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Procrastination



How much can it hurt you?

We all seem to procrastinate every once in a while. Whether it's putting off the gym for another day, cleaning the house, or not getting the work done around the office that we always say we will. Although, for some, procrastination can be more than just a problem in some life areas; for some it's a very serious issue.

What makes you procrastinate?

Procrastination is a very complex psychological behavior that affects everyone to some degree or another. ¹ When we procrastinate we are letting some "less important" life tasks take over the important ones. ² Time management is minimally related to procrastination, and thus some people know exactly what they should be doing, but still cannot accomplish the task at hand. ²

Procrastination can also be part of a larger problem in general for some people; difficulty in dealing with a procrastination problem may be due to a mental health disorder.

The following are characteristics some procrastinators may possess¹:

1. A procrastinator is often very optimistic about getting work done with a short amount of time.
 - A procrastinator may imagine that it will only take 5 days to complete a project, so at day fifteen there is no reason to start. Soon the procrastinator realizes that too much time has passed, and there is no sense of control. Consequently, there is not enough time to complete the project.
2. A procrastinator often tells themselves that they only work best under pressure.
 - Sudden "bursts" of energy are the source of this feeling, which is only due to the fact that you have no choice but to work "under pressure" or not do the project at all, due to the time constraint.

Resources may be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

3. Low self-confidence
 - The procrastinator may have low self-confidence or low self-esteem which affects his/her procrastination level. If this person is expecting only a high level of performance, then they may put off a difficult task in order to avoid disappointment.
4. A procrastinator says they are "too busy"
 - The procrastinator often says that he or she is too busy to complete the tasks. They will make up excuses for not getting the work done, like "I didn't get the work done, because I had to do.... instead."
5. Stubbornness
 - Procrastination may be associated with stubbornness or pride. People may often say that they will not complete the task until they are ready to do so, not when someone tells them to.
6. Issues coping with pressures
 - Procrastination may be a coping method of dealing with day-to-day pressures. These types of procrastinators often feel as if the pressures never end, no matter how many tasks they complete, so it is easier to put off tasks and be able to "justify", then having to actually complete the task.

Ultimately these characteristics will keep us from obtaining and accomplishing important life goals. Without this accomplishment, we may feel bad about ourselves, or continue to believe that we will never be what we want.

Why do people procrastinate²?

- Avoiding Discomfort
- Perfectionism
- Thinking you are not good enough
- Self-doubt
- Workaholism

What can I do to help stop procrastination?

First, before trying to prevent yourself or someone else from procrastinating, we must see if procrastination is part of a bigger problem all together.

People who procrastinate may be dealing with a mental health disorder. Some of the following may indicate that a person is struggling with depression²:

- Difficulty sleeping
- No sense of energy
- Not finding happiness in activities that you once did
- Feeling sad most of the time

Contact Us

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Another disorder that procrastinators may deal with is anxiety. Often those who suffer from anxiety disorder cannot start or finish any project, due to worry.²

Finally, another disorder which may be the factor behind procrastination could be Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Often people dealing this disorder have a hard time staying focused or organized while trying to complete a project.²

If you notice that you or someone else has these symptoms, seeking a physician's guidance will help to see if the issue of procrastination is part of a greater problem or not.

How to Stop Procrastination



Eliminating procrastination is very important, and can help you to accomplish goals that you have set. Helping to keep yourself on track is a very important part of eliminating procrastination, and so following these guidelines² may help you to reach that dream you thought you never could!

- Set specific goals
- Set priorities
- Organize your work
- Divide and Conquer
- Schedule a small amount of time to do a task
- Keep a positive attitude
- Make a commitment

References:

1. Procrastination, California Polytechnic State University <http://sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/procrastination.html>
2. Will Procrastination Stop You From Reaching Your New Year Goal? By John Weatherspoon, ACSW, LCSW.