



Damn Panic or Pandemic? ☐ ☐

The usual way I get questions to answer is by talking to people. Sometimes it is socially and sometimes it is people who actually stop me on the street. Both of those things are out of the question these days, so I will address a couple of the problems my friends and I have discussed on the phone or by email.

Nasty Procrastination

A number of people wanted to talk about how they are putting off things that they have plenty of time to do now. Not one of them is a world-class procrastination expert of my level.

Procrastinating has been my curse my whole life. Some of it has come from wanting everything I do to be perfect, which, of course, is impossible, so rather than accept imperfection, I put things off.

Another possible reason is that I often think that I am the luckiest person on the planet to have my life and must subconsciously think I don't deserve it. In my childhood I believed that everything I accomplished was the Grace of God and everything I screwed up was my own fault. That could be true.

The third reason, which I don't question for a minute, is that I am very, very lazy.

This time at home alone has made it very clear to me that I have to make a dent in this behavior. I would say eliminate it, but know that would bring me to a standstill, since it would be too perfect.

However, I am making some successful moves that might work for you if you have this tendency.

- Beware binge watching. The only series I had watched all the way through before this time was "Breaking Bad" because my husband loved it. Since this isolation began, I have watched "Better Call Saul," "Outlanders," "The Tiger King" "Unorthodox" and, now "Ozark." I've developed a problem.

- Develop a schedule of things you enjoy doing and things you put off. I put them on post-its on the wall right above my treasured toilet paper. Remove each post-it as you proceed. If you start seeing all the stuff you have been putting off next to a big empty space where the things you like to do used to be, it might help motivate you to get better at this. It did for me, and I am a tough case.

- Reward yourself. I watch an episode and then go knock one or two things off my "to do" list. Sometimes, I put a time limit on my chore. You can do anything for ten minutes, so I start with that, and find that I feel so good about making progress that I keep going a little longer.

- Forget perfect: I have finally accepted that I can do PART of a chore and finish it later, which is much better than never starting.

- Don't reward yourself with food that will make you feel bad later. This can be made easier if you order your groceries and have them delivered or pick them up curbside. It is just too embarrassing to ask for seven packs of Oreos. Ordering cuts out the impulse buys and limits temptation.

- If you are lucky enough to be able to splurge a little, joining a food plan where everything is delivered, either cooked or ready to be cooked. I discovered Sakara, a plant-based meal delivery, which is delicious. Some of my friends are using Hello Fresh and Blue Apron, which they like a lot. And, of course, we in Beaufort are fortunate to have great restaurants that deliver or offer curbside pickup.

- Listen to great music suited to whatever you want to accomplish. Jimmy Cliff helps me clean the house.
- I recommend meditation no matter what a person's quandary may be, and I highly recommend it for this situation. When I meditate, I envision myself doing the things I am putting off and remind myself of how fabulous I will feel once I do them. It works. Meditation is also very calming and can help with things like loneliness and worry.
- If you can, make one of your rewards some time outside. We live in such a gorgeous place, and getting out, even if only to walk a circle around your house (ignore the landscaping calling your name), or add it to your post-it wall, is a wonderful reminder of how lucky we are to live here. Also, sunshine and fresh air are good for your mental and physical health.
- Good luck. I'm really working on this and making progress. Not enough to impress those who have already rearranged the kitchen cabinets, closets and cleaned out the garage, but enough to give me hope and the belief that I can do this. You can too.

P.S. Wash your hands and make your bed.