In the early 90's when I learned about procrastination, I was happy to be interviewed for the magazine. It opens up a conversation then for the larger issue of people and personality. It is easier for many people to understand that there is a lot of genetic shaping of the animal world, and we are not just another animal so let's extend that to think of ourselves. No one forgets the dogs it is such a great hook for that lecture.

I think in my research on procrastination the thing that fascinates me is why do we become our own worst enemy? Why does our own behavior break down when we have an intention and we really do want to succeed? We are really the only person standing in our own way.

After many years struggling to find the place where I was connected, trying life as a tennis pro, even life in a seminary and various other “possible selves”, I got into the outdoor industry. As I said, I managed Trailhead in the early 80s as an outfitter. One day I was driving back from a whitewater canoe class I had been teaching, and I asked one of the other canoe instructors, “what are you doing tomorrow?” and she said she was heading off to Nigeria. I said, “No kidding, how did you get to do that?” And she described how she had completed a certificate to teach English as a second language at a local university, so she got to travel. I dropped her off, and I drove right to that same university, that is where I work now, and I enrolled in the program for double majoring in biology and psychology. My first degree was a bachelor of science and my focus was on animal behavior. I thought I would be a full-time biologist, but I got more interested in behavior instead of the physiology and other aspects of biology. So, I studied behavior for that undergraduate degree, and I think I have always had that interest into the why of what we do.

I think in my research on procrastination the thing that fascinates me is why do we become our own worst enemy? Why does our own behavior break down when we have an intention and we really do want to succeed? We are really the only person standing in our own way.

After many years struggling to find the place where I was connected, trying life as a tennis pro, even life in a seminary and various other “possible selves”, I got into the outdoor industry. As I said, I managed Trailhead in the early 80s as an outfitter. One day I was driving back from a whitewater canoe class I had been teaching, and I asked one of the other canoe instructors, “what are you doing tomorrow?” and she said she was heading off to Nigeria. I said, “No kidding, how did you get to do that?” And she described how she had completed a certificate to teach English as a second language at a local university, so she got to travel. I dropped her off, and I drove right to that same university, that is where I work now, and I enrolled in the program for double majoring in biology and psychology. My first degree was a bachelor of science and my focus was on animal behavior. I thought I would be a full-time biologist, but I got more interested in behavior instead of the physiology and other aspects of biology. So, I studied behavior for that undergraduate degree, and I think I have always had that interest into the why of what we do.

I think in my research on procrastination the thing that fascinates me is why do we become our own worst enemy? Why does our own behavior break down when we have an intention and we really do want to succeed? We are really the only person standing in our own way.

After many years struggling to find the place where I was connected, trying life as a tennis pro, even life in a seminary and various other “possible selves”, I got into the outdoor industry. As I said, I managed Trailhead in the early 80s as an outfitter. One day I was driving back from a whitewater canoe class I had been teaching, and I asked one of the other canoe instructors, “what are you doing tomorrow?” and she said she was heading off to Nigeria. I said, “No kidding, how did you get to do that?” And she described how she had completed a certificate to teach English as a second language at a local university, so she got to travel. I dropped her off, and I drove right to that same university, that is where I work now, and I enrolled in the program for double majoring in biology and psychology. My first degree was a bachelor of science and my focus was on animal behavior. I thought I would be a full-time biologist, but I got more interested in behavior instead of the physiology and other aspects of biology. So, I studied behavior for that undergraduate degree, and I think I have always had that interest into the why of what we do.

I think in my research on procrastination the thing that fascinates me is why do we become our own worst enemy? Why does our own behavior break down when we have an intention and we really do want to succeed? We are really the only person standing in our own way.

After many years struggling to find the place where I was connected, trying life as a tennis pro, even life in a seminary and various other “possible selves”, I got into the outdoor industry. As I said, I managed Trailhead in the early 80s as an outfitter. One day I was driving back from a whitewater canoe class I had been teaching, and I asked one of the other canoe instructors, “what are you doing tomorrow?” and she said she was heading off to Nigeria. I said, “No kidding, how did you get to do that?” And she described how she had completed a certificate to teach English as a second language at a local university, so she got to travel. I dropped her off, and I drove right to that same university, that is where I work now, and I enrolled in the program for double majoring in biology and psychology. My first degree was a bachelor of science and my focus was on animal behavior. I thought I would be a full-time biologist, but I got more interested in behavior instead of the physiology and other aspects of biology. So, I studied behavior for that undergraduate degree, and I think I have always had that interest into the why of what we do.

I think in my research on procrastination the thing that fascinates me is why do we become our own worst enemy? Why does our own behavior break down when we have an intention and we really do want to succeed? We are really the only person standing in our own way.

