

THINGS IN MOTION...

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest ... you cannot go into the same (river) twice. —Heraclitus (540?-480?) B.C.

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PROCRASTINATION

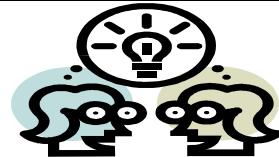
NO ONE is likely to be more aware of the tendency to put off doing anything that has no urgency than I am—it has been one of my most persistent dragons of discontent. Who is at fault? Who causes the needless delays in doing things long and sincerely planned? The acknowledged culprit is me, and no amount of self-condemnation has served to diminish by one iota the guilt that fills the baggage I carry on my back. What a shameful stain on the fabric of one's character!

Those quick moments of regret that whiz by us in our younger lives acquire longer stretches of our attention as we creep into our senior days—the feelings of remorse seem to press heavier on our conscience and we are now and then moved to action, but so long as we feel no serious threat of death, we continue to shove a lot of worthwhile endeavors into the bin marked “later.” Most of us need to step back and take a hard look at “later” and exactly what it means to us.

When is it all right to put aside telling a friend that he or she has added greatly to our lives? Is there a time when we shouldn't worry about the favor we promised to do for someone but never got around to doing it? And how about those things we promised ourselves: doing a painting or writing a poem; reading certain books and watching certain movies? From my own years I know that in time, all those things we planned to do later will become lost in the dusty corners of our memory and instead of satisfaction, we fill our last years with unnecessary regret--and thoughts of what might have been ... #

RECOLLECTION—MEMORY MAKEOVER

Television these days presents multiple examples of makeovers—an original state or condition that has been drastically refurbished in order to present it in a more modern and acceptable fashion. We are all guilty of subjecting our memory to just that sort of makeover by revising the true memory in order to remove the lesser appealing aspects and to add or enhance the parts that shed a more favorable light on us or on our contentions. And in so doing, we often make hypocrites of ourselves, not being willing to acknowledge a wart on the smooth skin of our past. I am just as guilty of this as the next man; perhaps more so where favorite past events are concerned.



I have fondly written of my younger days spent on the farm and of the happy times that were a part of farm life in the late thirties and early forties. Seldom do I write about the winters—or the sad inefficiency of fireplaces, the daily chore of lugging firewood and kindling into the house, the frequent necessity of wearing heavy clothing indoors, the bone-chilling ordeal of getting dressed in the morning and undressed at night; or simply taking a bath in houses without bathrooms and without running water.

Summers brought hot days and hot nights when sleep was fitful and often sweat-drenched or filled with the stench of mosquito spray—or even worse, the high-pitched whine of an invisible mosquito. Barefoot days also brought the likelihood of a stubbed toe or a splinter or nail injury. Medical treatment was mostly of the old home remedy type and largely ineffective.

Certainly we can pick only the good times to remember, but in so doing we should weigh our nostalgia with enough reality to lend balance to the past. And we need some degree of unhappy memories in order to appreciate the happiness that we now enjoy. Love life ... all of it! #