

PROCRASTINATION – IT’S NEVER TOO LATE

Procrastination is putting off until tomorrow what you should have done yesterday. It is a strategy to cope with situations that produce fear and anxiety. Procrastination is something that can be dealt with successfully. Following are some ways to do it.

1. Lack of interest in a subject
 - a. Read actively: converse mentally with the author, question his/her viewpoint, anticipate his/her conclusions, and attempt to disprove his /her ideas.
 - b. Learn to use an effective method of study. Surveying and raising questions about the material arouse interest in what is to be read.
 - c. Be alert to ways in which your course relates to your life, and the current scene.
2. Lack of goals for each study session
 - a. Plan ahead exactly what you expect to accomplish in a study session. Plan an enjoyable activity as a reward for a job well done.
3. Poor reading and study skills
 - a. Go to the O’Neill Center for referral in developing these skills.
 - b. Learn an effective approach to textbook study.
4. Trouble getting started
 - a. Have a definite place to study and be properly equipped with pencils, paper, dictionary, etc.
 - b. Have a definite starting time that you enforce. The sooner you begin the sooner you will be free to do other things.
 - c. A brief review is helpful in getting started.
5. Daydreaming (an escape from work)
 - a. Have only one course’s materials on your desk at one time.
 - b. Keep a scratch pad available. Jot down your irrelevant thoughts and come back to them later.
6. Worry about personal problems
 - a. Go to the appropriate student service agency for help – Counseling, Financial Aid, Health and Wellness Center, etc.
 - b. If you have trouble deciding on a major go to the Career Development Office. They will help you evaluate your aptitudes and interests.
7. Deadlines
 - a. Keep a calendar of assignment deadlines and appointments
 - b. Make a schedule with definite times for studying and completing assignments

8. Isolation
 - a. Meet with a classmate and get started. Hire a tutor. Visit the professor. Talk about it to a significant other. Go to the O'Neill Center.

9. Make an Un-schedule
 - a. Fill in a week's schedule with only essentials – classes, work, exercise. Then write down any minutes you do study.

10. Give yourself credit for a step
 - a. If you solved 5 problems but not 10, if you read 30 pages instead of 50, recognize that you are making progress, doing something.

11. Not a Mona Lisa every time
 - a. Grades are not a measure of self-worth. Your grade on an assignment is not equated with your worthiness as a person.

12. Use a symbol for studying
 - a. Choose an item, like a hat, that you put on when and only when you are studying, or an item that you place in your desk as you study.

13. Relax
 - a. Relax your body before beginning to study and give yourself an affirmation and/or an image that will motivate you.
 - b. Imagine that your brain is filled with the subject that you are going to study and that there is no room for anything else. See that the entrances to your mind are blocked by that subject.

14. Transition
 - a. Find a transition activity that will move you in a positive direction towards studying. For example, if you have a paper to write, break the task down by starting to copy a favorite poem from a book. Once you have the momentum for writing, you will find it easier to change subjects and bring your paper.

15. Contract
 - a. Develop a contract that suits your needs and slightly exceeds. For example, if you observe that it takes you 30 minutes of procrastinating before you begin to study, contract with yourself to reduce the time to 20 minutes by identifying for yourself a motivating reward or punishment.

16. Positive patterns
 - a. After analyzing your procrastination pattern, develop a positive pattern that will carry you across the rough spots. For example, instead of watching TV, light a candle of your

favorite color, gaze into the flame and say to yourself, “I am ready to begin now.” The effects of an intervention like this will grow stronger each time you do it.

17. The Consistent put-down

- a. If you consistently put yourself down or in other words, have a negative tape going, sit down and write out the script as thoroughly as possible. Keep it in a drawer. The next time the tape starts up in your mind, pull out the script and tell yourself, “I have already written this out in great detail. I no longer need to go through it all again. It’s here on the paper, so I can skip it and move on to the next step.”