



VIDEO SUMMARY

Managing Procrastination

Resource person: Tim Urban | Writer and creator of Wait But Why | Curated from TED
Managing Procrastination | Time and Resource Management | careers

Tim Urban turns procrastination into a cast of characters. The Rational Decision-Maker can plan for future goals. The Instant Gratification Monkey pulls attention towards whatever feels easy, novel or pleasant now. When the Monkey takes control, the person enters the Dark Playground: leisure mixed with guilt, dread and the knowledge that important work is waiting.

A deadline introduces the Panic Monster. As consequences become immediate, panic drives the Monkey away and allows a last-minute sprint. Urban's disastrous 90-page thesis shows the cost: a completed submission can still be rushed, exhausting and poor. Deadlines can therefore hide the underlying pattern by producing a result at the final moment.

The deeper problem appears in work without a clear external deadline. Career development, health, relationships, long research projects and difficult conversations may be deferred for years because no Panic Monster arrives. Urban's Life Calendar, one box for each week of a ninety-year life, makes the cost of repeated delay visible.

The model is memorable and deliberately comic. It does not describe literal brain systems or identify one cause of procrastination. Avoidance can be shaped by short-term mood repair, task aversion, low expectancy, perfectionism, unclear next actions, stress or a clinical condition. A useful response starts with the pattern: identify the feeling or friction, define a very small next action, decide when and where it will happen, remove an obvious distraction, and create an early checkpoint with another person. Persistent impairment deserves appropriate professional support.