OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

The avoidance of doing a task which needs to be accomplished (procrastination) can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, depression and self-doubt. It can interfere with your academic and personal success. Below are some tips to stop procrastinating—a habit that limits your life and your potential.

Assess the Task. Spend a few minutes thinking through everything that needs to be done.

Break it Up! Break the task down into small pieces. It is much easier to tackle smaller chunks than one huge task.

“Once begun, it’s half done!” Yes, a chiché inspirational poster quote, but very true. Don’t shoot for completion in one sitting. This may overwhelm you. Just begin. Getting started is the key and incremental progress will follow.

Schedule “Action Sessions.” Even a little progress each day adds up over time. With progress, your confidence will increase and help you finish. Schedule 15 to 30 minute “action sessions” with realistic goals in mind, and set your mind to completing these goals.

Eliminate Distractions. Find a quiet place and try to make your “action sessions” count.

Goals. Focus on what you want to do and not what you want to avoid. Think about productive reasons for doing the task and set small, positive, concrete and meaningful goals for yourself.

Self Talk. Notice how you are thinking and talking to yourself. Talk to yourself with positive words that will remind you of your goals. Replace counter-productive habits of negative self talk such as “I wish I hadn’t...” and replace with “I will...”

Reward Yourself. This can help a seemingly painful project become less daunting. After completing an “action session,” take a nap, buy a latte, call a friend, etc.

Be Realistic. Changing habits and achieving goals take time and effort. Don’t undermine your success by setting unrealistic expectations that you cannot reasonably meet.