

Beat the procrastination monster

School is just around the corner, which means another year of waiting until the last minute to hand in that paper, study for that test, and finish that project.

Lyn Benn, Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU) director of student development, says that one of the underlying reasons behind procrastination is often a fear of failure, and another is perfectionism.

"It's not just a question of time management," said Benn. "Students are afraid of failing their tests, their courses, of not graduating so they put off studying or asking for help."

Beat the procrastination monster by identifying which type of procrastinator you are: perfectionist, overdoer, defier, worrier, dreamer, or crisis-maker.



Lyn Benn

Perfectionists are usually idealistic and unrealistic. They should strive for excellence rather than perfection, and reward themselves regularly for achievement. Setting time limits for completing a task and letting others be involved and do things their way will promote flexibility in expectations.
Quick tip: Replace the word "must" in conversation with "choose to."

Overdoers have trouble saying no or asking for help. Overdoers must learn to say "no" to others when appropriate. By incorporating an ample amount of free time into their lives, and replacing "I should" with "I want to," overdoers can set healthy boundaries.
Quick tip: Enjoy unexpected free time rather than filling it with another to-do item.

Defiers resent authority and are pessimistic by nature. This group needs to view what others want or expect as a request not a demand. By picking their battles carefully and avoiding words of blame or attack, defiers are no longer merely reacting to a negative situation.
Quick tip: Do something specific that will satisfy you because it's done your way.

Worriers lack self-confidence and are dependent on others. Worriers should try to avoid mentally catastrophizing tasks, and recognize that making no decision is, in fact, making a decision. Recognize "I'm waiting..." statements and go one step further to "meanwhile I'm doing..."
Quick tip: Reduce the number of qualifiers in your speech. (No ifs, ands, or buts!)

Dreamers are vague about what needs doing, hoping for a miracle. Dreamers must learn to differentiate between dreams and goals. Replace vague, passive language with concrete active language. Plan each major project in writing, using a timeline. Keep two lists with you as you go about each day: a "to do" and a "to think about" list.
Quick tip: Use an alarm, a timer, or a beeper as a reminder to do a task.

Crisis-makers tend to dramatize and are easily bored. In thinking about a task, crisis-makers should try to focus at least as much on facts as they do on feelings. Go from extremist and general thinking

to moderate and specific. This group must also stop characterizing themselves in conversation as incompetent or victimized.

Quick tip: Avoid creating false emergencies by engaging in healthy adrenaline pumping activities.

For more helpful strategies for going back to school, visit kpu.ca/learningcentres/learning-aids.

About Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Kwantlen Polytechnic University has served the Metro Vancouver region since 1981, and has opened doors to success for more than 200,000 learners. Four campuses—Richmond, Surrey, Cloverdale and Langley—offer a comprehensive range of sought-after programs in business, liberal arts, design, health, science and horticulture, trades and technology, and academic and career advancement. Over 19,000 students annually have a choice from over 120 programs, including bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, citations and apprenticeships. Learn more at kpu.ca.

Media contacts:

Tatiana Tomljanovic

Media Specialist

t: 604.599.2883

c: 604.364.1288

tatiana.tomljanovic@kpu.ca

Corry Anderson-Fennell

Manager, Media and Communications

t: 604.599.2840

c: 604.828.5232

e: corry.anderson-fennell@kpu.ca

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