

LIVE EMPOWERED!

July 2008

Written and Published by Linda T. Inatsuka, Ph.D. to inform, educate and INSPIRE!

Special Points of Interest:

- Introducing the “New and Improved” Live Empowered! Newsletter!
- Do you “put things off” for later? Learn simple strategies to conquer procrastination.
- Coming Soon! Our new website will have more FREE tools and resources.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM DR. LINDA

Welcome to our premiere issue of Live Empowered! Actually, this is the first issue of the “offline” version of the newsletter. We’ve had the Live Empowered! Newsletter online in the past, but now that’s (along with this “hard copy” version) “new and improved” with more useful, informative content I hope you’ll enjoy.

I just recently (i.e., over a month ago) had to renew my license as a practicing psychologist. In the state of Florida, license renewals for psychologists occur every two years, during which we are required to complete 40 hours of continuing education credits. Of course, I should’ve “spread this out” over the span of two years, but “life happens” and lo’ and behold, I ended up scrambling to get this ALL done with a few weeks to spare! Yes, even as a therapist, I, too, struggle with procrastination from time to time. A number of my clients also struggle with procrastination among other things, which can lead to anxiety and stress. Many of you may relate to this. Therefore, this month’s article lists strategies that you can use to overcome and/or avoid procrastination.



FEATURE ARTICLE: *What are you putting off? How to Overcome Procrastination*

Do you have a big project to complete? Are you putting off making changes in your life? Do you often say to yourself, “This can wait until . . .” but find that it never gets done or completed? Or when you finally get around to it, you’re pressed for time, and now you’re really stressed? While the reasons many of us procrastinate are varied, there are some strategies that you can utilize to help you overcome procrastination.

1. **Break it down into smaller tasks.** If you are looking at a “big project” that you need to tackle, chances are looking at the “whole thing” will be overwhelming, and you’re apt to “put it off until later.” **(Continued on page 2)**

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1. However, breaking it down into smaller tasks will make it easier to complete. For example, let's say you need to clean your house. Looking at EVERYTHING that needs to be done will probably get you exhausted before you even begin. But starting by cleaning one area of the house a day may be a more manageable solution for you.
2. **“Just do it.”** To quote the Nike ad, sometimes you need to take action, however small (see #1), which then creates momentum. This is something that I do when I'm not “in the mood” to exercise. I tell myself that I'll exercise for 5-10 minutes and if at the end of that time I don't feel like continuing, I'll stop. However, more often than not, I end up continuing because I've created some “momentum” to go on. I heard a writer once say that the way in which he overcomes writer's block is to just start writing regardless of whether he feels like it or not. He admitted that the first few minutes of his writing is “gibberish,” but as he continues and gets into the “groove,” he ends up with something worthwhile. Likewise, once you *start* something, you are more likely to continue.
3. **Good enough is good enough.** One reason people struggle with procrastination has to do with perfectionism. That whatever they need to get done needs to be “perfect” and therefore, they put off completing tasks because it's “not good enough.” Unfortunately, for perfectionists, no matter what they do or how good it is, it may never reach “perfection.” More importantly, this is unattainable. If you find yourself in this situation, perhaps the question you need to ask yourself is, “What is the price (or result) of not having ANYTHING done versus having SOMETHING done?”
4. **Reward yourself.** Let's face it. We tend to procrastinate on things we DON'T want to do rather than things we like to do. Consequently, you probably need more motivation to get these tasks done. To sustain your motivation, reward yourself once you complete a task (even the small tasks-see #1). Rewards don't necessarily mean that you have to “buy stuff.” It could be little things such as taking a walk, listening to music, calling a friend, getting a cup of coffee, etc.

Whatever your reasons for procrastinating, start incorporating these strategies to get things done. Not only will this lessen your stress and anxiety, but “getting things done” will definitely increase your sense of accomplishment and self-esteem.

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DR. LINDA READS . . .

Do One Thing Different by Bill O'Hanlon (1999)

This is actually a book I read a few years ago, but reread it recently as I find the concepts and strategies useful for when working with my clients. The author, Bill O'Hanlon, is a mental health counselor who struggled with depression and developed the *solution-oriented approach* to therapy. (I'm a proponent of this approach.). He lists *10 Solution Keys* that help you to “change how you view and ‘do’ your problems.”

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Unlike traditional psychotherapeutic approaches, the solution-oriented approach “acknowledges” your past, but focuses more on developing practical, effective solutions to overcoming and dealing with problems. It answers the questions of “What do I do?” or “How do I overcome this?” when addressing difficulties.

The book is written in an “easy-to-read” manner. You can use any one of the solutions keys (i.e., do ONE thing different) to deal with your problems.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coming Soon: We are currently updating our website, www.liveempowered.com. The new website will have more helpful resources and information.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT . . .

“Procrastination is the grave in which opportunity is buried.” -Author unknown

“. . . Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.” -Lord Chesterfield

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Empowering individuals to live successful and fulfilling lives.

ABOUT DR. LINDA INATSUKA

Psychologist Dr. Linda Inatsuka (FL License #PY0005714) provides strength-based, solution-focused counseling services to empower individuals to solve problems such as overcoming depression and grief, finding relief from anxiety and stress, changing unhealthy behaviors, and rediscovering the joy in their relationships.

If you live in the Tampa Bay area in Florida and would like to learn how our services can help you, please call us for a FREE phone consultation at (813) 985-6121, or contact Dr. Inatsuka via e-mail at drlinda@liveempowered.com.

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