

# Are Teen Procrastinators Lazy...or Just Misunderstood?

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## QUICK TIPS for THERAPISTS

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While many parents, teachers, and even teens themselves may view procrastination as a weakness or a sign of being lazy, nothing could be further from the truth. Procrastination is driven by complex emotional needs that vary depending on the individual. I've identified four basic types of procrastinators, each with its own motivation for avoiding tasks that need to be done, and its own motivation for engaging with them as well.

### **The Perfectionist**

The perfectionist values **excellence** above all and sees every task as a performance to be judged by teachers, parents, and/or peers. Any mistake, however small, could be cause for criticism or rejection. **When**

**the perfectionist is not certain a task can be done 100% correctly, without mistakes, the task will be put it off.**



### **The Warrior**

The warrior is drawn to **full engagement** and loves to pit him or herself against a problem or foe—as long as it is interesting or exciting, that is. The warrior feels as though **survival depends on moving away from tedium toward stimulation**. Tedious tasks are postponed and easily forgotten.

## The Pleaser

The pleaser is motivated by **personal connections**. The pleaser will prioritize requests from others, even if it means putting off the tasks that they need to do. When they **say yes** to tasks that, in their hearts, they really didn't want to commit to, they will wind up putting those tasks off as well.

## The Rebel

The rebel values **autonomy**, desiring to be valued for unique character and contributions. The rebel's core fear is being anonymous. By following orders, the rebel risks losing identity, and thus status in the tribe. **To establish his or her own person, the rebel resists taking orders** even when it doesn't further personal goals.

When teens recognize their procrastination type, the stigma of "lazy" is reduced, making way for self-compassion. In my book, ***The Teen's Guide to Getting Stuff Done***, I outline a clear path for each procrastination type, with specific motivational tools to help them own the tasks they need to get done and meet their goals. The first tool is the *The Procrastination Type Quiz*, a great way to open a dialogue with the teen procrastinator client.

**Book Titles:** *A Teen's Guide to Getting Stuff Done*

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