

HAVING FUN EFFECTIVELY

Guilt is one of the worst side effects of poor time management. Guilt results from wasting time or procrastinating i.e. not doing what you're supposed to be doing, which means letting down parents and others with high expectations of you, as well as letting down friends who want you to spend time with them. Guilt can have a very subtle, yet drastic, influence on how effectively you use your study time, as well as how effectively you relax. See if this sounds familiar to you:



It's Friday night and Mark is sitting in his room trying to study. His friends have gone to his favourite bar, and they really wanted him to come along, but he has a ton of work to do before a midterm on Monday and decided to stay behind to work. A noble decision, but Mark is having problems concentrating. He keeps thinking about his friends having fun without him. He reads the same page over and over in his textbook but can't remember what he's just read. He takes a break, but it doesn't help. Finally, after a couple of hours of intense frustration with very little accomplished, Mark slams his book shut. "What is the point of sitting here? I'm not getting anything done anyway. I may as well go out." And off he goes to join his friends.

Once there, however, Mark can't seem to get school work off his mind. The midterm next week is worth a lot, and the course is part of his major. He feels bad that he didn't get anything done tonight, and will need to sleep in tomorrow, and is really getting worried about whether he'll have enough time now to prepare. "Why am I here? This is nuts - I have so much work to do. I should be going over those chapters..."

Mark is experiencing what is affectionately called the "guilt overlap." He feels guilty when he goes out, yet can't focus when he tries to work. He isn't studying effectively and he isn't relaxing effectively either. When having fun becomes a means of escaping work, it can be difficult to really relax and enjoy it without feeling guilty. Mark is a victim of his own lack of planning.

The best way to avoid this dilemma is to make fun activities an important part of an overall time plan. By ensuring that your academic work is under control, you also ensure that any time you've planned for relaxing can be guilt-free. A good time plan will also be flexible enough to allow you, at least some of the time, to take time off for spontaneous fun things that come up without getting behind in your work. Time planning not only helps you to work more effectively, it also helps you to have fun more effectively . . . and without guilt.