

Juniors
Delayed Gratification: The Marshmallow Test
11/29/16

Assignment	Standards	Points	Assigned	Due
Delayed Gratification	CRLS: Personal Management, Problem Solving, Career Development	5	11/29/16	11/29/16

Objective: Students will be able to identify strategies for delaying gratification.

Materials: Download and watch the video: The Marshmallow Test (in AG Video folder)

Instructions:

After watching the Marshmallow Test Video, discuss the following points:

This study has been repeated many times over and revealed the same results. If you want to succeed at something, at some point you will need to find the ability to be disciplined and take action instead of becoming distracted and doing what's easy. Success in nearly every field requires you to ignore doing something easier (delaying gratification) in favor of doing something harder (doing the work and putting in your reps).

Discussion: Is delaying gratification a trait that you are born with or can you train yourself to become better at this?

Answer: You CAN train yourself to delay gratification through practicing discipline, and making daily improvements that essentially promise something small and then delivers results. The brain becomes wired to connect 1) Yes, it's worth the wait, and 2) yes, I have the capability to do this.

Discussion: What are some things that you currently do that provide instant gratification (ex. Instagram, watching Netflix, snapchat)? How could delaying gratification in one area of your life lead to more productivity in other areas? **Note for teacher:** Feel free to share an example of a way that you have delayed gratification in your life and how it payed off later.

Go over with the class the following strategies for delaying gratification. Feel free to allow students to add additional strategies they may have had success with.

1. Start very small. Make your new "habit" so easy that you can't say no". What are some examples of this? Want to exercise more? Start by exercising 1 minute a day. Want to write more? Write three sentences a day. Want to eat healthier? Eat one healthy meal a week.
2. Improve one thing, by one percent. Do it again tomorrow. Often times when we go to make a change, we expect an earth shattering moment, rather than

the aggregation of better decisions on a daily basis. Almost every habit you have, good or bad, is the result of many small decisions over time. We often put pressure on ourselves to make one huge change all at once, but remember this, “Success is a few simple disciplines, practiced every day; while failure is simply a few errors in judgment, repeated every day.” Jim Rohn. There is power in small wins and slow gains.

3. Use the “Seinfeld Strategy” to maintain consistency. Jerry Seinfeld used this method to help shape his career as a comedian and writer. The most important aspect of his method is consistency. He suggests using a calendar and challenging yourself to do the task every day and marking it off on the calendar after each day so that you can visibly see the progress.
4. Find a way to get started in less than 2 minutes. The “2 minute rule” is based on the fact that many things we procrastinate doing aren’t actually difficult to do, you have the talent and skills to accomplish them, you just avoid starting them for one reason or another. The “2 minute rule” has 2 parts:
 - Rule #1: If it takes less than 2 minutes, do it now. What are some examples of this? (doing dishes, making the bed, sending an email, etc).
 - Rule #2: When you start a new habit, it should take less than 2 minutes to do. Can all of your goals be accomplished in less than 2 minutes? Obviously not, but every goal can be started in 2 minutes or less. The basis of this rule is that once you start doing something, it’s easier to continue doing it.
 - This applies to big and small goals. Want to become a better writer? Write a sentence (2 minute rule) and you’ll often find yourself writing for ½ hour. Want to eat healthier? Eat a piece of fruit (2 minute rule) and you’ll find yourself inspired to make a healthy salad as well. Want to make reading a habit? Read the first page of a new book (2 minute rule) and before you know it, the first 3 chapters have flown by. Want to run 3 times a week? Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, get your running shoes on and get out the door (2 minute rule) and you’ll start a habit!

The most important part of a habit is getting started – not just the first time, but each time. It’s not about performance; it’s about consistently taking action. In many ways, getting started is more important than succeeding. This is especially true in the beginning because there will be plenty of time to improve your performance later on. The 2 minute rule isn’t about the results you achieve, but rather about the process of actually doing the work.

Closing Discussions for the group:

- What is something that you put off starting in your daily life?
- Now think about your future (post-high school). How might the ability to delay gratification relate to college and career success?