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Bad things come to those who wait

Putting off work for later can be sign of larger problems

How many times a week do you think, "I'll do it tomorrow?" If you're like most of the working world, that thought frequently crosses your mind. For some, procrastination is an easy solution to avoiding a tedious task. For others, it is a deeper issue.

"Not every procrastinator is the same," explains Judith E. Glaser, author of "The DNA of Leadership" (Platinum Press Inc., \$24.95). "Some procrastinators find it hard to get down to the work and rather prefer to think about it. They wait until the very last minute when time is the master, forcing them to take a stand, do the job, or finish the project."

Motivation is a key factor in many procrastinators, says Glaser. That's why the common motto of a serial procrastinator is "I work better under pressure." These outside forces provide just enough pressure to get the job done.

"Other procrastinators really don't like to make commitments - they like to live in a world of constantly changing options and possibilities," she says. "They procrastinate and find new things that grab their attention. They don't like the drudgery of doing the work, they like the excitement of the pursuit."

Downward spiral

Whatever the driving force is, procrastination at work can lead to missed deadlines, demotions or even unemployment. In life, it can lead to late payments, repossession of property and even loss of your children or marriage.

"I've observed some procrastinate as they have not understood 100 percent of the task at hand - they may try to resolve the dilemma in their mind before they resolve it in real life," explains Dr. Gabriela Cora-Locatelli, president of the Executive Health and Wealth Institute, a corporate consulting services company based in Miami Shores, Fla. "If you are a boss, make sure your employee understands what needs to be done, check and see if they would know how to do it, and establish a deadline as you hold them accountable."

Today first

"To avoid procrastination, first be clear on what's really important to accomplish today, and leave the rest for later in the week," advises Kerul Kassel, a personal and business coach for New Leaf Systems, a coaching and consulting firm that specializes in increasing productivity. "Next, schedule the activities in your calendar for specific days during specific time slots - no more than one to two hours at a stretch, otherwise it's too daunting. Focus on making progress with the task."

Kassel, who created the Procrastination Solutions Kit, suggests asking a friend or co-worker to hold you accountable for the tasks you've assigned yourself. Also, create rewards for following through on an activity and consequences for not completing the task in the allotted period of time, she says.

"We say we want to exercise, but we hate exercising or find it inconvenient, but if someone told us they'd pay us \$10,000 to exercise for a month, the cost for not exercising would be high enough to follow through," Kassel explains in reference to the effect of motivation. "

Many believe overcoming procrastination is a matter of the mind. The more procrastination is thought of as a personality flaw, the more likely you are to criticize yourself.

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