



## Procrastination Is An Immovable Force Of Nature

Congratulations Timmy, you've embarked on the spring semester of the rest of your life. You are going to college and it's time to say so long to the 'rents and hello to a few new student bodies. You've made an excellent decision to kick-off your collegiate experience with the purchase of the *Van Wilder Guide To Graduating College In Eight Years Or More*.

I'm going to assume that there were several compelling reasons why you selected this guide as a scholastic work belt for your educational tools, but I'll bet the title had something to do with it. Let's examine that for a quick one, okay Timmy? The most important and operative word in the title is "Graduate." You want to finish what you start, right sport? Get a leg-up on the competition, be recognized as an achiever, and more than likely because getting this college thing done properly means there'll be copious amounts of cheddar in your immediate future.

That's great, graduating is a good objective and these are all excellent reasons for heading out on an exploration of the university universe. So let's take a look at the secondary imperative in the title "...*In Eight Years Or More*." Listen, it took me seven years to complete my studies and since I've been a graduate for a few years now, I can look back and honestly say...



**LUNCHTIME**

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### VanWilderism #35

Ambivalence is the mother of inertia.

*Write that down.*



**Wow!** I probably could have milked an extra spin or two out of the college calendar.

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**Joseph R. Ferrari:**

An associate professor of psychology stated, "Telling someone who procrastinates to get a weekly planner is like telling someone with chronic depression to just cheer up."

*The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2002*

Now some people might take a dim view of turning a four-year scholastic schedule into what you might refer to as a protracted passion. They might even claim that this is an example of gross procrastination. Here's a concept I'd like to introduce you to:

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Procrastination is not a bad habit.

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Oh sure, there are academicians who'd prefer to treat procrastination as a four letter word. Like, what are they thinking? Maybe: "ocra" or "asti"? That's just silly – crazy academics and their fancy vocabulary.

You may be surprised to learn this, but you, Timmy, as a college student, are the subject of many scientific studies. And in this case everyone studying you wants to find the cure for procrastination. Procrastination, which these studies define as the act of delaying responsible decisions, is basically the lack of checks on the old "to-do" list. That is, if you ever got around to doing a "to-do" list.

There are very lofty discussions within these studies deliberating whether procrastination is biological, in which case you've got serious issues with your prefrontal lobe cortex, or whether it's psychological, meaning you've got a hell of a tumbling run worked out for the mental gymnastics gold medal round.

But the funny thing is, the studies conclude that everyone is a procrastinator. It's just a matter of degree. According to a noted psychologist, 90% of all college students are habitual procrastinators, and 25% are chronic. So, does that mean the best and brightest our great country has to offer are either brain damaged

or whacko? Whoa-ho there, I'm not going to stand here and let anyone run down the fine college students of the U.S. of A. And I don't know about you but I don't feel brain damaged; well there was that episode during the Jäger Olympics but that's not important right now.

You know, if I had to sum up the reasons why you selected this book, I'm going to go all in and say it's because we're going to deal with how things really are. We're not going to get bogged down in what your parents, or professors, or academic studies, or focus groups happen to think about "you," or about what they think "you should do." We're going to concentrate on, "what is." Whoa, that's existential.

*Note: If you haven't taken Philosophy 101 yet, I recommend the course – very enlightening.*

The thing to remember about procrastination is this: out of the 25% of college students that are chronic procrastinators there's going to be a lot of them who will end up failing out of school. And you don't have to be Professor Brainiac to know that a "one-semester-and-out" program is not going to yield eight years of academic fulfillment.

Don't get me wrong, if your idea of the preferred college experience is: show up for a semester, blow off all your classes except for co-ed beach volleyball and then sober up just in time to receive notice that the university has concluded that you're an academic liability, then that's okay. Seriously, there's nothing wrong with that, champ. I'm not here to pass judgment. You'll get plenty of that from Mom and Dad, and I don't even want to think about the look you'll get from Nana at Christmas time. If you are going to go that route though, you should at least be honest with yourself and admit that that's what you're doing. Oh, and please no tears when Mom's is at the curb with the family minivan

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**Procrastinate:**

Originally from the Latin *procrativus*, which means I'm gonna look that up as soon as I get a chance.



to take you back home to live in the basement and Uncle Bobby calls to let you know he's pulled some strings to get your old job back at the Maxi-Mart. Reminds me of my first roommate, Rex. He spent the entire first quarter of my first freshman year just sitting around drinking Jack Daniels all day and playing guitar. Girls really dug that guy... big time rock star now... but I know deep down he's just half the man he could have become... very hollow inside... really sad... really, really sad.

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**VanWilderism #12**

Persistence is omnipotent.  
Write that down.

Even if you learn nothing else from the *Van Wilder Guide To Graduating College In Eight Years Or More*, the biggest idea you'll be presented with, and quite possibly the key to your success in school and a great life lesson, is not going to be a statistical analysis of your and your peers' procrastinatory practices. No, no, no. Pack your bags Timmy, you're moving to Flow Town.

