

Student success plan



Who can tell you more about yourself than you? Even though some people don't like to analyze themselves we all know our downfalls and weaknesses on areas we need to improve in. My weak areas are test anxiety, procrastination, and communication. I always freak out before a test, I wait until the last minute to do things, and I have a tendency of getting people confused because my nonverbal language doesn't match my verbal speaking and vice versa. My test anxiety didn't really start to bother me until middle school because that is when the real tests started happening and that's also when I started to slack in school. I would always get these horrible headaches and then my stomach would start hurting. I just thought it was normal but as the years went on it only got worse. I could never pass any exams, but every once in blue moon I would get a C or a B. It always made me feel stupid. I knew most of the material but I would always blank out. According to Diana Peters Mayer, some students blank out on tests because of their nerves, feel defeated, give up, and begin to underachieve (82). I know this describes me because there have been times I have just put my name on a test and turned it back into the teacher blank. I talked to my teacher about my test scores because she was really concerned about my grades. She decided to let me take my test in a private room by myself to see if that would help out but it didn't. I knew deep down one of the main reasons I always did poorly on tests is because my study habits weren't the best and I hated for people to judge me on my test scores. Sometimes I would think to myself " I bet my teacher thinks I'm dumb when it comes to grading my test" and that thought still cross my mind now. When having to take a test is when I feel at my worse in school. I truly am my worse critic and with that attitude I always ended up defeating myself. With me wanting

to get my Bachelor's degree in accounting I knew I had to get control of my test anxiety. Starting July 2011 is when I decided to change my study habits around to see if that had something to do with my anxiety with test and my test scores. I had started taking the CNA class that July. They told us ahead of time when we would be taking our test and what chapters that would be on them, so right then and there I formed a study group and started practicing the skills and studying the material as soon as possible. I knew these strategies would help me accomplish my goals of coping with my test anxiety. Next I checked out a few websites to see if they could give me some pointers. According to Study Guides and Strategies, approach the exam with confidence, be prepared, choose a comfortable location for taking test, allow yourself plenty of time, avoid thinking you need to cram just before, strive for a relaxed state of concentration, get a good night's sleep, and don't go to the exam with an empty stomach are some great ways to prepare for a test to reduce anxiety. Also noted by Study Guides and Strategies, during the test you should: read the directions carefully, budget your test taking time, change positions to help you relax, if you go blank skip the question and go on, and don't panic. All these strategies I took into consideration. Normally I wouldn't eat breakfast in the morning but particular on tests days I did. When I took my first CNA exam I was still nervous and had a headache but I felt comfortable because there was no way I could go blank because the material and skills were like second nature to me. I tried to stay positive and not discourage myself and when I got my test back and seen I only got 10 wrong out of 100 I felt good about myself. I felt like I had accomplished everything in life. For the first time I didn't feel like a complete failure and an idiot because I knew my hard work had paid off. My second weak area was

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and still is procrastination. Like most people they don't see their procrastination as a bad thing as long as they are getting their tasks done on time or just done period. I am one of those people and I still procrastinate a little now but in a good way. Like; I won't do the dishes today because I can do them in the morning. I have been putting things off for as long as I can remember because I would map out in my head how long it would take to do my homework or my chores and wait until the last minute, but once I started doing my homework or etc. I found it to be more time consuming than I thought. I would start to panic because I didn't think I would meet the deadline, but once I seen I did some of my best work under pressure procrastination became a part of my life. When it came to my school work; that was one task that would get pushed to the side unless it was math homework. I always enjoyed doing my math problems because I loved working with numbers. The day I knew I had to stop procrastinating is when I started my Accounting project for my first accounting class at Blackhawk. I had waited a week before it was due. I couldn't get my financial statements to balance and our teacher told us if we don't balance it was automatic fail. I was panicking and I had almost failed the class but my teacher had sat down with me to help me find my errors; on the day it was due. She had given me and some of the other students until midnight to have it all in and corrected. All I knew was I had God to thank for that because she was going back on her word and giving me a second chance. In order for me to get in control of being a procrastinator I had to find out what kind of procrastinator I was. According to Jeffery Combs, there are six types of procrastinators; The Neurotic Perfectionist, the Big-Deal Chaser, the Chronic Worrier, the Rebellious Procrastinator, the Drama Addict, and the Anger Giver. “ Neurotic

