



MAC LEADER

February, 2019

Time to Renew Your Local PDCA Membership!

If you haven't already done so, please send in your chapter and/or council dues. If you have any questions, please contact the council office at 703-378-4455 or macpdca@cox.net

MAC Spring Meeting, Seven Springs Resort in Pennsylvania

We're getting excited about our Annual MAC Spring Meeting. Scheduled for Friday and Saturday, **April 26 & 27**, at the Seven Springs Resort in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania, there is a wealth of activities on site including golf, bowling, swimming, shooting, mini golf, alpine slides, and much more. Please see the attached brochure for the meeting and plan to join us in Seven Springs!

65th Annual MAC Convention and Trade Show

The site of our **November 6-8**, 2019 MAC Convention and Trade Show, will be the Valley Forge Casino Resort. This property has much to offer our attendees, and we are excited to be in an area with so many opportunities for activities. More details will be sent as they become available.

Again, mark your calendars now so you can avoid conflicts!

Newly Designed MAC Website

It's been a long process, but we're close to launching our newly remodeled MAC PDCA website. We'll have a list of our members, pictures of recent events, showcased member projects, and the ability to register and pay for our events online. Watch your email for the announcement!

NATIONAL PDCA NEWS

National PDCA has a program of webinars, podcasts, and online seminars available every month. Take advantage of the many opportunities for contractor and crew training available to you as a member benefit.

Join PDCA at one of the World's Leading Events for Industry Professionals

2019 PDCA EXPO

- MARCH 6-8, 2019
 - SAVANNAH, GA
-

The 2019 PDCA EXPO will be filled with new industry information; innovative business and technical training, round-table discussions, and informal gatherings during this 3-day conference.

Go to www.PDCA.org for more information on the Expo and other National PDCA activities and benefits.

CHAPTER NEWS

Washington Metro Chapter and Delaware Valley Chapter News

Washington Metro and Delaware Valley Chapter members will be receiving chapter dues invoices directly from their chapters. Please pay those dues directly to the chapter.

If you would like to put your chapter meeting announcements or your company or chapter charity events in this newsletter, please send the information to Anita Dallas (adallas@cox.net) by the 20th of the month before the event.

We have many MAC Members at large who don't have a chapter in their immediate vicinity and who may want to participate in a chapter event. Putting your chapter upcoming meetings/events in this e-newsletter lets them know what is happening around the council. I'm sure your chapter would welcome MAC members from other areas at your events. Making sure to send me your upcoming event information in a timely

manner will help keep all our MAC members informed of educational events throughout the region.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please keep all of our members, their families, and employees in your prayers. Many in our MAC Family struggle with health issues on a daily basis. Please let me know of anyone needing particular prayers at this time.

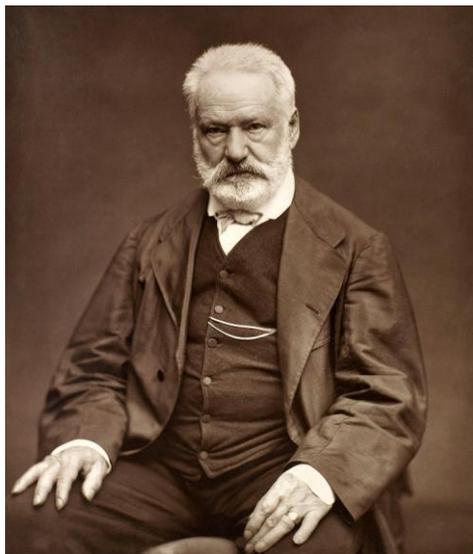
Featured Articles:

The Akrasia Effect: Why We Don't Follow Through on What We Set Out to Do and What to Do About It

by James Clear |

In the summer of 1830, Victor Hugo was facing an impossible deadline. Twelve months earlier, the French author had promised his publisher a new book. But instead of writing, he spent that year pursuing other projects, entertaining guests, and delaying his work. Frustrated, Hugo's publisher responded by setting a deadline less than six months away. The book had to be finished by February 1831.

Hugo concocted a strange plan to beat his procrastination. He collected all of his clothes and asked an assistant to lock them away in a large chest. He was left with nothing to wear except a large shawl. Lacking any suitable clothing to go outdoors, he remained in his study and wrote furiously during the fall and winter of 1830. The Hunchback of Notre Dame was published two weeks early on January 14, 1831.



