



InterVision Group, LLC

Stop Procrastinating Now!

By Debby Stone, JD, CPCC

In *Gone With The Wind*, Scarlett O'Hara drawled, "I won't think about that now. I'll think about that tomorrow." In our culture, putting things off until tomorrow is commonplace. We are so overwhelmed that we procrastinate. Many of us have become masters at finding excuses for putting things off.

In the manufacturing industry there is a concept called "just-in-time" delivery. Rather than keeping supplies for the manufacturing process in inventory, the necessary supplies are delivered "just-in-time". Many of us deliver "just-in-time" in our lives as well. While the just in time concept works very well in manufacturing, it does not serve us well in our lives. When we continually put things off, we often miss deadlines or fail to put forth our best effort because we run out of time.

While many of us believe that we work well under pressure, that is rarely true. In fact, the more frenzied we are, the less productive we become. Functioning under stress leads to mistakes and wasted time. Did you ever notice that when you are in a real hurry, even simple tasks like buttoning a shirt become difficult?

To stop the habit of procrastinating, begin by noticing when you do it. What kinds of things do you tend to put off? How do you feel about those tasks? What are you avoiding? And, what do you gain by putting off a particular project? See if you notice a pattern in your procrastination.

Once you examine your current habits, you can begin to take steps to change your behavior. Instead of reading an email and then putting it aside to take action on it later, reply immediately. Go ahead and tackle that project that you have been dreading by breaking it down into smaller components and diving in. Chances are, once you get started, it will not seem so daunting after all.

You may also want to find an accountability partner. This can be a friend, your spouse, a colleague or a coach. Tell this person what you will do and set deadlines for when you will do it. Your accountability partner is then responsible for following up with you to be sure you do not procrastinate.

Most of all, I urge you to begin this process now – don't procrastinate. If you can end your habit of procrastination, you can increase your productivity and eliminate a major cause of stress. It is not too late. After all, as Scarlett O'Hara said, "Tomorrow is another day!"

Self Quiz - Are You a Procrastinator?

1. Do you feel an adrenaline rush when working under a tight deadline?
2. Are you constantly completing tasks "just-in-time"?
3. Are there big projects on your to do list that never get done?
4. Do you ever think, "If I put this off, maybe I won't have to do it at all"?
5. When you saw this article did you immediately think "That sounds good...I'll read that later"?

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