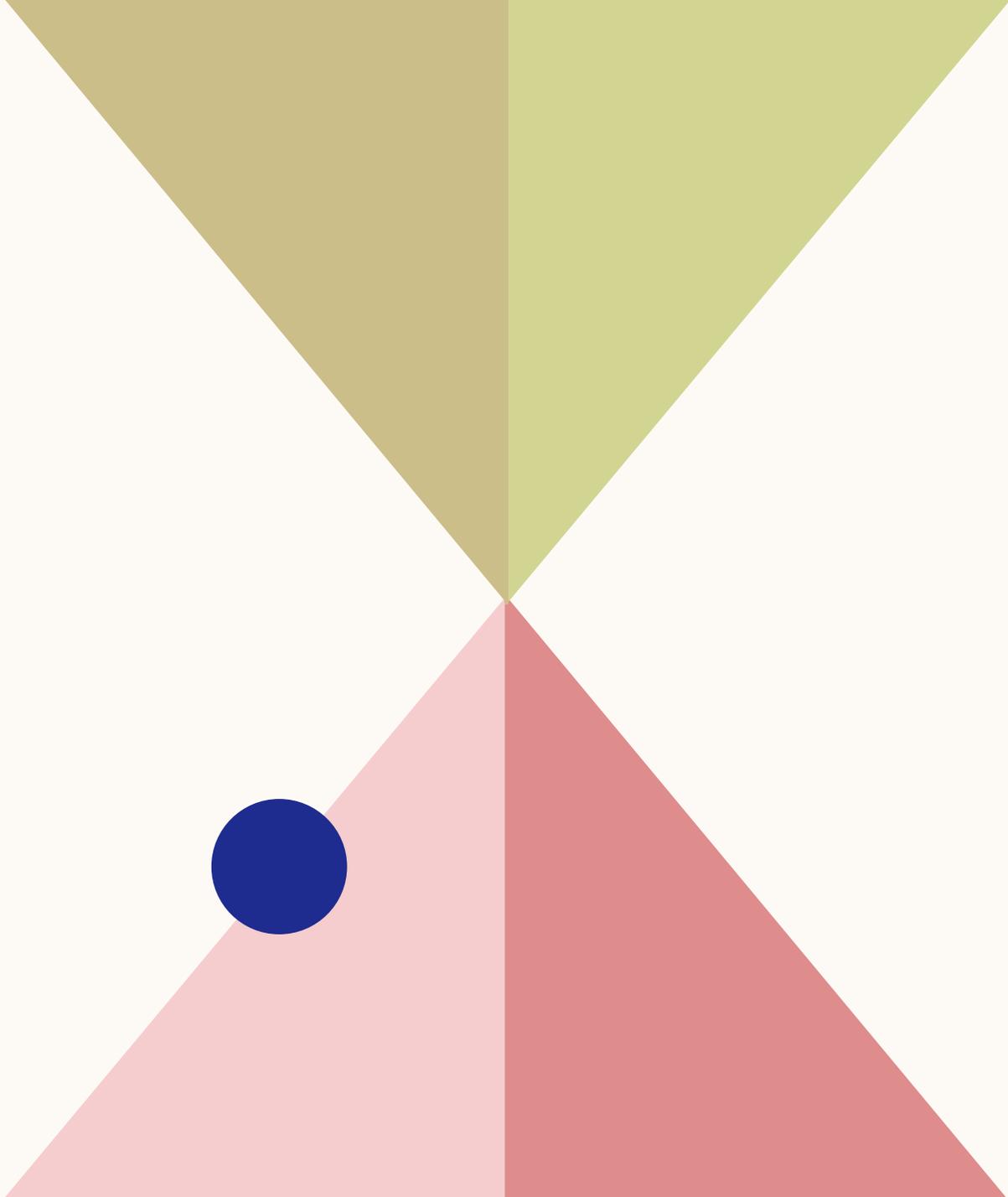


# OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

Dr. Lisa Matich  
Director, Academic  
Support Center



# AGENDA

Introduction

What we do when we procrastinate

Why we procrastinate

Procrastination cycle

What works

Final thoughts

# INTRODUCTION

“Never put off till tomorrow what may be done day  
after tomorrow just as well.”

— Mark Twain



# WHAT IS HAPPENING?

What we do when we procrastinate



**WE ARE PRIORITIZING  
SHORT-TERM NEEDS OVER  
LONG-TERM ONES**

“Procrastinate now, don't put it off.”  
— Ellen DeGeneres

# EVERYTHING IS MORE DRAMATIC AT NIGHT



# **WHAT ARE YOUR AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES?**

Poll Time!

