



# Why Intelligent Students Fail

- 1) **Lack of motivation** - Talent is irrelevant if a person is not motivated to use it. Motivation may be external or internal. External sources tend to be transient, while internal sources tend to produce more consistent performances.
- 2) **Lack of impulse control** - Habitual impulsiveness gets in the way of optimal performance. Some people do not bring their full intellectual resources to bear on a problem but go with the first solution that comes to mind.
- 3) **Lack of perseverance and preservation** - Some people give up too easily, while others are unable to stop even when the quest will clearly be fruitless.
- 4) **Inability to translate thought into action** - Some people are buried in thought. They have good ideas but can't seem to do anything about them.
- 5) **Lack of product orientation** - Some people seem more concerned about the process than the result of activity.
- 6) **Inability to complete tasks** - For some students nothing ever reaches closure. Maybe it is the fear of what they would or should do next or fear of becoming hopelessly tangled in detail.
- 7) **Failure to initiate** - Some people are unwilling or unable to initiate a project. It may be indecision or fear of commitment.
- 8) **Fear of failure** - People may not reach their intellectual performance. They avoid the really important challenges in life.
- 9) **Procrastination** - Some people are unable to act without pressure. They look for little things to do to put off the big ones.
- 10) **Misattribution of blame** - Some people blame themselves for even the slightest mishap; some always blame others.
- 11) **Excessive self-pity** - Some people spend more time feeling sorry for themselves than expending the effort necessary to overcome the problem.
- 12) **Excessive dependency** - Some people expect others to do for them what they ought to be doing themselves.
- 13) **Wallowing in personal difficulties** - Some people let their personal difficulties interfere grossly with their work. During the course of life, one can expect some real joys and some real sorrows.
- 14) **Lack of concentration** - Even some very intelligent people have very short attention spans.
- 15) **Spreading oneself too thin or too thick** - Undertaking too many activities may result in none being completed on time. Undertaking too few can also result in missed opportunities and reduced levels of accomplishment.
- 16) **Inability to delay gratification** - Some people reward themselves and are rewarded by others for finishing small tasks, while avoiding bigger tasks that would earn them larger rewards.
- 17) **Inability to see the forest for the trees** - Some people become obsessed with details and are either unwilling or unable to see or deal with the larger picture in the projects they undertake.
- 18) **Too little or too much self-confidence** - Lack of confidence can gnaw away at a person's ability to get things done and become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Conversely, individuals with too much self-confidence may not know when to admit they are wrong or in need of self-improvement.

From Robert Sternberg in his book, Intelligence Applied