

The Last Minute

"If it weren't for the last minute nothing would get done." Rita Mae Brown

How many of us wait until the last possible minute to do something? Too many, for sure.

Why are we stuck? Why do we wait? Why do we increase the pressure? Why don't we change?

It seems in college, or high school, we learned to do the homework and the big project at the last minute. We crammed for exams all night. It was the life lived by our peers and expected of us.

Often, in working with clients, they are up against last minute deadlines. The work usually gets done. Yet, it's not always the best work. It's not always something one is proud of. Plus, it sure adds mental and physical stress.

Stress affects our lives, and stress is a major cause of illness. Yet, we still stress, and we still put ourselves into stressful situations.

Do you know and admire someone who never seems rushed, and always has the work done on

time or in advance? I do. I admire them and their ability to be relaxed, yet to accomplish much. Actually, I think they accomplish more than those living in the last minute. They do a better job.

So, who are these people we admire? How do they do it? It's simple. Here's the secret:

1 Plan Ahead

2. Schedule (in advance leaving time for the unexpected)

Make sure your plan is to get it done before it needs to be done. Being done a day or a week ahead of time feels great, and is great.

3. Say NO

Saying no is not easy. Yet, how often do people ask us, usually at the last moment, to do something to assist them? How often do we say 'yes' when we want to say 'no'? How often does it prevent us from doing what we had planned?

4. Adjust the schedule as needed in advance

Sure, life gets in the way. So, move those items that can be moved. Delegate what can be delegated. Eliminate that which need not be done.

See, it's simple to do, you know how to do it, and at the last minute you actually do it. Now, the goal is to do it earlier, with less stress.

Use the last minute, if you must, to fine tune or review the finished product. Finish it, sleep on it, and then adjust at the last minute if you feel the need to do so. Yet, if there is no time, it'll be fine to go as it was done and completed earlier.

Me, I make sure all my proposals and meeting notes for the next day are reviewed and finished the day before. Then I can meet confidently with my clients, and they come away with the feeling I was prepared, I was aware, and I was, I trust, helpful and insightful. The extra benefit is I leave my office at the end of the day relaxed. I am ready for the next day, I am prepared, and I am looking forward to the day.

Try it. Yes, you can. Sure, you'll 'fail' at times, but keep trying. You'll get better and better at planning and doing in advance. You'll like how it feels, the relaxation, and that will motivate you to keep doing it.