After many years struggling to find the place where I was connected, trying life as a tennis pro, even life in a seminary and various other “possible selves”, I got into the outdoor industry. As I said, I managed Trailhead in the early 80s as an outfitter. One day I was driving back from a whitewater canoe class I had been teaching, and I asked one of the other canoe instructors, “what are you doing tomorrow?” and she said she was heading off to Nigeria. I said, “No kidding, how did you get to do that?” And she described how she had completed a certificate to teach English as a second language at a local university, so she got to travel. I dropped her off, and I drove right to that same university, that is where I work now, and I enrolled in the program for
the fall. I quit my job. I did the certificate for teaching English as a second language, thinking I was going to go travel the world. Instead what happened was I got hooked on academics. As I got older and a little more focused, and after having a linguistics background (ESL), I did a MA in psychology, then a PhD and along the way a Bachelor of Education. And then I settled back down. You can see I kept following my heart. In the end, I completed 5 degrees. That was incredible to me - as an undergraduate I wasn’t sure I would finish the first three years!

**MM:** What are your responsibilities in your job as professor?

**TP:** I have done a lot of things at the university. I have been an associate dean of students, and I just finished being the graduate supervisor in our department. So, I have done administrative work in addition to my teaching and research. Mostly, I focus on my teaching. I teach very large classes. In fact, I teach on television, that is how I was able to do that streaming video, because TV cameras recorded me anyhow.

I have signed a contract to write a first-year text book, so I will start this when I return. I say when I return, because right now I am on unpaid leave of absence to be “Mr. Mum.” I am at home full time, because that is what this “Dinosaur Dad” wants to do. I didn’t have my first child, Laurel, until 50, so I thought, I have the means, so I stay at home and we play. My wife, Beth, is back at work at Environment Canada, envious of daddy’s time at home!

**MM:** How has that been working out?

**TP:** It is a big change. A lot of people at the university asked how I was going to do it because I am deeply involved in what I do at Carleton, but a child is a miraculous change in my life. I used to teach developmental psychology, but it is not until you have a baby that you have any clue. It is an amazing trip. The great thing is that she loves being outside with the dogs and horses. I am still doing consulting work, but I don’t have the day-to-day grind of the commute, committees, etc.

**MM:** When you are working, how do you hold such a big job and keep dogs?

**TP:** That’s a good question. Some days we all ask that. There is the video called The Lone Trail about the Yukon Quest, and I think it is William Kleedehn they ask at one point, “What do you like about mushing?”, he answers “sometimes I wonder”. It is a lifestyle, like anything in your life, it ebbs and flows. To do my job, there are days that I have to get up really early, around 4.30 am, to get the tractor going to clear the driveway, feed the dogs and horses. It is a lot of work, but it is a way of being. Of course, on other cold, sunny days when I don’t have classes, you’ll find my dog truck at the end of the trail. That flexibility makes my job as a professor perfect for my other life driving dogs!

**MM:** One more question regarding your job: Do you procrastinate?

**TP:** Ha ha ha! I use to, like every student. I thought it was the bane of my existence as an undergraduate, because there would be assignments I didn’t want to do, but after studying it for so long, I have it beat. I can recognize when I start to lie to myself, like when we tell ourselves “I will feel more like doing it tomorrow”, or “I work better under pressure”, but these are just big “flags” that we are trying to rationalize our current behavior, which is not doing anything. I am pretty good at seeing that for what it is and flagging it and saying “Tim lets just get it done”. Once you get started, most jobs just get done. I am really not much of a procrastinator anymore. It is an odd thing though, it is like saying do you ever get depressed? Everybody gets sad and everybody puts things off once in awhile, but I am never bothered by procrastination.

**MM:** I will try and tell Greg to look for his flags more closely.

**TP:** That’s a good question. Some days we all ask that. There is the video called The Lone Trail about the Yukon Quest, and I think it is William Kleedehn they ask at one point, “What do you like about mushing?”, he answers “sometimes I wonder”. It is a lifestyle, like anything in your life, it ebbs and flows. To do my job, there are days that I have to get up really early, around 4.30 am, to get the tractor going to clear the driveway, feed the dogs and horses. It is a lot of work, but it is a way of being. Of course, on other cold, sunny days when I don’t have classes, you’ll find my dog truck at the end of the trail. That flexibility makes my job as a professor perfect for my other life driving dogs!

**MM:** One more question regarding your job: Do you procrastinate?

**TP:** Ha ha ha! I use to, like every student. I thought it was the bane of my existence as an undergraduate, because there would be assignments I didn’t want to do, but after studying it for so long, I have it beat. I can recognize when I start to lie to myself, like when we tell ourselves “I will feel more like doing it tomorrow”, or “I work better under pressure”, but these are just big “flags” that we are trying to rationalize our current behavior, which is not doing anything. I am pretty good at seeing that for what it is and flagging it and saying “Tim lets just get it done”. Once you get started, most jobs just get done. I am really not much of a procrastinator anymore. It is an odd thing though, it is like saying do you ever get depressed? Everybody gets sad and everybody puts things off once in awhile, but I am never bothered by procrastination.

**MM:** I will try and tell Greg to look for his flags more closely.

**TP:** It is just those moments when you are making excuses, and you need to say “Lets just get to it.”

**MM:** There you are Greg, words from the wise man himself! Want to learn more? Check out www.procrastination.ca (but don’t rush or anything).