

Overcoming Procrastination

Introduction

William Knaus, a psychologist, estimated that 90% of college students procrastinate. Of these students, 25% are chronic procrastinators and they are usually the ones who end up dropping out of college.

What is Procrastination?

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task, which needs to be accomplished. This can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, depression and self-doubt among students.

Procrastination has a high potential for painful consequences. It interferes with the academic and personal success of students.

Why do Students Procrastinate?

Procrastination begins with some kind of negative feeling that distracts us. However negative is often just a label put on top of neutral energy. If you can recognize and reframe some of these feelings of anxiety and self-doubt, you can make a plan for organizing your time and yourself.

Problem

• **Unrealistic Expectations and Perfectionism.**

You may believe that you **MUST** read everything ever written on a subject before you can begin to write your paper. You may think that you haven't done the best you possibly could do, so its not good enough to hand in.

• **Fear of Failure.** You may think that if you don't get an A, you are a failure. Or that if you fail an exam, you, as a person, are a failure, rather than that you are a perfectly ok person who has failed an exam.

Solution

• Let go of those beliefs. Start early, do the best you can at the moment. Review and revise later.

• Reframe failure use it to learn; move on to the next event. Compete only with yourself! Visit the professor - how can I do better on the next exam?

- **Finding the Task Boring.**

• **Fear and Anxiety.** You may be overwhelmed with the task and afraid of getting a failing grade. As a result, you spend a great deal of time worrying about your upcoming exams, papers and projects, rather than completing them.

• **Difficulty Concentrating.** When you sit at your desk you find yourself daydreaming, staring into space, looking at pictures of your boyfriend/girlfriend, etc., instead of doing the task.

• **Personal Problems.** For example, financial difficulties, problems with your boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.

• **Poor Time Management.** Procrastination means not managing time wisely. You may be uncertain of your priorities, goals and objectives. You may also be overwhelmed with the task. As a result, you keep putting off your academic assignments for a later date, or spending a great deal of time with your friends and social activities, or worrying about your upcoming examination, class project and papers rather than completing them.

- Focus on your priorities and goals. Apply material to yourself.

- Break the large task into small parts. Set specific goals. Bite it off, one small bite at a time.

- Getting started: organize environment; 5 minute rule; pre-read text; review lecture notes; use a worry pad.

- Seek counseling.

- Keep a record of how you are using your time.

- Summarize your time usage by categories.

- Make a weekly schedule, daily priority list and monthly calendar.