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perfectionists are very critical and very judgmental of other people- but they are especially critical of themselves. These people can't start something until it's absolutely perfect. Neurotic perfectionists tend to have an all-or-nothing type of personality" (46). " Big-deal chasers have lots of energy and good people skills, but they apply those positive qualities only to the kind of enterprise that will reward them. " " They have low self-esteem, which they mask with high confidence" (65). " Chronic worriers love the familiar. They crave the predictable. They cling to the confines of " averagism. " They are very insecure with new challenges that could potentially take them out of their comfortably uncomfortable zone" (84). " Rebellious procrastinators exhibit passive-aggressive behavior. They say what they want people to hear, but they only do what they want to do. They may agree to something, but that doesn't mean that they will do what they say. They get their attention through creating conflict. They do more to create conflict than they do to produce" (102). The Drama Addict, " this is the last-minute procrastinator, the type of person who believes he works best under pressure. He takes pride in this, believing that it is noble to create all that frantic energy and adrenaline and then, at the last minute, save the day and rescue himself" (115). The last type of procrastinator is the Angry Givers. " Anger givers produce from a giving perspective, often with underlying anger issues beneath the surface. They tend to give, give, and give, but their giving stems from a need for approval. They typically take on way too much in their role as a giver, becoming overwhelmed... and then they procrastinate" (131). I am the drama addict procrastinator. All these years; I was feeling so good because I like the fact that I did my best work under so much pressure. I had to realize I was doing more harm than good. It had

gotten so bad that I had to start taking medication to control/stop my migraines from all the stress I was putting on myself. So I started taking it one day at a time. First I made a to-do list and prioritize all my tasks from most important to least important. All my homework was at the top of the list and everything else was below. Then I started to visualize the toll I was putting on my body and my life. I asked myself " Is this how I wanted my life to be in the future? " No! I had to take control of the drama I was causing and eliminate it. When you have become a procrastinator and have done it for so many years, it will not take one day to recover from it. It takes time, patience, dedication, God, and your willingness to transform into something greater. My last weak area is communication. When I was told I needed to work on my communication skills I was thinking; how can I improve on what I am saying, how can you misinterpret that? But once I sat back and really evaluated what I was saying, how I was saying it, and how people were taking it; I knew it had to be true that I needed to improve my skill and improve them quickly. To know that even the way I felt about others came off as wrong shocked me. I couldn't figure out where to start first, what I needed to correct. I was told I came off as rude, heartless, and mean but I thought I was being straight to the point and keeping it truthful with them. I took it as maybe some people can't handle the truth so they automatically think I'm being rude and heartless. I had realize it's all about the way you deliver what you have to say and I know sometimes I say what I feel without even thinking how it is going to sound or how am I coming off to them. I realized that my childhood made me numb when it came to my feelings and knowing how to express them in a way that could be understood. I notice that certain things that should get an arousal out of me didn't. Sometimes I

feel I am unable to show emotions because that is a sign of weakness and I hate to feel weak or vulnerable. So the first thing I had to do was pray because for one; who better than the man upstairs to help me with my problem and two it was starting to effect my relationships. I had to let God know first that I needed his guidance and I knew I couldn't change for the better without him. Next I needed to learn how to listen with my ears and eyes. I tend to not really listen and when I think someone is trying to disrespect me I get defensive and cut them off so I can make my point. So when I do that I have defeated the purpose of trying to listen to what they are trying to express/say. I was the type of person that would go into a situation with my mind already made up. No matter the outcome, since I had already judge the situation or the person, I would get a completely different understanding from the conversation or situation. I needed to learn to go into any situation with an open mind and give the person a chance to express themselves freely without prejudice. That was hard for me to learn and even though sometimes I still do it now I can catch myself and readjust my attitude and demeanor. Next I needed to work on was saying what I mean and what I say. I didn't know how to express my feelings all too well and it made me nervous to have to open up and express any feelings or emotions I was having. With that being said I would be sending the wrong signals and emotions. My face expressions wouldn't match the sincerity in my words. I had to be aware of my whole body language and not just the words I was saying. It was so hard to know that what I was trying to say was not being interrupted the way I thought it would be. I learned a lot of about myself even though I am still working on my weaknesses I'm not where I was before. " I'm not perfect" is my favorite saying because it is true and with

being human all we can do is learn from the past so it won't affect our present. I hope with all these new strategies and techniques I can continue to grow as a person, mother, and student so I can reach my goals in life and succeed. Works Cited Combs, Jeffery. *The Procrastination Cure*. Pompton Plains: The Career Press, 2011. Lansberger, Joe. *Overcoming Test Anxiety*. n.d. . Mayer, Diane Peters. *Overcoming School Anxiety*. Broadway: AMACOM, 2008.