

Deadline Stress Lessons

(from Sermons for all Occasions by Skip Carlson)

Learning about deadline stress before it arrives can result in a much calmer time around the deadlines because you have a better frame of reference from which to see yourselves and what is going on. The following are 3 important areas to learn about deadline stress before the last week of any quarter, trimester, semester, and/or a week or so before any major deadline / due date:

What is it?

- Deadline stress is that kind of overwhelming feeling of more work to do than there is time left to do it.
- Choosing to do work later many times results in deadline stress.
- Handling deadline stress may be the most important thing you learn about during this course.
- Procrastination is a human tendency that can be overcome if we work at it.
- Deadline stress is a fact of life in any job. **Even if you start earlier it can still happen.**

How to avoid it or reduce it:

- Keep a steady pace on any assignment or job from beginning to end.
- Try your best to start much earlier next time.
- You will be most successful in changing your habits for the better if you just do small steps and not try to change everything about yourself at once.

How to deal with it:

- Think of the last week (or day) before the deadline as the time you have been waiting for, especially if you earlier made the decision to put things off to do them at the last minute. **This will be exciting. Enjoy it.**
- Learn to live with it and enjoy the struggle and learn to change habits and start earlier next time.
- **Life is not always fair.** Computers and disks fail at difficult times, especially when not much time remains. This is called Murphy's Law: *Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.* Murphy's Law is much less prevalent when you start earlier and work at a steadier, more even pace.
- Be pleasant! Smile! **Don't be angry with everyone else for decisions you made earlier.**
- It is OK to be a bit angry with yourself for putting yourself in the position that you have.
- **Keep working hard towards the goal. Don't give up. Be strong. Do your best with the time you have.**
- Work smart. Do the things that have the most importance, point wise. Don't spend lots of time on 10 point projects before completing 1000 point projects. List and Prioritize your work.
- **Beat the deadline even if it means working late.** Hopefully an "all nighter" is not necessary. If so Mountain Dew® and M & M's® or Coffee can help one to stay awake longer.
- **Celebrate meeting the deadline!**