

How to stop procrastinating

Answer: forgive yourself

Michael Ernst
UW CSE 190b



Experimental evidence

Study of 119 freshmen

Survey about procrastination and self-forgiveness
before each of two midterm evaluations, plus grades, etc.

Citation:

“I forgive myself, now I can study: How self-forgiveness for procrastinating can reduce future procrastination”

by Michael J.A. Wohl, , Timothy A. Pychyl, Shannon H. Bennett

Personality and Individual Differences, volume 48, issue 7, May 2010, pp.803–808

Study results

Students who forgave themselves for procrastination:

- showed less negative affect between exams
- were less likely to procrastinate before the second round of exams

Self-forgiveness was not related to performance in the first set of exams

Self-forgiveness predicted better performance in the second set of exams

Study results in more detail

- * Forgiving oneself for procrastinating on a given task is related to less procrastination on a similar task in the future.
- * This relationship is mediated by negative affect, such that self-forgiveness reduces procrastination by reducing negative emotions.
- * The presence of this relationship depends on the extent to which the individual procrastinated on the first task. In our study, only at high levels of procrastination on the first exam was self-forgiveness negatively related to procrastination on the second exam.

Have you worked at CSE late at night?

Have you seen the security guard?

Or did you see the security guard at the job fair?

What is his name?

(It's Franklin.)