

## **Tips and Tools for the *PROCRASTINATOR***

- Do you continuously put things off until the last minute?
- Do you gamble with time to see if you can complete tasks in increasing less amount of time?
- And, when you succeed do you have a feeling of ZEST!
- Is it getting harder to succeed at this game?
- Are you known by your family and friends as being a procrastinator?
- Have you been getting into more and more trouble due to your procrastination?
- Do you experience shame, guilt, and negative feelings about yourself as a result of your procrastination?
- Has it become painful for you?

### **This might help you:**

- Admit to yourself that you have a problem.
- Make a decision to address the problem.
- Take responsibility.
- Let those close to you know that this is a problem and is painful for you.
- The problem might be psychological such as high anxiety over achievement-related tasks, a fear of success, a fear of failure, ambivalence about a task/decision and/or resentment or anger.
- Or, it could also be symptomatic of a learning disability such as ADD or ADHD in which you just cannot focus.
- So, forgive yourself and let go of the self-blame and self-degradation.
- And, elicit the help of others, i.e. counseling, the PLTC

## **Some Suggestions:**

**Elicit the support of others:** Studying with a supportive friend could help motivate you to do the work and stay on task.

**Clear your schedule:** If you are behind and need to catch up, give up some of the things that you would normally do or want to do and clear up time in your schedule to complete specific tasks.

**Make a concrete plan and stick to it:** Make a real schedule of all the things you must do and during the open time, plan the tasks or assignments that you need to work on.

**Be Specific:** State the date, time, amount of time, and place where you will work. Identify the specific task/assignment and that you will work on, i.e. question 1 of the lab; Chapter 2 of the History text; read over notes from the Physics lecture....

**Use of Time:** Stop throwing away time. There are tasks you could do in 15 min., a half hour, an hour, two hours. Match the task to the appropriate time you anticipate needing. Use the time in between your classes in creative and productive ways. **Pick up all of the thrown away time and use it, use it, use it!!!**

**Remember that you do not need a whole day to begin to work.** Most of us cannot work after a two hour period of intense studying and typically you will need a brief break after about 20 minutes.

**Break up long stretches of time into smaller periods of time.** If you have a weekend, break each day up into three segments such as 11am – 1:00pm; 3:00 – 5:00pm, and 6:30 – 8:30pm. You have lots of breaks to chill and even time to go out on Saturday night. Try it.....

**Rotate your studying:** For each two hour period of time, focus on a different task or assignment. For example, you might work on editing a paper you've written in the morning, work on problem 2 of the lab in the afternoon, and read two articles for your Women's Studies class in the early evening. This way you're making progress on a number of assignments at one time.

**If it isn't working, change it!** If the place that you're studying is not working, find another place. If the study group is not helping, find another study group or study by yourself around others if you need company such as in the Science Center or Clapp Library. If you are stuck on the lab, put it down and go to the library to search for books for that research paper. **Be flexible!**

**Reward yourself** after you have made progress. Once you have completed a task give yourself a break to do something fun, or watch your favorite TV show, or hang out with friends. Be specific about the reward and the time you are allowing yourself for the reward.

**Then get back to work!!! And begin again.....**

**Reference:** Procrastination: Why you Do It, What to Do About It Now, by J. B. Burka, L.M. Yuen, Da Capo Press, 2008