

ADDRESSING - AND AVOIDING - PROCRASTINATION

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP, WRITES MCGREGOR



MELANIE MCGREGOR
Column

ment for a week - a delayed reward. So, you pick the instant reward over the delayed reward and watch a movie, maybe for a series of days.

By this point, you're getting more anxious about the assignment with only a few days left to go until the due date. So, the reward of getting it done becomes more immediate - a few days in the future is closer than a week - and you finally tackle the job.

Other than choosing an instant reward over a delayed one, you may also put off what you think you can and even what you know you can't because of fear of failure, dislike of the task to be done, or feeling overwhelmed. However, the procrastination or dread of a task may be worse than doing the task itself. Think about how you feel and what you may

say to yourself while procrastinating: "I shouldn't be doing this," "Why am I so lazy?", "How am I going to get this done on time?" All that takes a toll on your stress and anxiety levels.

So, what can you do to address procrastination? Here are a few tips:

- Just start. Even if you don't finish the whole task, even just a small start can motivate you to keep going. You don't have to be perfect from the start ... you just need to start.
- Break up the task into smaller steps. We're less likely to put off a small task than we are a larger, more daunting one.
- Ask for help. Could someone else's encouragement or guidance help address why you're procrastinating?
- Set up rewards. Could playing our favourite music while doing the task

help us start and keep going? How about treating ourselves to a favourite cup of tea when we accomplish part of a task? This

can create those more instant rewards and reduce the chance that we'll procrastinate.

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Procrastination: delaying or putting something off. It pretty much boils down to avoiding something that needs to be done in the future in favour of something else you'd rather do in the present.

Think of having an assignment due for a class. While you know that starting it now will give you more time to complete it, you put it off. Watching a movie instead will be fun right now - an instant reward - while you won't have the satisfaction of completing the assign-



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