“The thing all writers do best is find ways to avoid writing.”  
— Alan Dean Foster

# EMOTIONS - ALL THE FEELS

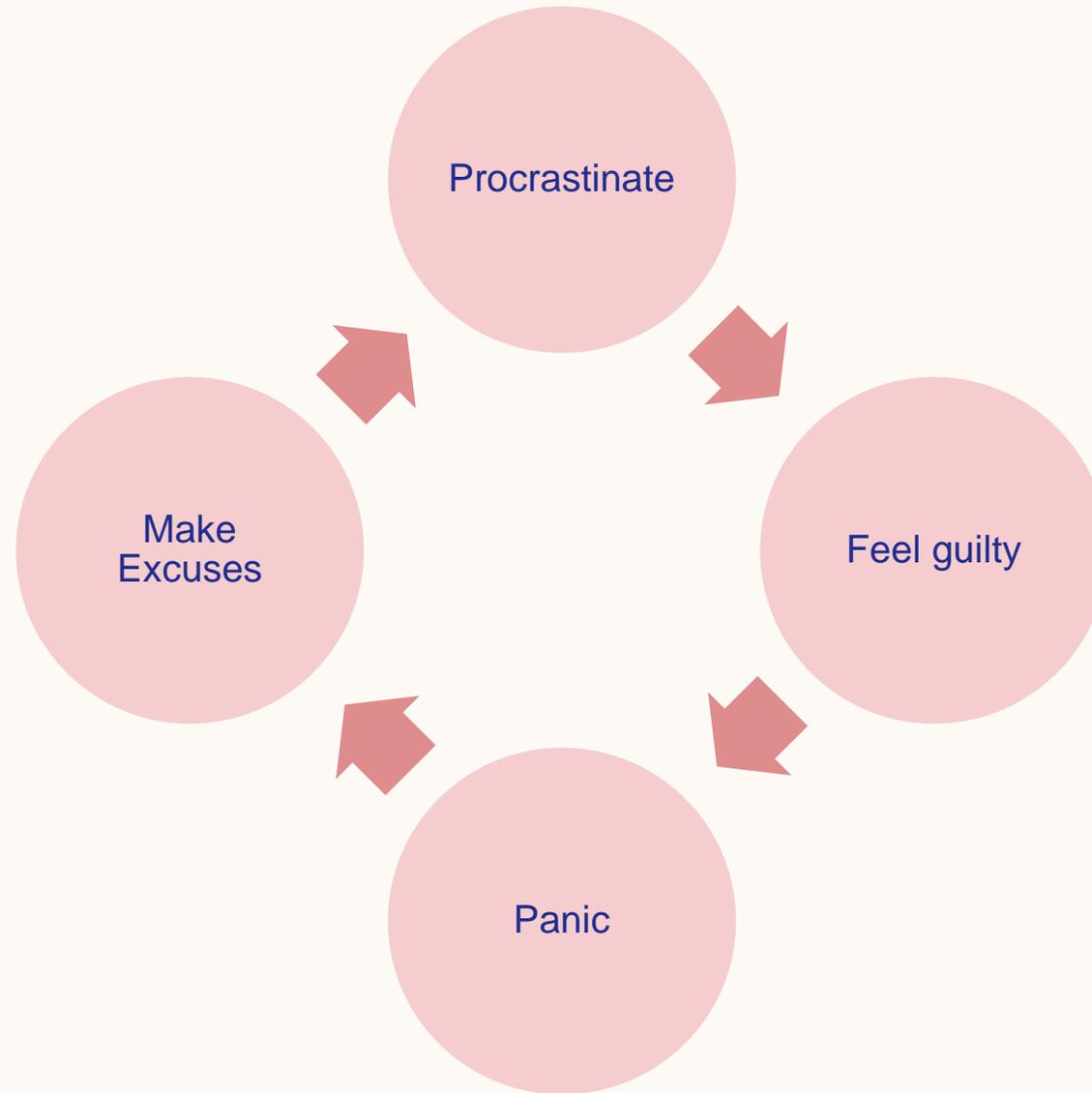
Why we procrastinate

# PROCRASTINATION IS EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- ❖ It's tied to difficulty managing emotions surrounding the task
- ❖ It's short-term mood repair
- ❖ It's "immediate urgency of managing negative moods"

(Pychyl & Sirois, 2016)

# THE PROCRASTINATION CYCLE



**WHAT DO YOU TELL  
YOURSELF MOST OFTEN  
TO JUSTIFY  
PROCRASTINATION?**

Poll Time!

