

Aesop and Advice for Middle Schoolers

Stress is hard on kids just like it is on adults. There are a lot of reasons for stress you can't do much about, but one thing you CAN do is take control of ORGANIZING your life and your work.

Aesop may not have known a lot about modern life but here are a few of his fables to remind you about getting organized. Click the title to read the original fable.

The Boy and the Filberts

A BOY put his hand into a pitcher full of filberts. He grasped as many as he could possibly hold, but when he tried to pull out his hand, he was prevented from doing so by the neck of the pitcher. Unwilling to lose his filberts, and yet unable to withdraw his hand, he burst into tears and bitterly lamented his disappointment. A bystander said to him, "Be satisfied with half the quantity, and you will readily draw out your hand."

Don't get your hand stuck in the pitcher by grabbing too much – work step-by-step!

Decide what is REALLY important to you – what things you want to accomplish. Write these goals down so you never forget. Then do at least ONE TINY thing every day that is JUST meant to move toward a goal. For instance, if you have a goal of running a 5K race, you might do something as small as replacing your shoelaces in your running shoes if you have only that much time to spend. You will get there faster than you imagine that way.

Make a to-do list for EVERY day. Include what MUST get done, what might get done AND your 'tiny steps'. Don't try to do ALL of a big job at once – do it one... 'handful of nuts' at a time.

The Farmer and His Sons

A FATHER, being on the point of death, wished to be sure that his sons would give the same attention to his farm as he himself had given it. He called them to his bedside and said, "My sons, there is a great treasure hid in one of my vineyards." The sons, after his death, took their spades and mattocks and carefully dug over every portion of their land. They found no treasure, but the vines repaid their labor by an extraordinary and superabundant crop.



Take care of your work first. If you put it off you KNOW you will never get to it! Talking with friends, a favorite CD, a video game, a TV show or just daydreaming will always be more fun. But, in the long run you will be happier with your day if you took care of everything on your to-do list.

It's true! Getting tasks DONE eases stress and putting them off increases stress - and -- this kind of stress can RUIN your day and get you in trouble at home and at school,

Just as it was for the Farmer's sons - hard work will definitely pay off for you. So grab your shovel and DIG IN!

The Hare and the Tortoise

A HARE one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise, who replied, laughing: "Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race." The Hare, believing her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race the two started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue.

Be ON TIME! Be as quick as the Hare, if you can, but leave yourself enough TIME to be a Tortoise!

I had a friend in school that was always late. It made her crazy with worrying about it. Being early is SO MUCH EASIER. Get up 5 minutes earlier in the morning, use the alarm on your phone, and even get a friend to call you to remind you about something IMPORTANT you need to get to, if necessary. Before you go to bed at night, get out your clothes and pack your backpack...that way you might not have to be COMPLETELY awake before you leave the house!

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."



"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew: It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

There are a hundred things you need to be able to find when you need them. Calculator, clean socks, phone charger, colored pens, house key, graph paper.....

It can really waste time and create stress when something is missing – not to mention how parents get mad about running for something at the last minute because it's lost. AVOID this situation by putting everything away, every time. Clear your desk. Keep your closet neat. By ALL means get file folders and file all your school papers – by subject. 'Old' papers can be very handy later!

IF you don't have a desk, put all your study tools in a box, or a bag and pull them out at the table when you are ready to begin each day. Then PUT THEM AWAY again so they are ready for tomorrow.

The Ant in the story did well all winter – just because he put away food when the weather was good. BE AN ANT.....not a grasshopper!

The Dog's House

IN THE WINTERTIME, a Dog curled up in as small a space as possible on account of the cold, determined to make himself a house. However when the summer returned again, he lay asleep stretched at his full length and appeared to himself to be of a great size. Now he considered that it would be neither an easy nor a necessary work to make himself such a house as would accommodate him. He was cold again the very next winter.

Take care of your health. Eat right, sleep enough, exercise regularly.

Having to be active when feeling bad has at one time or another made everyone tense and miserable. It often seems like too much trouble to get out and exercise. Of course junk food seems to taste better than healthier options. And we ALL know the best shows are on late!

YOU are too important to short change your well-being.

Aesop's dog was cold TWICE because he didn't take the time and trouble to take care of himself. Learn from his misfortune and take care of YOU.

