Beating Bad Habit

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We all have habits - good and bad - but in order for us to move forward and become the successful people we were destined to be, we need to forego of our negative habits and change them. What is that one bad habit that always, if not, most of the time, pulls you down?   I'll tell you mine, and it's that one thing that I'm not proud of, both as a college instructor and as an online English tutor - I procrastinate a lot.   And by this, I mean, from eating breakfast, coming up with test questions for the exam tomorrow afternoon and reading materials in advance for my online English tutees tomorrow night.

When I was still a student, I didn't see this habit of mine as overly destructive - adrenaline rush, I used to say - my mind is at its best when I'm cramming.   I still got good grades even if I just finished the 7-page paper a night before the deadline.   But now that I see this bad habit in the students in the college where I teach English, literature and Humanities, and how much procrastination takes its toll on their grades, I say, "stop with the procrastinating and do things you're supposed to do as soon as you're told!"

One fine school day, I told one of my classes to make a dream collage as their assignment. I was so excited to see my students turn in their works the following meeting and what did I get, many of them asking to have the deadline extended the following week.   As a reward for those who didn't procrastinate and did their assignments - I gave them a 30 out of 30 rating.   As for those who had this and that as an alibi - 20 as the highest score they can get, regardless of the effort they put into making their work beautiful.

As I look back to my life as a student, had I not procrastinated and finished my 7-page research paper a week before the deadline, I would have had enough time to review and edit it.   I could have gotten myself, not just a good grade but an excellent one.   Alas!   With the help of my procrastinating students, I have finally learned that those who don't procrastinate are the ones who are rewarded.

Having acknowledged the fact that I am a procrastinator and I don't like to continue being one, I need to have a positive habit that could replace it.   This is the only way that I can beat it and that goes out to any other bad habits you can think of - replace it with a good habit.   From this day on, I will seriously use my planner, write to-do-lists, check the entries as soon as possible and stick to my schedule.   I am going to do this because once I beat my bad habit of procrastination, I will become more organized and in the end, more successful.

As Aristotle, a wise philosopher puts it, "we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." This goes out as a challenge to all of us, let us feed the good habits and starve the bad ones, so as to become the best that we could be.   Let us repeatedly do the positive things that can make us a more sensible member of society and stop doing the negative habits that we do not want to conquer our being. Bad habits will always find their way of bringing us to that dark abyss of nothingness; we better start beating them now.

Questions for discussion:

1.   What are the top bad habits that you want to let go of?
2.   How do you think can you successfully erase these negative habits?
3.   What is that one good habit that you want others to copy from you? Why?
4.   Children tend to emulate habits from their parents - how can parents teach their kids to develop good habits, especially, good study habits?
5.   Is it okay to tell a person that he/she has a habit that annoys you?   Why or why not?