

Believe it or Not, Procrastination Has it's Flaws

By Rebecca Shorten

We all procrastinate, even when we think we're not procrastinating at all. Like when we do housework to avoid doing our homework, or when we decide the lawn really needs mowing. It may seem productive, but in the end, we still have that pile of homework sitting on our desks that just doesn't seem to get any smaller.

When asked his favourite way to procrastinate and how he avoids it, our esteemed leader, Wade MacLauchlan, replies in an email (on a Sunday afternoon) that he usually says, "I'll get back to you on that." Next day he did get back to me and answered the second part of the question, "I get up early in the morning and just do it." That email was sent at 4:49 am Monday morning. I think he needs to learn how to procrastinate better.

But I also asked other students similar questions regarding procrastination. Of the whopping 10 students I interviewed (I didn't get around to ask-

ing more students), 40% said they procrastinate all the time, and 60% said they procrastinate sometimes. No one said they procrastinate occasionally or never. At least they were honest, and not kidding themselves.

In the same poll the students were asked their favourite way to procrastinate, and 30% said watching TV, 30% said Internet, 20% said video games, and 20% said 'other.' At least having only 10 people in the poll made it easier to work out the percentages.

According to a (fairly) recent article in the New York Times called "Dillydallying: Bad for Your Health," students who procrastinate are more likely to catch that nasty bug going around campus, and have more stress related problems like stomach aches. Procrastinators are also more likely to live unhealthily.

So what do we do about this problem? Well, as Wade MacLauchlan suggests, get started early (maybe not at 4:49 am, but 8:00 am is good). If we start early, then we finish early and have more of the day to ourselves, or so it

seems. Of course, this plan of action is not for everyone. We all seem to have natural cycles during the day where we seem to perform best. For some, it's early morning or the afternoon, and for others, this could be late at night.

One good strategy for avoiding procrastination is to sit down at your desk and sort your one big pile of homework into a few smaller, less daunting piles in order of priority. Your essay that's due next week has more priority over the one that's due next month. Next, make sure you have everything you need at your desk for productive study. This is so you're not wandering around wasting time looking for things, or deciding you need to go to the store for pens or paper. Some tasks may seem easier than others, so start with those so that your brain can get used to thinking on an academic level. You don't play sports without stretching first, and this is the same idea, but for your mind.

For bigger projects, break it

down into smaller tasks so that you have more of a feeling of accomplishment. Smaller goals are easier to achieve than large daunting ones. Then once you've finished a task, you can treat yourself to a cookie or a walk around the block. This system of rewarding yourself is a good idea so you don't become discouraged. But don't let yourself get distracted. There's a mountain of homework to be conquered!

Another tip is not to study on your bed or where there are tempting distractions. You may fall asleep, or be 'called' to your Sony Playstation. Our minds associate certain places with certain tasks, so we need to avoid those places where we do our everyday things, and find a place to study that is just for studying. Some people go to the library, the cafeteria at quiet times, and the Student Centre has lots of nooks you can squeeze into with your books.

Good luck beating off that procrastination!

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