



STOP Procrastinating!

PROCRASTINATION

We all agree that procrastination is an effective way for failure. Just avoid writing that paper and your grade will drop!

The problem is that you were probably planning on finishing that paper on time, but you really wanted to spend some time with friends, watch a TV show, clean your room, or help someone else with their problem.

Procrastination is a behavior and it gets reinforced every time that you procrastinate, just like with any other behavior or habit. You are probably good at it by now, and it is time to explore how exactly you lose your motivation to do something and procrastinate.

WHERE DID YOUR MOTIVATION GO?

How do you procrastinate? Do you cross your fingers and hope everything will work out? Do you lower your expectations? Do you feel hopeless, since you have messed up anyway, so why even try? Here are some more ways that block motivation and excitement, and feed procrastination.

LOSS OF INTEREST:

If the task is irrelevant to your interests and goals, you will not be as eager to start. You may even feel that it is imposed on you and avoiding may even feel right.

DRAMATIZING:

You may tell your friends all the tasks you have to do and you may even find some comfort in venting about how difficult the class is. However, talking about it may defuse your energy, and direct your attention to things that do not help accomplish the task.

PLEASING OTHERS:

If what you are doing is someone else's wish for you, then you will find yourself having a hard time with doing it.

MAGICAL THINKING:

Wishing that things will work-out even if you are not at the airport on time and even if you do not have your paper ready at the deadline.

PERFECTIONISM:

Having high expectations is a great goal, but nobody is perfect. Perfectionism is a trap and it can keep you from even starting something if you try to avoid making mistakes.

LACK OF CONTROL:

You know that, for example, at school your work will be evaluated by your professors. You may have a hard time letting things be under someone else's control and accept their evaluation of your work.

CONFUSION:

You may not be sure of what is expected from you. Sometimes you may need more concrete and direct instructions than what you were given at the beginning.

BEING OVERWHELMED:

Everyone's life is different. Sometimes an easy task on top a busy schedule can make you feel overwhelmed and delay the process of completion.

LACK OF SPECIFIC SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE:

You may want to do the job, but if you do not know how to do it or what tools are required then you may be putting everything off indefinitely.

THE WAKE UP CALL!

What does it cost to procrastinate? Well, most students agreed that procrastination is expensive. Here is what it may have or will cost you:

- **Your grades!** Hoping that the teacher will forget about the deadline is a rare coincidence. Most likely, the more time you spend on avoiding the work the lower the quality and the grade you will receive.
- **Your health!** According to the September 2009 Psychology Today studies show that "Just over the course of a single academic term, procrastinating college students had such evidence of compromised immune systems as more colds and flu, and more gastrointestinal problems. And they had insomnia."
- **Money!** Wait long enough before buying those tickets and you may have to spend more because it is the last minute, if you can find any left!
- **Friendships!** You probably trust your friends but if they procrastinate, if they show up late, and make up excuses, you don't like it! You may be polite enough to make up for their excuses, but you eventually will become annoyed and resentful - especially when you have to take responsibility for them.
- **Forget about self-esteem!** For most people, procrastination is an ongoing emotional battle with guilt. When you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing you may be steeped in self-criticism about how unworthy you are.
- **Forget about self-esteem even more!** Procrastination can make you feel guilty, lazy, stupid, inadequate, anxious, unworthy, bad, even feeling like a loser, or hopeless and you may even want to giving up trying!

THERE IS HOPE!

There is hope! There are many ways to get untangled! Here are some general moves that may dissolve your procrastination. Here are some things to try that may be helpful to you:

- Read the above examples and find what applies to your situation.
- Write down a list of your own ways to procrastinate.
- Stay honest with yourself.
- Stay real, avoid exaggerating and distorting (you may need to ask for someone's feedback and help with this step).
- Find a specific goal. Visualize yourself achieving it.
- Devote some time into breaking the task into small steps.
- Develop a checklist of skills and the tools you need, and gather them.
- Monitor your progress in small, attainable steps.
- Be reasonable of your expectations.

INSTANT HOPE!

For fast and effective results, ask for support:

- Your professors are available to answer specific questions to help you avoid mistakes and to clarify misunderstandings.
- Your mental health counselor is available to help you strengthen your skills, and to help you establish and achieve your goals.

For more information, stop by Counseling Services in West 263 E or contact Aphrodite Beidler, LMHC, at 509-372-7153 or abeidler@tricity.wsu.edu.