can't seem to bring themselves to bill. Others are removed from practice before specific courts or cut-off from valuable referral sources like indigent defense due to client complaints. And – no surprise – these same lawyers end up with multiple disciplinary complaints and legal malpractice claims. If you feel yourself [slipping into chronic procrastination](#), or know someone who might be, [getting help is essential](#). In Oregon, it is also [free and confidential](#).

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