(Victor Hugo as photographed by Etienne Carjat in 1876. By this time, it seems, he had unlocked his clothes and put them back on. (Source: National Library of France.)

The Ancient Problem of Akrasia

Human beings have been procrastinating for centuries. Even prolific artists like Victor Hugo are not immune to the distractions of daily life. The problem is so timeless, in fact, that ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle developed a word to describe this type of behavior: *Akrasia*.

Akrasia is the state of acting against your better judgment. It is when you do one thing even though you know you should do something else. Loosely

translated, you could say that *akrasia* is procrastination or a lack of self-control. *Akrasia* is what prevents you from following through on what you set out to do.

Why would Victor Hugo commit to writing a book and then put it off for over a year? Why do we make plans, set deadlines, and commit to goals, but then fail to follow through on them?

Why We Make Plans, But Don't Take Action

One explanation for why *akrasia* rules our lives and procrastination pulls us in has to do with a behavioral economics term called “time inconsistency.” Time inconsistency refers to the tendency of the human brain to value immediate rewards more highly than future rewards.

When you make plans for yourself — like setting a goal to lose weight or write a book or learn a language — you are actually making plans for your future self. You are envisioning what you want your life to be like in the future and when you think about the future it is easy for your brain to see the value in taking actions with long-term benefits.

When the time comes to make a decision, however, you are no longer making a choice for your future self. Now you are in the moment and your brain is thinking about the present self. And researchers have discovered that the present self really likes instant gratification, not long-term payoff. This is one reason why you might go to bed feeling motivated to make a change in your life, but when you wake up you find yourself falling into old patterns. Your brain values long-term benefits when they are in the future, but it values immediate gratification when it comes to the present moment.

This is one reason why the ability to delay gratification is such a great predictor of success in life. Understanding how to resist the pull of instant gratification—at least occasionally, if not consistently—can help you bridge the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

The Framework You Need to Beat Procrastination

Here are three ways to overcome *akrasia*, beat procrastination, and follow through on what you set out to do.

Strategy 1: Design your future actions.

When Victor Hugo locked his clothes away so he could focus on writing, he was creating what psychologists refer to as a “commitment device.” A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future. It is a way to lock in future behavior, bind you to good habits, and restrict you from bad ones.

There are many ways to create a commitment device. You can reduce overeating by purchasing food in individual packages rather than in bulk size. You can voluntarily ask to be added to the banned list at casinos and online poker sites to prevent future gambling sprees. I've even heard of athletes who have to "make weight" for a competition choosing to leave their wallets at home during the week before weigh-in so they won't be tempted to buy fast food.

The circumstances differ, but the message is the same: commitment devices can help you design your future actions. Find ways to automate your behavior beforehand rather than relying on willpower in the moment. Be the architect of your future actions, not the victim of them.

Strategy 2: Reduce the friction of starting.

The guilt and frustration of procrastinating is usually worse than the pain of doing the work. In the words of Eliezer Yudkowsky, "On a moment-to-moment basis, being in the middle of doing the work is usually less painful than being in the middle of procrastinating."

So why do we still procrastinate? Because it's not being *in* the work that is hard, it's *starting* the work. The friction that prevents us from taking action is usually centered around starting the behavior. Once you begin, it's often less painful to do the work. This is why it is often more important to build the habit of getting started when you're beginning a new behavior than it is to worry about whether or not you are successful at the new habit.

You have to constantly reduce the size of your habits. Put all of your effort and energy into building a ritual and make it as easy as possible to get started. Don't worry about the results until you've mastered the art of showing up.

Strategy 3: Utilize implementation intentions.

An implementation intention is when you state your intention to implement a particular behavior at a specific time in the future. For example, "I will exercise for at least 30 minutes on [DATE] in [PLACE] at [TIME]."

There are hundreds of successful studies showing how implementation intentions positively impact everything from exercise habits to flu shots. In the flu shot study, researchers looked at a group of 3,272 employees at a Midwestern company and found that employees who wrote down the specific date and time they planned to get their flu shot were significantly more likely to follow through weeks later.

It seems simple to say that scheduling things ahead of time can make a difference, but as I have covered previously, implementation intentions can make you 2x to 3x more likely to perform an action in the future.