# WHEN YOU THINK YOU JUST CAN'T DO IT

Negative thinking or negative self-talk:

- Is the root of self-doubt
- Creates anxiety
- Erodes confidence
- Distracts you from the task at hand
- Creates worry
- Disrupts your creativity
- Derails your concentration

“I’m going to stop putting things off, starting tomorrow!” — Sam Levenson

## CHRONIC PROCRASTINATION HAS LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Sleep problems

Depression

Anxiety

Low self-esteem





# TIME MANAGEMENT DOES NOT FIX IT

- Time management is how we regulate behavior and impulse control to achieve a task or goal.

It includes:

- Awareness
  - Arrangement
  - Adaptation
- Procrastination is a habit - affects everyone to some extent

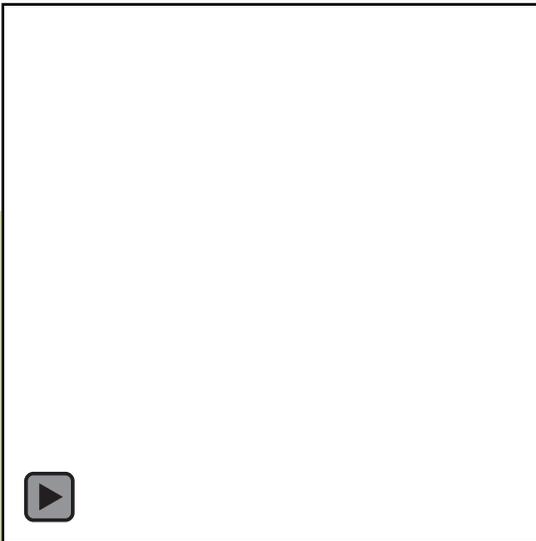
“Someday is not a day of the week.”  
— Janet Dailey



