

Zeigarnik Effect



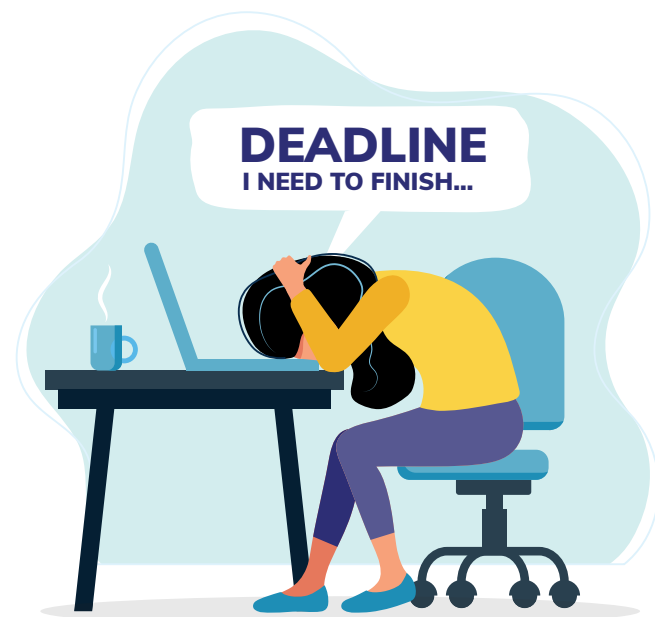
What is it?

The Zeigarnik Effect is a psychological phenomenon that refers to our tendency to recall details about things we haven't finished more easily than tasks that we have already completed. It is often associated with the intrusive thoughts about unfinished work that pop into our minds when we've tried to move on to other things.

How does it manifest itself?

Humans, like computers, can only store a finite number of things in our short-term memory. However, unlike computers, we cannot do more than one complex task at the same time. This leads to common manifestations of the Zeigarnik Effect like:

- Struggling to maintain focus on a single task because thoughts of other unfinished tasks keep interrupting our flow
- Waking up in the middle of the night because we didn't finish a task we planned to complete during our waking hours
- General mental tension caused by our constant subconscious focus on unfinished work



What can we do to mitigate it?

There are numerous techniques available to help us get things done, and keep the Zeigarnik Effect at bay, like tracking your work, or timing yourself as you complete tasks. Some common tools and techniques to do this are:

- Bullet Journals
- Dot Journals
- Getting Things Done (GTD) Methodology
- Personal Kanban
- [Pomodoro Technique](#)

Want more resources for working effectively?

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