Procrastination Types

Procrastination is something that every college student struggles with. The first step to overcoming procrastination is to realize what type of procrastinator you are. There are six different types of procrastinators: Perfectionist, Dreamer, Worrier, Defier, Crisis-Maker, and Overdoer.

Use this handout with the Procrastination Self-Assessment Quiz on the Motivating Adult Learners page from the University of Maryland (http://userpages.umbc.edu/~koconne1/605TheAdultLearner/quizInstructions.htm)

That assessment will help you to discover what your procrastination type is.

The Perfectionist Procrastinator

Characteristics:

- Tend to put forth excessive amounts of time and energy to make sure that everything they do is perfect.
- Tend to put off starting tasks due to a fear of failure or doubts about doing it the “right way.”
- Tend to see everything in life as things that have to be done, not necessarily what they want to do.

Strategies for Perfectionist Procrastinators:

- Strive for excellence rather than perfection
- Focus on what’s realistic rather than ideal
- Avoid “all or nothing” thinking
- Change your “have to’s” to “want to”s
- Give yourself a time limit for completing a task
- Make a daily “to do” list that’s short and practical

The Dreamer Procrastinator

Characteristics:

- Tend to recoil from anything that might be difficult or distressing.
- Tend to be passive rather than active.
- Tend to pay little attention to facts or details, making it hard to focus on and perform difficult tasks.
- Tend to think of themselves as special people, for whom fate will intervene, making hard work and efficiency unnecessary.

Strategies for Dreamer Procrastinators

- Train yourself to differentiate between dreams and goals
- Develop the habit of thinking with “5 W’s and 1 H”: What, When, Where, Who, Why, and How.
- Change your wish’s, like to’s, and try to’s to will’s
- Change your someday’s and soon’s to specific times
- Plan each major project in writing, using a time line and specifying each step you will need to take
- Seek more interaction with other people
The Worrier Procrastinator

Characteristics:
- Tend to be indecisive and often fail to commit themselves to the specific decisions they do make.
- Tend to lack confidence in their own abilities, causing them to avoid or delay doing things.
- Tend to be dependent upon others for advice, reassurance, nurturance, and help.
- Tend to have a high resistance to change, preferring the safety of the “known” over the risk of the “unknown.”

Strategies for Worrier Procrastinators
- Recognize making no decision, is, in fact, a decision.
- Follow a two-step decision-making process: first commit yourself to the goal, then determine the steps you’ll take to achieve that goal.
- Change your I don’t know’s to One thing I do know is…
- Change your I can’t statements to compound sentences: I can’t…but I can…
- Each day, do at least one thing you’ve been consciously putting off.
- Each week, do something that you’re generally uncomfortable doing.
- Break down every large, intimidating project into an assortment of smaller, easier-to-manage tasks.

The Defier Procrastinator

Characteristics:
- Tend to see life in terms of what others expect or require them to do, not what they themselves would like or want to do.
- Tend to avoid expressing negative feelings; instead they convey those feelings by procrastinating.
- Tend to use procrastination as a way of challenging authority.
- Tend to be pessimistic in nature, undercutting their motivation to complete tasks in a timely manner.

Strategies for Defier Procrastinators
- Learn to view what someone else wants or expects as a request, not a demand.
- Mean what you say.
- If you haven’t done something, own up to it.
- Strive to act rather than react.
- Do what you know needs to be done.
- Try to work with a team, not against it.
- Do something specific that will satisfy you because it’s done your way.

The Crisis-Maker Procrastinator

Characteristics:
- Tend to first ignore the task, then feel intensely caught up in it, when faced with an undesirable task.
- Tend to dramatize situations, making themselves the center of attention.
- Tend to be easily bored and resist the “dullness” of doing things rationally and methodically.
- Tend to have a need to prove themselves by living on the edge.
Strategies for Crisis-Maker Procrastinators

- Identify other self-motivators besides stress.
- Strive towards changing your thinking style from extremist and general to moderate and specific.
- Avoid overdramatic, polarized language
- When discussing a task or responsibility, try to focus on the positive or active, rather than the negative or reactive.
- Figure out methods for handling things so that you can avoid or more successfully manage-recurring crises.
- Create your own motivators to change a boring task to a more interesting one.
- Understand that you may not feel interested in something until after you get involved in it.

The Overdoer Procrastinator

Characteristics

- Tend to suffer from low self-esteem, compelling them to take on more work than they can handle.
- Tend to have trouble saying “no” or asking for help.
- Tend to assume so many different responsibilities and roles that they easily get distracted from specific tasks and confused about priorities.
- Tend to lack true self-discipline, especially in regard to personal needs.
- Tend to find it very difficult to relax without feeling guilty or ashamed.

Strategies for Overdoer Procrastinators

- Acknowledge the difference between priorities and demands.
- Try not to depend on others for approval.
- Focus your thoughts on how you are going to gain control over things, not how things are controlling you.
- Don’t hesitate to say “no” to others when it’s appropriate.
- Talk more about your options than your obligations.
- Make and follow daily “to-do” lists that make the best use of your time and energy.
- Enlist help whenever appropriate.
- Incorporate an ample amount of leisure activities into your life.

Adapted from “Procrastination Self-Assessment Quiz” and “Obstacles in Adult Learning” from http://userpages.umbc.edu/~koconne1/605TheAdultLearner/obstacles.htm


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