



Facing and Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination is a bad habit that you may fall into when you are feeling overwhelmed by the workload. It does not need to be part of your identity, and it is not a character flaw. It is, however, reinforcing (especially if you receive a good grade), and it takes a toll through lack of sleep and anxiety. Every time you delay, it reinforces your negative attitude or fear about the task.

Active participation (just doing it!) can build a more positive attitude and a feeling of accomplishment rather than anxiety.

Ask yourself why you are procrastinating:

- Lack of motivation to do the task
- Task seems too difficult or time consuming
- Trouble getting started
- Fear of failure
- Unrealistic expectations and perfectionism

How can you change ?

1. Make it meaningful. What is important about what you are putting off? How will you feel when it's completed?

2. Take it apart. Break the task into smaller pieces. Make a list and cross off each piece you've done, no matter how small.

3. Write an Intention Statement and post it where you can see it. "I intend to make a list of four possible topics for my paper by 9 p.m., and I will reward myself by watching TV for a half-hour."

4. Find a reward for finishing each step, rather than expecting to complete the whole task in one sitting. Be your own motivator.

5. Do it now! Set a timer for 15 minutes and just start. You'll probably keep working -- if not, switch to something else and try again.

6. Tell someone. Sharing your intentions will keep you honest by getting support and keeping you focused. They will ask how it's going!

7. Be here now! If you get distracted by other thoughts of past or future, write them down so you can let them go and get back to work.

8. Use positive self-talk. "I know I can do this. It's not so difficult. I understand what I have to do."

9. Don't expect to be perfect. Expect excellence, not perfection. Accept setbacks and start again.