

Go ahead... stress about deadlines

Are you a last minute Nelly? Do you find that you are always completing tasks in the nick of time? Is this a stressful time for you? When I am faced with a deadline, I persistently “stress” over the work that must be done by that specific date. However, I often do not take any action whatsoever until the night before it is due. The stress seems to build up so much that it forces me to set aside all other activities and focus on the tasks needed to be done. After I complete the project, I would repeatedly find that I performed some of my best work while burning the midnight oil. The gratification of meeting the deadline with an exceptional output would lead me to repeat this process for the next project.

So why is it that we stress about “deadlines”? Maybe it’s the word itself. As you may have read in one of my previous articles, our words guide our feelings. Think about it....a *deadline* could have our subconscious thinking about death! Who wouldn’t stress about that?

People believe that a deadline creates pressure and inhibits creativity when quite often it does just the opposite. Therefore, you could view the stress you feel prior to a deadline as an essential part of your creative process. Even if you feel you are procrastinating when it comes to taking action toward completing your task, your mind is working in the background to come up with the optimal approach to the task. When you are finally ready to take action, you will find that you do it more quickly. So, this stress actually helps you to find the best and/or most effective way to complete the task by allowing your mind to think about it for you.

Sometimes the stress or anxiety you feel may be a signal that the project or goal is in conflict with your personal values. During the time when you are “stressing” over an upcoming deadline, otherwise known as the subconscious creative process, it may be helpful to explore your true feelings to uncover any underlying issues.

Journal about your “stress”

1. Take out a pad of paper and begin writing about your answers to the following questions.
 - What are all of the tasks that need to be done in order to accomplish the project or goal?
 - What does accomplishing this mean to me?
 - Once achieved, what benefit(s) does it provide?
 - What are the things I may have to give up in order to achieve this?
 - How will I feel once I have achieved it?
2. Pay close attention to your feelings and be as detailed as possible. The issues that arise may have been blocks that were hidden. It may take a few sessions, but once you uncover the issues, you can begin to address them.

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