

Coping with College Series

Are You a Good Procrastinator?

by Sandy Muraoka
Staff Counselor
Student Counseling Services

Are you a good procrastinator? Many students find that they have perfected the art of procrastinating. There are many different ways to practice this skill.

Studying with the television and the radio blaring is a perfect way to delay work. Telling yourself that your work needs to be perfect eventually leads to procrastination (or even quitting). By doing this, you push yourself to the point where you realize that you can't get it perfect, therefore you must be a failure. This negative thinking will surely weaken your motivation. Some students find that if they tell themselves over and over that they cannot do the work, they begin to believe it. Again, this sort of thinking will surely have you putting work off until tomorrow because you are afraid you will fail.

If you found yourself relating to some of these examples, chances are that you are a good procrastinator. Not meeting deadlines and not getting assignments done on time can have a negative effect on your scholastic and work performance.

Why do people procrastinate? For some, time management is a problem. Not having clear goals about what you want to accomplish can hinder your ability to prioritize tasks in your life. Managing your time requires that you understand your goals and prioritize those tasks that will get you to achieve those. Failure to accurately estimate the amount of time required to successfully complete a task leads to procrastination.

Students who have poor self-esteem or lack confidence in their performance often procrastinate because they are afraid of failing. These individuals often have negative thoughts about themselves and their performance, such as "I'll never get this done," or "I know I'm going to get an F on this test." This kind of thinking can lead to anxiety or even depression. Focusing on your successes and giving yourself permission to make mistakes can help.

Sometimes personal problems can interfere with your getting work done. When you have had a loss in your family, or are fighting with your significant other, it can be hard to set these things aside and focus on school. Support from friends and family helps you to deal with your problems without feeling overburdened. This assistance will enable you to continue to function even during difficult times.

Lastly, if someone is bored or does not enjoy an activity, chances are she/he will procrastinate. Reaching our goals sometimes means that along the way we will need to do things we may not like. Thinking of the end product sometimes helps to remind us that the sacrifice is worth it.

All of us procrastinate at some time or another, but if you find that your procrastination is habitual and is interfering with your school performance, seek assistance. Student Counseling Services (438-3655) offers services can provide assistance in this area.