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Essay 3

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A Problematic Procrastination Situation

In Tim Urban's 2016 Ted Talk, "Inside the mind of a master procrastinator", he explains his personal understanding of the procrastination cycle. According to Urban, non-procrastinators and procrastinators don't differ much from each other. Their brains control thinking normally and makes decisions rationally, however, procrastinators have an additional function which Urban names the "Instant Gratification Monkey". Urban explains that this "Monkey" serves as the distractions from all important work, leaving essential decision making on a completely opposite side of thought. Procrastinator's brains always find a way to distract them from the important tasks at hand, leaving projects to the last possible moment of a deadline. When this moment comes, Urban explains that panic initiates. In order to illustrate his point, Urban argues that the "Panic Monster" is the only thing the "Instant Gratification Monkey" is afraid of, causing all thought to focus on important tasks. This leaves procrastinators in a situation where they will do everything in their power to meet the last possible deadline in the shortest amount of time.

According to Urban, this cycle is never a learning experience for procrastinators, mostly because the system works. The project with a tight deadline eventually gets done. However, Urban argues that the true dangers of procrastination come with long term commitments with no deadlines, like starting or ending a relationship or getting training for a dream job. Because there are no deadlines, procrastinators will put everything off and never accomplish that which is necessary

for them to achieve their dreams and aspirations. However, if you truly realize how short life is, Urban explains that that might put more importance on reaching goals as a procrastinator, maybe setting your own deadlines instead.

Although Urban successfully used humor and relatability to connect with the audience, he fails to provide scientific evidence to back his claims and despite a failure to only provide acceptance instead of an actual solution to procrastination, Urban's descriptions make sense and the conclusion brings a call-to-action for his audience. I agree that procrastination causes major panic before a deadline, for example, I have procrastinated this essay.

Urban's comedic spark shined in this TED Talk. His relatable humor gave the audience a sense of understanding. As he gave humorous names to the human quirks of procrastination, Urban used hand drawings to literally illustrate what he was talking about and made the audience laugh throughout his presentation. A couple of minutes into Urban's TED Talk, he related his personal experiences of procrastination to a story of him writing a 90-paged senior thesis that was meant to be written over the course of a school year. The weeks went by, and those weeks turned into months which turned into semesters. Eventually, Urban had to write his entire thesis in the 72 hours before the deadline. This situation was very real and very comedic, leaving the audience to laugh at Urban's ridiculous situation. Adding appropriate humor to Urban's presentation helped his audience relate to his talk.

However, because of Urban's emphasis on comedy in his speech, he lacked complete evidence for the claims he made. Although he did say he had the brain scans of a procrastinator and a non-procrastinator to compare, Urban simply drew crudely scribbled illustrations instead of actual brains scans. Although this was funny for the audience, it did mean that Urban was

judging his own explanations of procrastination from his own experiences, and had no science to support his ideas. This may appeal to an audience who just wants to gain a new perspective and have a laugh, but someone who desires actual evidence on why procrastination exists would be alienated from Urban's talk.

Additionally, Urban doesn't offer a solution to procrastination like some might hope. After detailing his experiences of being emailed by procrastinators in the professional work force, Urban states, "These people were writing with intense frustration about what procrastination had done to their lives, about what [distractions have] done to them. And I thought about this and I said, well, if the procrastinator's system works, then what's going on? Why are all of these people in such a dark place?" Urban accepts the procrastinator's habits as being appropriate. He believes that it's okay to procrastinate, as long as the project gets done on time, even if the results are poor. This might be unfortunate news for someone desiring to learn how to change their habits of procrastinating short-term projects, and with tight deadlines.

On the flip side, Urban provides a call-to-action that makes sense to an audience. When explaining long-term procrastination, Urban illustrates how short life can really be, even for someone that lives to be 90. He explains that if you stay stuck in the procrastination cycle throughout your life, you'll never accomplish what you need to in time. This realization provides a call for people to set their own personal deadlines and goals to appropriately make their dreams become a reality. Also, Urban explains the cycle of procrastination in a simple detailed way that anyone who procrastinates can relate to. This information seems correct from a subjective point of view, and there is no reason to argue against his idea of a cycle.

Personally, I agree with the overall talk that Urban provided. I procrastinated this essay specifically and have done it many times before. I relate to Urban's idea of being completely distracted until panic hits before a deadline and find his experiences to be humorous and fun. His conclusion provided a different point of view that I have actually decided to apply in my own life by visually representing my approximate time left alive. This allowed me to realize the actuality of "life is short, enjoy it while it lasts." I personally agree with Urban's points.

In conclusion, Urban's strengths lie in his success humor and relatability and his call-to-action. Urban's weaknesses are his failure to provide scientific evidence and his lack of a solution to the problem. However, in the end, I personally agree with Urban and believe in his point of view on procrastination. We all procrastinate in different ways, whether that be short or long-term goals, so if you look at life from a wider view, you can visualize accomplishments better and manage your time more wisely.

Works Cited

Urban, Tim. "Inside the mind of a master procrastinator." TED. February 2016. Lecture.