

OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION—GUIDELINES FOR THINKING

The Defier Procrastinator

“... BUT why should I do it?”



Practice relaxation techniques. Defiers waste a lot of energy when they focus antagonistically on what people expect of them. Learning how to refocus and reframe situations will help you remain relaxed.

Think about school assignments as requirements of the course that you're choosing to take, rather than demands that others are imposing on you. Don't view every request from the outside world as an assault on your right to remain an independent person. Remember that you're in school because you WANT to earn a college degree.

Before reacting to something in anger, calm yourself down and start reasoning intelligently and practically about it. Learn how to watch the "danger signs" when you are overreacting. Instead, move forward in a more effective and ultimately rewarding direction.

Instead of just complaining about some school-related assignment, start generating multiple options for responding to it effectively.

Although defiance may sometimes be justifiable, choose your battles carefully, weighing what's most worth fighting for.

Practice guided imagery. Once you free yourself from your rigid way of conceptualizing things, you can become a more imaginative and spontaneous person.

Appreciate the fact that perfectionist procrastination is YOUR problem, and is not caused by your teachers, your parents, or your friends. We all have very limited control over how others around us live. If you want to live a more stress-free and enjoyable life, it's up to YOU to change!

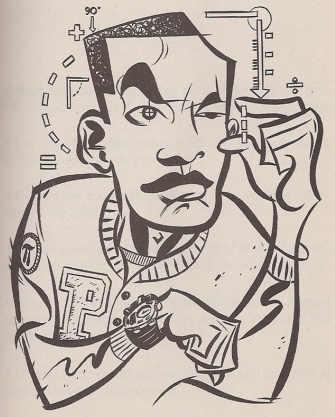
Before beginning a class assignment, put some thought into what is practical and realistic instead of what would - or might - be ideal. Don't let self-intimidation with doing things perfectly deter you from getting started. Consider multiple strategies for accomplishing your work.

When planning your schedule, be sure to allow yourself more than adequate time to accomplish school-related tasks. Always estimate your tasks to take 20% longer than you think they will.

Make it your goal to work steadily toward improving your grades, sharpening your skills, and recovering from setbacks, instead of always expecting yourself to get an A. It's better to set more practical standards for yourself.

The Perfectionist Procrastinator

“... BUT it's not perfect!”



Practice guided imagery. Though it may seem counter-intuitive to encourage Dreamers to do more "living in your head", a focused session of guided imagery can make you more grounded and attentive to the tasks at hand.

Each academic semester, take at least one of your dreams and see if you can transform it into a goal. Don't confuse your random ideas with true-life goals. In your heart, you know that there are certain dreams you really do want to achieve.

When you don't want to work on a school-related task because it doesn't feel good, think instead about how good you will feel about yourself once you've done the task well.

Guard against thinking of yourself as being special compared to other students and therefore not needing to do what they need to do to succeed. This kind of passive fantasizing can easily take the place of actively doing things that cultivate the special talents you do possess.

When you get an assignment, immediately begin to develop it by thinking in terms of the "5 Ws and 1 H": what, when, where, who, why, and how.

The Dreamer Procrastinator

“... BUT it's so difficult!”



OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION—GUIDELINES FOR THINKING

Practice guided imagery. Overcome your fear by cultivating feelings of confidence and good self-esteem.

When you put off making decisions about your assignments, daily schedule, or longrange academic goals, recognize that you ARE indirectly making a decision- to do nothing.

When confronting a challenge, acknowledge that it makes you nervous, but focus more on what could be exciting about it and what opportunities it could bring.

Although some assignments or other aspects of student life may intimidate you, guard against mentally “catastrophizing” them, or making them bigger and more threatening than they are. Avoid starting out from an “Ohmygosh!” orientation. Who said being a student was going to be easy?

Practice being your own best friend by believing in your skills, intelligence, and intuition and relying on them even when you have doubts. Friends should be there to encourage and support you but you also need to take charge of your own responsibilities.

The Worrier Procrastinator

“... BUT I'm afraid to make a change!”



The Overdoer Procrastinator

“... BUT I have so much to do!”



Practice guided imagery. Don't assume that relaxation means “doing nothing”. You need to learn how to release tension and restore personal energy.

Think of the student experience as not only hard work, but also as an adventure. You may need to spend more time and energy on what you really want to do, as well as on what you're required or asked to do.

Remind yourself that going to school means having to make choices. You can't have it all!! You must learn to make day-by-day choices about the best use of your time and energy.

When planning your schedule, strike an appropriate balance between what you WANT to do personally and what you NEED to do to meet academic demands. This will help you develop a more positive attitude toward your time.

Don't think about doing things to please others if it will be at the expense of your own goals. Learn to be assertive and to say “no” to extraneous demands for your time.

Practice relaxation techniques. Crisis-Makers exert a great deal of energy when life is in a constant state of turmoil. It's best to break the cycle of habitual excitement with genuine peace of mind.

Don't allow last-minute stress to be your significant motivator. Learn how to rely on more positive goals or desires, such as finding enjoyment in your work or building working relationships with people, to serve that purpose.

Appreciate that you may not feel interested in doing an assignment until AFTER you start doing it. Coach yourself into adopting a more active and upbeat frame of reference.

When thinking about a project or obligation, focus at least as much on the facts (for example, “this is a required course”) as you do on your feelings (“I don't like having to take it”). Constantly allowing yourself to be controlled by your feelings puts you at a disadvantage.

Avoid manufacturing crises by thinking in extremist terms. If you complicate each new task or responsibility, you will find it that much harder to get started.

The Crisis-Maker Procrastinator

“... BUT I like doing things at the last minute!”