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But what's Flow Town, Mr. Wilder?

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Please, call me Van. I'm not the president or mayor of Flow Town, but I do have a sweet little condo over on Main Street so I'm prepared to clue you in. But listen Sally, this isn't necessarily going to be an easy concept to grasp, so pay attention and I'll try to keep it simple. I know this may be hard to believe, but I was not always the pillar of practical patronage that I am today. It's true I was a mess until I was acquainted with the idea of Flow Town some time around mid-term in the fall of my second sophomore year. I hope this helps you as much as it did me.

### Here are the only laws of Flow Town.

1. If you think about eating your lunch, you will.
2. Even when the cameras are on, don't go big unless you're ready.
3. Just because it's boring doesn't mean it's good for you.
4. Live your own reality.

**The First Law of Flow Town**, "If you think about eating your lunch, you will," means you are your decisions. If you choose to dwell on success rather than obsessing about disaster then chances are you'll be successful – and a lot more fun on road trips.

**The Second Law of Flow Town** states, "Even when the cameras are on, don't go big unless you're ready." You're on a bigger stage now Sally, and if you want to perform at a higher level, dream big. But when you act on your dreams, know your limitations. In other words, if you hate math, you'll want to shy away from that nuclear physics degree program.

**The Third Law of Flow Town**, "Just because it's boring doesn't mean it's good for you" is self-explanatory. Just don't do it! Unless you're into self-abuse, in which case I know some pretty weird religious sects you might be interested in. Could be a good PhD program for a cultural anthropology post-grad, but it weirds me out. So, let's just leave it alone, shall we?

**The Fourth Law of Flow Town** is, "Live your own reality." Sounds New Age-y and queer? Okay, fine, don't say it out loud unless you're sure you're alone. Sally, Sally, Sally, jealousy and envy are not attractive accessories, so leave them at home with that cheap costume jewelry and floral party dress that you thought was so "retro" when you picked it up at the Salvation Army sidewalk sale for fifty cents. Let's say your roommate or best friend rarely studies, parties all the time, never sleeps, and coasts to good grades. This doesn't mean that you need to adopt these habits or

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### Eating Your Lunch:

A painful and or sometimes embarrassing accident usually involving impact between the face and a resistant surface.

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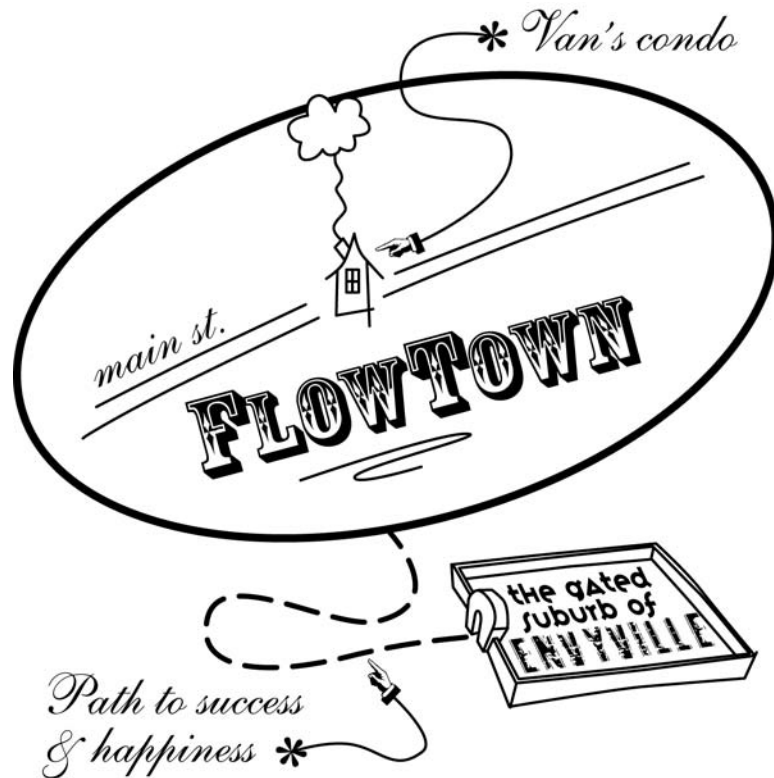
### College Students:

were found to procrastinate more for written assignments and less for tests or examinations  
*Solomon and Rothblum, 1984*

should punish yourself because you have to work hard. And on the flip, you don't have license to look down on them for "goofing off."

There are no overnight successes, Sally. We all have our own paths to walk – remember to stretch, you don't want to pull anything.

Flow Town's not on Google Maps yet so here's a diagram to help you locate it.



**Do you think the typical "4 year college" should be longer or shorter than 4 years?**

College should be forever.

– John McCue, Senior in Neuroscience, UCLA