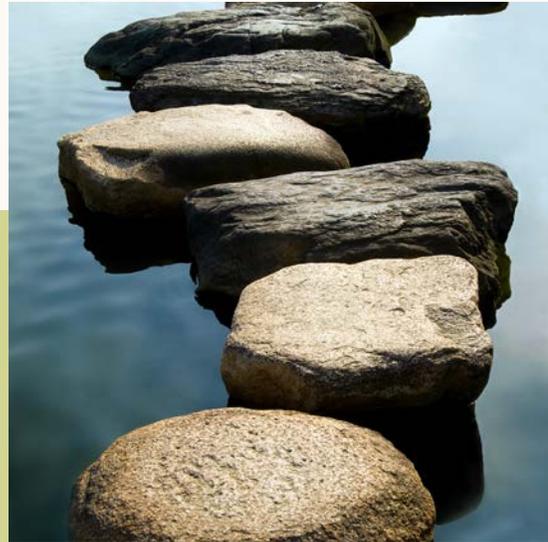
# WHAT WORKS

Re-framing procrastination

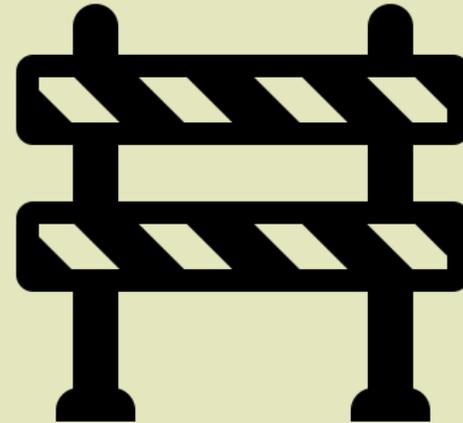
# RE-FRAMING PROCRASTINATION



**FORGIVENESS/  
SELF-COMPASSION**



**NEXT SMALL STEP**



**REMOVE  
ROADBLOCKS**



**KEYSTONE HABITS**



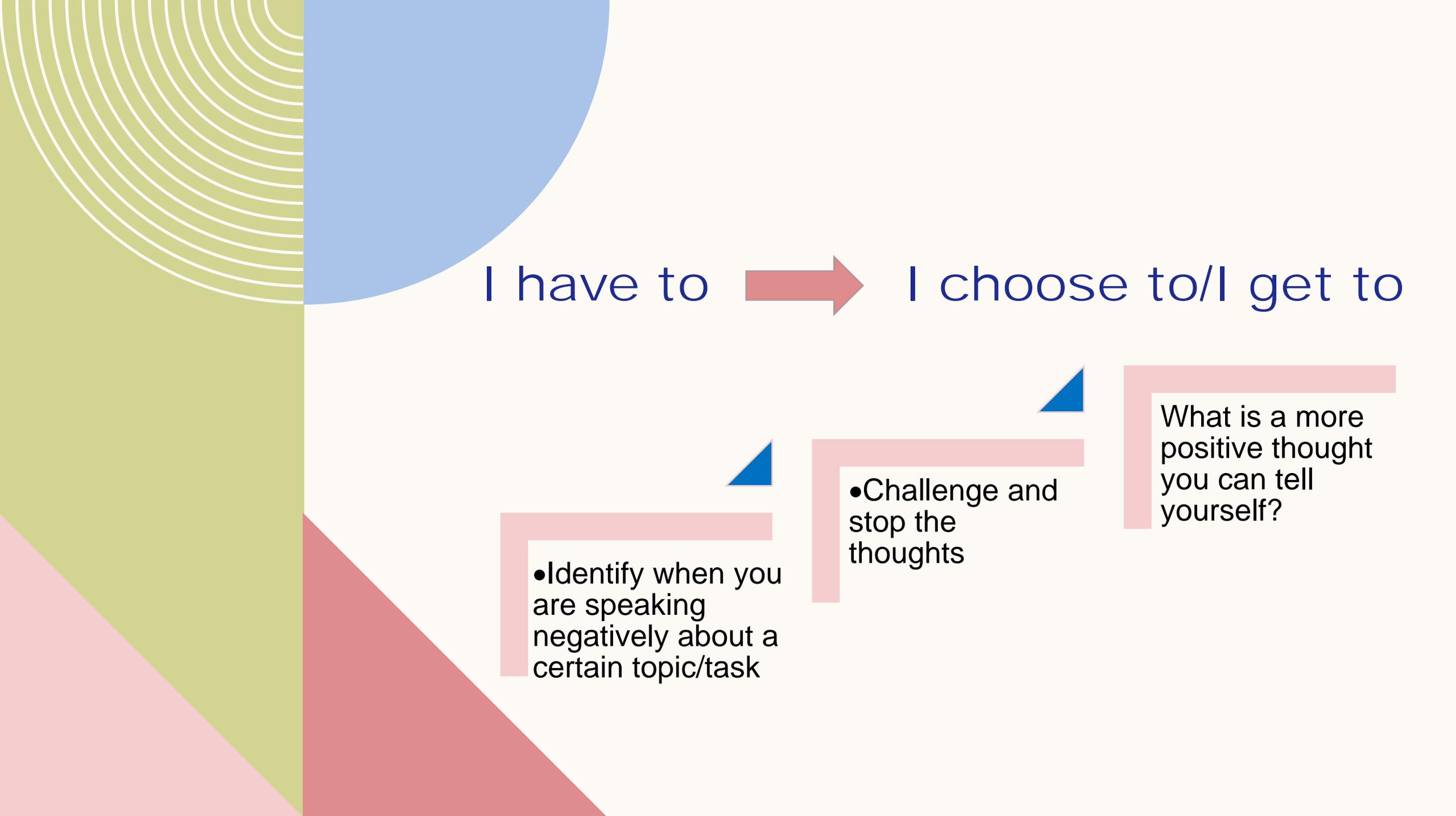
# WHAT WORKS

Positive self-talk



- ***“I have to finish this long, important project. It should already be done by now and I need to plow through it.”***

***“(1) I have to (2) finish this (3) long, (4) important project. (5) It should already be done by now and (6) I need to plow through it.”***



I have to



I choose to/I get to

•Identify when you are speaking negatively about a certain topic/task

•Challenge and stop the thoughts

What is a more positive thought you can tell yourself?

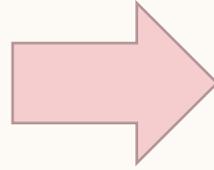
Finish → Start

What can be done *right now*?

Focus on the *now*

Small step forward

# Long project Short task

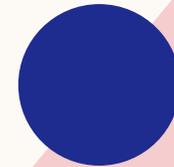


Chunking

What is the very next smallest task you can do?

