



BEATING

PROCRASTINATION

Seriously – enough is enough! How many times have you seen your child start out with the best of intentions only to get distracted along the way? This is a brief tale of one teenaged girl! "...today I have to go to school, do my laundry, read my book, summarize an article, clean up my room, and go to bed at a decent hour since I didn't sleep last night because I was thinking about all I had to do today. It's 11:15pm and this is what I've actually done: I went to school. I came home, went upstairs to change into my sweats and ended up on FaceBook until dinner. After dinner I looked for tickets to upcoming basketball games .At about 9pm I decided to do laundry; it took 20 minutes to sort the lights and darks, but one load finally got in the wash. While I was waiting to put it into the dryer I should have cleaned up my room, or made notes on the book – but do you think I did that? Of course not. Instead I became mesmerized by iGoogle. My homepage was always Google, but I never bothered to customize the theme, code for the weather, or select which applications I wanted on my homepage. Now, I'm exhausted and aggravated at myself. Why do I do this to myself every day? In the morning I think of all the things I'm going to accomplish; I even make lists and put endless reminders on post-its all around my room. It's not like I forget that I have things to do – I just don't actually start them. I can't explain why the things didn't get done-they just didn't! I can't explain it. I am the Queen of Procrastination. "

I know the details vary but the story of procrastination and distraction remain similar!

Why do we procrastinate? Usually this happens because what we have to do is distasteful, too difficult or overwhelming. Students are so distracted by stimuli that they can't figure out where or how to get started. Sound, smells, sights and the random wandering of their minds continually vie for attention. Unable to select the most important things most tasks are approached in a disorganized fashion.

These might be a few other reasons for procrastination:

- ⇒ **Perfectionism:** some worry so much about producing the perfect project they over research and explore every possible avenue.
- ⇒ **Over estimating the time left to complete the task:** most students see time as endless ahead of them and fail to take into account all the other things they need to accomplish
- ⇒ **Underestimating the real amount of time involved :** many students have no sense of how much time it takes to look up sources, research information, take notes and formulate the paper.
- ⇒ **Fear of Failure:** rather than risk failure it may be better to do nothing. Self esteem may be based on results and if you fail you have no worth. This makes it too dangerous to try.
- ⇒ **Lack of Rewards:** we all need to feel excited and satisfied with what we do. When we feel our efforts are appreciated we do more. However the rewards have to start coming from within, from the internal chat we have with ourselves. Remind your student when they have been successful so they can recover that positive feeling.

- ⇒ **Delaying until the right mood strikes:** for some this could be a form of rebellion. It leads to a power struggle and no one wants to give in. The homework gets forgotten in the heat of the battle.

IDEAS TO MOVE PAST PROCRASTINATION.

- ◆ **Do something pleasant first.** get the momentum going! It then becomes easier to move to the less enjoyable task. Action often comes before motivation. The more you do, the more you'll feel like doing.

- ◆ **Create the right environment** for your child's learning style. Let them listen to quiet music, wear ear plugs sit on an ADD ball.

- ◆ **Eliminate the negative self talk.** Try to teach your child to say..."I might not be able to finish this today, but I can do the first couple of questions in the next 30 minutes." Kids do not enjoy the feeling of getting things in late all the time and once they are able to meet a few deadlines and experience the relief they might just get hooked on getting their assignments in on time.

- ◆ **Break it into tiny steps** don't try to eat the elephant in one bite!



Write the steps on post it notes and throw away each note once that step is done. Keep up the momentum by focusing on one thing at a time. Chunk the tasks into 15 minute segments at first so the student can see how much they can get done. By building in 15 minute segments the task is not overwhelming and scary.

- ◆ **Plan** it stops the panic with being overwhelmed! Schedule time to do the task. Follow only one agenda to list the all the things to do including homework. Track future assignments, upcoming tests and projects on a term @ a glance calendar. Colour code the subjects so the upcoming work stands out.

Another organizing idea is to keep a file folder with big assignments on the left side. Use post it notes break the assignment into smaller portions with due dates . The right side is Today's work. Move the post its on to the daily list as they need to be completed and then tossed when done. It makes a concrete visual for the student to see how much they are getting done.

FYI

FABULOUS PRODUCT

A remaining time, timer for students. I have one student who is using this and loves it. It can be purchased on line at this site:

www.timetimer.com

I will be purchasing one to use in my sessions as well.

BOOK RETURNS

Whoops, none of my books have found their way back home. Please check and return. Thanks

TAX RETURNS

I will provide tax receipts upon request.

SUMMER

TUTORING

I will be offering individual tutoring during the month of August. As you plan your summer please let me know if you wish to book time for your child to consolidate skills.

Referrals to new clients are always welcome.

CONFERENCES

I will be attending the LDAO conference on Monday, March 7/09

Monday, April 6/09 Dr.

Adam Cox is speaking at Sick Kids Hospital. The topic is the transition to high school. I highly recommend attending if possible.