Fighting Akrasia

Our brains prefer instant rewards to long-term payoffs. It's simply a consequence of how our minds work. Given this tendency, we often have to resort to crazy strategies to get things done—like Victor Hugo locking up all of his clothes so he could write a book. But I believe it is worth it to spend time building these commitment devices if your goals are important to you.

Aristotle coined the term *enkrateia* as the antonym of *akrasia*. While *akrasia* refers to our tendency to fall victim to procrastination, *enkrateia* means to be “in power over oneself.” Designing your future actions, reducing the friction of starting good behaviors, and using implementation intentions are simple steps that you can take to make it easier to live a life of *enkrateia* rather than one of *akrasia*.

*This article is an excerpt from Chapter 14 of James Clear's book **Atomic Habits**.*

The 1 Percent Rule: Why a Few People Get Most of the Rewards in Life

by James Clear

Sometime in the late 1800s—nobody is quite sure exactly when—a man named Vilfredo Pareto was fussing about in his garden when he made a small but interesting discovery.

Pareto noticed that a tiny number of pea pods in his garden produced the majority of the peas.

Now, Pareto was a very mathematical fellow. He worked as an economist and one of his lasting legacies was turning economics into a science rooted in hard numbers and facts. Unlike many economists of the time, Pareto's papers and books were filled with equations. And the peas in his garden had set his mathematical brain in motion.

What if this unequal distribution was present in other areas of life as well?

The Pareto Principle

At the time, Pareto was studying wealth in various nations. As he was Italian, he began by analyzing the distribution of wealth in Italy. To his surprise, he discovered that approximately 80 percent of the land in Italy was owned by just 20 percent of the people. Similar to the pea pods in his garden, most of the resources were controlled by a minority of the players.

Pareto continued his analysis in other nations and a pattern began to emerge. For instance, after poring through the British income tax records, he noticed that approximately 30 percent of the population in Great Britain earned about 70 percent of the total income.

As he continued researching, Pareto found that the numbers were never quite the same, but the trend was remarkably consistent. The majority of rewards always seemed to accrue to a small percentage of people. This idea that a small number of things account for the majority of the results became known as the Pareto Principle or, more commonly, the 80/20 Rule.

Inequality, Everywhere

In the decades that followed, Pareto's work practically became gospel for economists. Once he opened the world's eyes to this idea, people started seeing it everywhere. And the 80/20 Rule is more prevalent now than ever before.

For example, through the 2015-2016 season in the National Basketball Association, 20 percent of franchises have won 75.3 percent of the championships. Furthermore, just two franchises—the Boston Celtics and the Los Angeles Lakers—have won nearly half of all the championships in NBA history. Like Pareto's pea pods, a few teams account for the majority of the rewards.

The numbers are even more extreme in soccer. While 77 different nations have competed in the World Cup, just three countries—Brazil, Germany, and Italy—have won 13 of the first 20 World Cup tournaments.

Examples of the Pareto Principle exist in everything from real estate to income inequality to tech startups. In the 1950s, three percent of Guatemalans owned 70 percent of the land in Guatemala. In 2013, 8.4 percent of the world population controlled 83.3 percent of the world's wealth. In 2015, one search engine, Google, received 64 percent of search queries.

Why does this happen? Why do a few people, teams, and organizations enjoy the bulk of the rewards in life? To answer this question, let's consider an example from nature.

The Power of Accumulative Advantage

The Amazon rainforest is one of the most diverse ecosystems on Earth. Scientists have cataloged approximately 16,000 different tree species in the Amazon. But despite this remarkable level of diversity, researchers have discovered that there are approximately 227 “hyperdominant” tree species that make up nearly half of the rainforest. Just 1.4 percent of tree species account for 50 percent of the trees in the Amazon.

But why?

Imagine two plants growing side by side. Each day they will compete for sunlight and soil. If one plant can grow just a little bit faster than the other, then it can stretch taller, catch more sunlight, and soak up more rain. The next day, this additional energy allows the plant to grow even more. This pattern continues until the stronger plant crowds the other out and takes the lion's share of sunlight, soil, and nutrients.

From this advantageous position, the winning plant has a better ability to spread seeds and reproduce, which gives the species an even bigger footprint in the next generation. This process gets repeated again and again until the plants that are slightly better than the competition dominate the entire forest.

