

Good example of term paper on changing a habit

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



Describing the habit

When I am in situations where I have many deadlines and many different deliverables, which was pretty common for me at work, I tend to feel overwhelmed. I start panicking and I lose the ability in being able to perform the tasks efficiently and in the proper sequence, which sometimes also results in me delivering lower quality work and working till the last minute. Instead I would like to remain calm and by making this improvement I will achieve these professional benefits: I will be able to divide my time more efficiently, I will be able to plan things for myself and my team in advance, I will be able to deliver higher quality work, and I will be able to deliver my work more diligently. Having proper time management skills will be efficient for me as a leader as I will also be able to guide those under my leadership to be more productive than they are currently. Currently, I rarely deliver my work on time, and it will be difficult for me to ask other employees to work hard and deliver assignments on time. Therefore, in order to deliver as required, the leader should lead by example, hence the need to change my procrastination habit.

Habit Loop

The need to avoid having pressure and mental stress, drives me to avoid doing any work until the last minute. The need to relax and have a good time also makes this habit a routine in my daily work.

- Experiment and have three rewards

The reward involved delaying things to the last minute, which in turn freed up time for me to do other interesting things. The other reward entails

avoiding exerting a lot of mental capacities. The third reward for delaying things was to avoid the anxiety and physical stress that comes with doing various activities around the office before the end of the day. The rewards are immediate and do not last for long because as the day proceeds reality dawns, and I realize that I have to work on the issues. The rewards are worse because the pressure to finish before time increases.

- Identify cue

I did the following experiment to try and find situations and cues that trigger this routine. I took the time to identify the specific time, the place I am currently, the emotional state, what I did before and the people around me. These are the results of the experiment I carried out to identify what triggers the cue:

- Where are you? Sitting at my desk

- What time is it? 9: 00AM

- What's your emotional state? Overwhelmed

- Who else is around? No one

- What action preceded the urge? Wrote down a list of the deliverables that I have.

I found out that the cue to my actions start immediately I go to the office, and I write down my deliverables for the day. Once I do this, I find that I do not have the motivation to go on doing what I have to do during the day. Instead, I sit around idly alone in the office thinking of other things that do not concern the deliverables for the day.

- Describe the routine

The routine usually entails panicking and avoiding getting the things on my

list done, followed by the action of delaying the deliverables and the personal deadlines that I have set for myself, resulting on working this the last minute to achieve what is expected of me (Dyer 67).

- The plan to change the routine:

Honestly the plan to change this routine has started for me far before this course. I wanted to utilize the chance that I had in doing my MBA to change this habit. I came into the MBA with a different mindset, and with the willpower and motivation to change this habit or improve my productivity. I also wanted to reduce the feelings of stress and panic that I have when I'm faced by an overwhelming amount of work and what better way to do that than in a sheltered setting like the MBA. Here you get out what you put in and it is the perfect setting because it mimic working environment with sporadic weeks of high stress and the pressure to deliver.

My plan before coming was not an elaborate and structured plan, not like the plan that I was able to create to hack my habit after taking the behavioral decision making course. The plan that I had was just always trying to remind myself not to stress out or panic and to try to stay on top of my work (the earlier the better) in order to avoid being in stressful situations and end up procrastinating my work (Duhigg 78). The plan that I initially had was to use a support system, which entailed me telling my group mates from the beginning to remind me not to stress and to help me structure my time more effectively. I also found that working with friends, and highly effective people has helped me improve my habit. Another part of my plan was a priority matrix that I worked on monthly (this was a tip given to us in class when we started the MBA), please find below example:

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The plan of changing the routine entails two things, which is one finding a way to limit the stress and panic, the other is organizing my time and engaging myself to get the will power to get things done.

- Implementation Intentions & Mental Rehearsal

I knew that changing my routine was not easy, and I come up with a rehearsal plan where I would test my skills at home when I am doing various house chores. This entailed making a list of all the chores I needed to do and then working out a time plan to finish the chores. I did this for three weeks, and I found out that this was highly rewarding as I would finish the chores and have time to relax and do interesting things. Mentally, I would try to remain calm and look at the deliverables in a positive way like a long-term benefits of working and motivating other people. In this case, I would look at all the free time I would have if I prioritized and finished the deliverables early.

- Gamification

Finding fun ways of doing this habit hacking plan was another priority. In the office, there were other colleagues who had the same procrastination problem. We, therefore, came up with a game, where the last person to finish his or her deliverables would treat the others for lunch or coffee. On a daily basis, one would strive to make sure that they finished their deliverables early to avoid being the one to treat others every another day. I would also make a checklist to monitor my progress in hacking the habit. With every progress, I would treat myself to something new or anything I craved.

- Tracking

I did manual tracking of my progress in hacking the habit. I made a column in an exercise book where I would write down everything I had to on a day, and then I would write down my emotions after writing down the deliverables. The next thing would be monitoring my routine on a daily basis by writing down the time I took to finish the work. The column reward contained a list of emotions I felt before writing down the deliverables, after writing them down and how I felt after completing the deliverables.

Result

- Lessons

I realized that behavior change begins with one identifying and believing that they have a bad habit. It is not easy to change the behaviors, and it takes a lot of time and willpower to change a lifetime routine. However, it is not a difficult, as it seems as long as there are the will and support from those around you. Professional development requires the commitment and focus not all of which can happen when one does not have the will to work on their duties. Changing behaviors is about having the will and when asking one to do a change of habit; I would provide support and have patience because this is not an easy task.

Works Cited

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