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FAMILY TIES

D.I.N.

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

Someday is not a day of the week. —Author unknown

A student wrote “D.I.N.” on a little scrap of paper. We were talking about getting things done, and she told me her mom used to say, “D.I.N.” I had no idea what it stood for or what it meant. But when she quoted the words of her mom, “Do it now!,” D.I.N. made lots of sense! I took that piece of paper home, put it on the refrigerator, and say D.I.N. to myself to this day!

I dare say, each of us has procrastinated at one time or another. For some, it becomes debilitating. Procrastination is actually a habit, a bad one that involves letting the low-priority tasks get in the way of high-priority ones. For students, it can take the form of socializing with friends when you know an important assignment is soon due. For many, it’s not getting tax returns done, not sending out Christmas cards, not sorting the mail when it comes, not responding to an invitation, or even not eating a meal.

Sometimes people say, “I’ll do it later,” “I’ll wait until I’m in the mood to do it,” “It’s just too hard!” or “I don’t know where to begin.” These are clever ways to rationalize postponing important tasks. Sadly, by doing this, we actually create more stress and pressure for ourselves.

Why do we procrastinate? Perfectionism, feelings of inadequacy, fear, and lack of time and priorities management. Maybe you can identify other issues that lead you to procrastinate, but let’s look at these:

Perfection can show itself as anxiety, and it’s the anxiety associated with needing to do an outstanding job of a task that stalls us. Worry easily can prevent digging in or even beginning the task.

Feelings of inadequacy can nearly suffocate us. When we do the negative self-talk, reminding ourselves that we are not up to the task, are incompetent, or want to avoid the unpleasantness of having our skills put to the test, we fulfill our own prophecy.

Fear is real, and not readily acknowledged in our daily lives because we are supposed to be naturally brave and self-sufficient. Sadly, the more we delay the task at hand, the worse



and more discomforting the problem becomes.

If we don’t have the skills or put the knowledge we have into practice, we are ineffective in prioritizing and organizing the tasks at hand. If we didn’t grow up in an organized environment, with a family who helped us to learn these skills, we can

be hindered even more.

So what can we do about procrastination? How does our procrastination affect us? How does it affect other members of our family? These are important questions to ask yourself.

There’s no magic fix, but here are some suggestions.

Acknowledge your challenges with procrastination, and figure out where it is rooted. Is it in fear, anxiety, perfection?

Use Scripture for encouragement. *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love* (Romans 8:38 NLT).

Do some rational self-talk. Make two columns on a piece of paper. Write down your excuses on the left, and then write a realistic thought on the right side. For example: “I’m not in the mood right now” versus “Mood doesn’t do my work, actions do. If I wait for the right mood, I may never get it done.” You also might take a piece of paper, write a big D.I.N. on it, and put it where you can see it throughout the day!

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