Scientists refer to this effect as “accumulative advantage.” What begins as a small advantage gets bigger over time. One plant only needs a slight edge in the beginning to crowd out the competition and take over the entire forest.

Winner-Take-All Effects

Something similar happens in our lives.

Like plants in the rainforest, humans are often competing for the same resources. Politicians compete for the same votes. Authors compete for the same spot at the top of the best-seller list. Athletes compete for the same gold medal. Companies compete for the same potential client. Television shows compete for the same hour of your attention.

The difference between these options can be razor thin, but the winners enjoy massively outsized rewards.

Imagine two women swimming in the Olympics. One of them might be 1/100th of a second faster than the other, but she gets all of the gold medal. Ten companies might pitch a potential client, but only one of them will win the project. You only need to be a little bit better than the competition to secure all of the reward. Or, perhaps you are applying for a new job. Two hundred candidates might compete for the same role, but being just slightly better than other candidates earns you the entire position.

These situations in which small differences in performance lead to outsized rewards are known as Winner-Take-All Effects. They typically occur in situations that involve relative comparison, where your performance relative to those around you is the determining factor in your success.

Not everything in life is a Winner-Take-All competition, but nearly every area of life is at least partially affected by limited resources. Any decision that involves using a limited resource like time or money will naturally result in a winner-take-all situation.

In situations like these, being just a little bit better than the competition can lead to outsized rewards because the winner takes all. You only win by one percent or one second or one dollar, but you capture one hundred percent of the victory. The advantage of being a little bit better is not a little bit more reward, but the entire reward. The winner gets one and the rest get zero.

Winner-Take-All Leads to Winner-Take-Most

Winner-Take-All Effects in individual competitions can lead to Winner-Take-Most Effects in the larger game of life.

From this advantageous position—with the gold medal in hand or with cash in the bank or from the chair of the Oval Office—the winner begins the process of accumulating advantages that make it easier for them to win the next time around. What began as a small margin is starting to trend toward the 80/20 Rule.

If one road is slightly more convenient than the other, then more people travel down it and more businesses are likely to build alongside it. As more businesses are built, people have additional reasons for using the road and so it gets even more traffic. Soon you end up with a saying like, “20 percent of the roads receive 80 percent of the traffic.”

If one business has a technology that is more innovative than another, then more people will buy their products. As the business makes more money, they can invest in additional technology, pay higher salaries, and hire better people. By the time the competition catches up, there are other reasons for customers to stick with the first business. Soon, one company dominates the industry.

If one author hits the best-seller list, then publishers will be more interested in their next book. When the second book comes out, the publisher will put more resources and marketing power behind it, which makes it easier to hit the best-seller list for a second time. Soon, you begin to understand why a few books sell millions of copies while the majority struggle to sell a few thousand copies.

The margin between good and great is narrower than it seems. What begins as a slight edge over the competition compounds with each additional contest. Winning one competition improves your odds of winning the next. Each additional cycle further cements the status of those at the top.

Over time, those that are slightly better end up with the majority of the rewards. Those that are slightly worse end up with next to nothing. This idea is sometimes referred to as The Matthew Effect, which references a passage in The Bible that says, “For all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

Now, let's come back to the question I posed near the beginning of this article. Why do a few people, teams, and organizations enjoy the bulk of the rewards in life?

The 1 Percent Rule

Small differences in performance can lead to very unequal distributions when repeated over time. This is yet another reason why habits are so important. The people and organizations

that can do the right things, more consistently are more likely to maintain a slight edge and accumulate disproportionate rewards over time.

You only need to be slightly better than your competition, but if you are able to maintain a slight edge today and tomorrow and the day after that, then you can repeat the process of winning by just a little bit over and over again. And thanks to Winner-Take-All Effects, each win delivers outsized rewards.

We can call this The 1 Percent Rule. The 1 Percent Rule states that over time the majority of the rewards in a given field will accumulate to the people, teams, and organizations that maintain a 1 percent advantage over the alternatives. You don't need to be twice as good to get twice the results. You just need to be slightly better.

The 1 Percent Rule is not merely a reference to the fact that small differences accumulate into significant advantages, but also to the idea that those who are one percent better *rule* their respective fields and industries. Thus, the process of accumulative advantage is the hidden engine that drives the 80/20 Rule.

Spring is coming and remember: *If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.*
- Anne Bradstreet

Have a wonderful weekend!

Anita Dallas, EVP