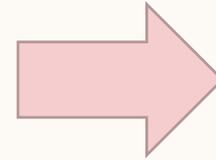
Ignore the larger picture

– laser focused on the next short task





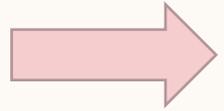
**Important project**



**Imperfect step**

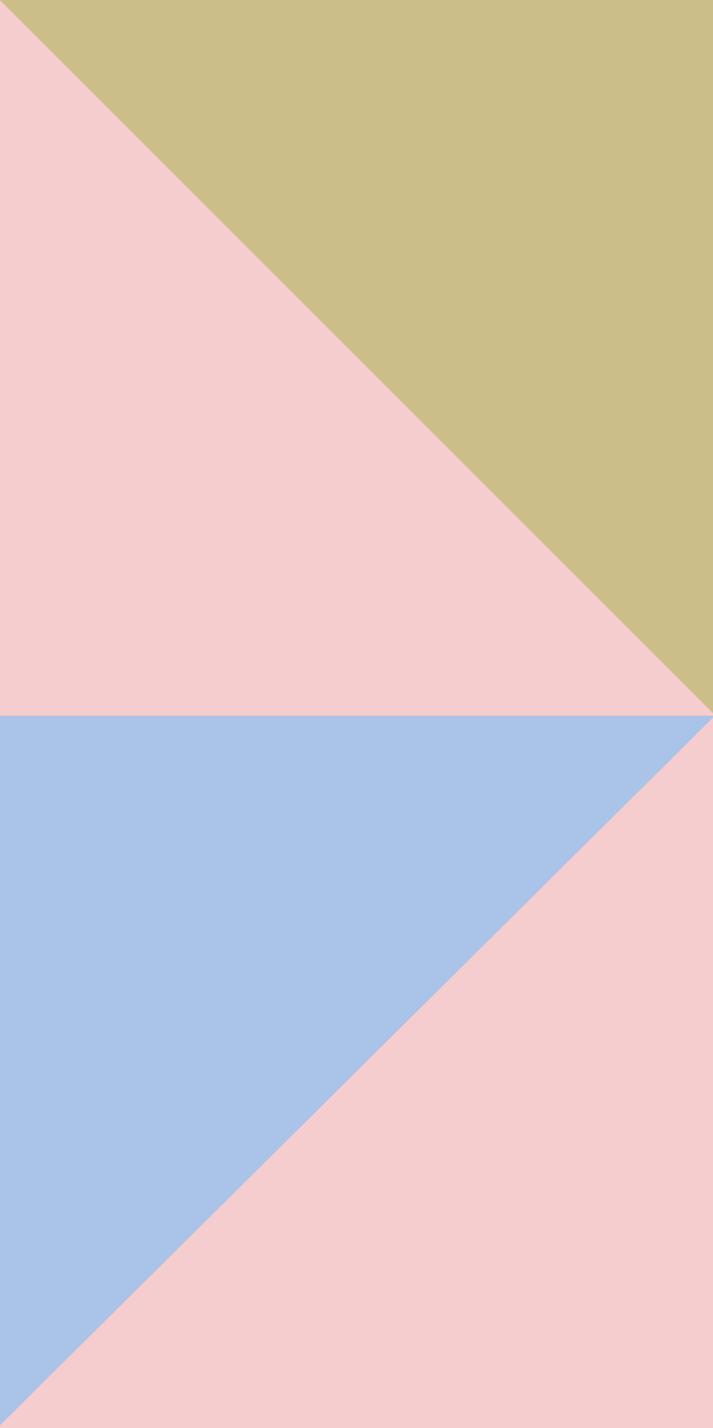
**Permission to be messy**  
**Less focus on perfectionism**

# It should be done by now

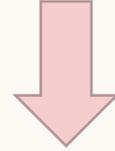


# I'll feel terrific

- “*Should*” = blame and guilt
- Imaginary versus reality
- Focus not on how bad you feel now, but on how good you'll feel after you do that first action



Need to plow through



Have plenty of time  
for play

*“I’ve got to work all weekend!”*

*Isolation = resentment*

Need plenty of breaks, small rewards



# WHAT WORKS

Creating good habits

**HOW MANY OF YOU START  
YOUR DAY BY MAKING  
YOUR BED?**

Poll Time!

# YOUR IDENTITY EMERGES FROM YOUR HABITS

Every action is a vote for the type of person you wish to become:

- Each time you write a page, you are a *writer*
- Each time you practice the violin, you are a *musician*
- Each time you start a workout, you are an *athlete*

# Stages of Habit Formation





**“ Procrastination is like a credit card;  
it’s a lot of fun until you get the bill. ”**

- Christopher Parker

# SUMMARY

Procrastination means we are putting short-term needs first

Procrastination involves emotions and a dopamine hit

- Procrastination cycle

Re-frame it and use tools to overcome procrastination

- Positive self-talk
- Good habit formation stages

# THANK YOU

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Academic SupportNet on  
Okta

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