

Are You Trapped by the Autopilot Dilemma?

(from Motivation123 Newsletter; Wednesday, March 28, 2007)

An epidemic is occurring all around you, and there is a good chance it has already found its way into your life. It begins slowly at first, nearly imperceptible. But it grows. In time it can take over your entire life. I have seen it happen too many times, and if you don't act now, it may happen to you. It's easy to fall into the trap. Well-intentioned individuals of all ages don't mean for it to happen, but that doesn't matter. It takes much more than good intentions to steer clear of this problem. If all it took was good intentions the world would be packed with people living their dreams and accomplishing their goals. But that's not how it works, and this trap is one of the most common reasons why it has happened too often in the past, and will continue to happen in the future.

What exactly are we dealing with here? What is so deadly to the goals and hopes you have stored away in your head? -- ROUTINE.

The Results of an Amazing Experiment –

A very unusual experiment was conducted by John Fabre, the French naturalist, consisting of processional caterpillars, a type of caterpillar that blindly follows the one in front of it (This explains the name processional caterpillar). The experiment consisted of several of these caterpillars, a flowerpot filled to the rim with dirt, and pine needles. The caterpillars formed a complete circle around the rim of the flowerpot, with the first one touching the back of the last one. The pine needles, the food of the processional caterpillar, were placed in the center of the circle. The caterpillars began their procession around the flowerpot, one following the other in a circle. This went on hour after hour, day after day, for an entire week. In the end, every one of the caterpillars dropped dead of starvation. The one thing that could have saved them was only six inches away, but without purposeful thought or action, the caterpillars continued with a habitual routine that eventually proved too much to endure.

This is happening to people you know, maybe even you, although not to this degree. You get stuck doing the same old thing every single day and your goals, sitting only inches away, are as good as gone. Plain and simple. You might think it's a little too simple, but falling into a routine can destroy your life. I have very strong beliefs about this because I have seen it happen to people close to me, as I'm sure you have as well.

Good friends and family start off with bright hopes for the future, but their routine begins to take their place. 'No time, no time,' is a common excuse. After seventy years of having no time to do the things you have always wanted to do you'll end up with nothing but a good excuse in the end. This is your life we are talking about here. It's worth taking the time to break the pattern of habit and creating the changes you wish to make.

There is little more that is as important as the life you create and the good you leave behind. Recognize if you are in a routine and break free. Sometimes it's a matter of an attribute we all seek in life - confidence. Permanent change requires courage and a strong belief in your ability to succeed, something that we all doubt from time to time.

What Are You Talking About???

The routines I'm referring to are much deeper than a morning process of a shower and shave. I'm talking about turning off your brain and letting autopilot kick in. Doing the same things you did the day before with no plans to change the pattern any time soon. You know the drill - wake up, shower, work, home, sleep, repeat. This is no way to live, and you know that. But it's still hard to break free once the routine has gotten hold of you. All hope is not lost. If you want to turn off the autopilot and

start taking control of your life it takes only one moment to make the decision. And then everything changes.

You've heard it a thousands times, and it's a good thing, because it's true. If you keep doing what you have always done in the past you will keep getting the exact same results. People experience a partial insanity when it comes to routine. Perfectly logical creatures believe that doing the same thing again and again will get different results. That's crazy! If you want to lose weight but continue with the same eating habits, you won't lose weight. If you want to have more energy but stay up until four and get up at six it won't happen. You have goals, just like everyone else. If you are stuck in a routine you won't accomplish them. Be honest with yourself about this one. It's the only way you'll realize the need for a change before you can enjoy improvement.

What does it take? It takes a decision. A choice of what you really want to do with your life and the corresponding actions to make it happen. I want you to create a plan for your future and the goals you want to accomplish. If you know where you are going and how to get there you will not be disappointed in the end.

[In other words -- "plan your work, then work your plan." Create a vision of the desired outcome for your life (put it in writing). Convert this to a set of goals (make a picture board depicting each), and your goals to plans (which will be comprised of tasks). Then schedule each task and DO them at their appointed times!]

Routines & habits *can* be good and serve us well. Read this –

HABIT

I am your constant companion. I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do you might just as well turn over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed--you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all great men; and alas, of all failures, as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a man. You may run me for a profit or run me for ruin--it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you. WHO AM I? I AM HABIT! --Anonymous

A Job? ... Or a Career!

"Please never, ever work for money. Please don't just get a job... A job is something you do for money. But a career is something you do because you must do it. And you'd do it even if you were paid nothing beyond food and the basics. You'd do it because it's your life." ... If you chase money, it may catch you—and if it catches you, you'll forever be its slave. By letting money pursue you but never catch you, you'll always be its master. By always doing what you love, loving what you do, delivering more than you promise, you'll always be underpaid—which is how it always should be... People who are *underpaid* for the level and quality of the service they provide are always in demand and always ahead of the money in their knowledge and contribution. So money and opportunity are always chasing them... Chase your passion, not your pension! ... learn as much as you can, to know as much as you can, to gain skills as much as you can, to find a cause that benefits humankind—and you'll be sought after for your quality of service and dedication to excellence. This passion will make you oblivious to quitting time and to the length of your workday... You'll awake every morning with the passion of pursuit, but not the pursuit of money. (from Empires of the Mind, by Denis Waitley, pp. 131-132)

THIS DAY

Look to this day--
For it is life,
The very life of life.
In its brief course lie all
The realities and verities of existence,
The bliss of growth,
The splendor of action,
The glory of power ...
For yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

MAKE EACH DAY COUNT

Ultimately, what you accomplish in your life
is a result of what you accomplish
in a normal day.

*Jimmy Calano & Jeff Salzman, founders of
Career Track*

TODAY IS A GIFT

Yesterday is History
Tomorrow is a Mystery
Today is a Gift
That's why its called
the Present!

CARPE DIEM (Seize the Day)

"Are you in earnest? Seek this very minute, whatever you can do, or dream you can; begin it! Boldness had genius, power and magic in it. Only engage and the mind grows heated; begin and then the task will be completed." *(from Goethe's essay "The Power of Commitment")*

(The point is ... as important and necessary as thinking, goal setting, and planning are, unless they are followed up with **ACTION** in a timely manner, nothing will be accomplished! Breaking long range goals down into "bite-size" mini-goals that can be accomplished **TODAY/ NOW** will motivate/ inspire action. Determine what you can/ need to do today/ now ... then **DO IT/ BEGIN/ TAKE ACTION!** Make it a **HABIT** of taking action in the beginning of each day, and you will be "on a roll" ... it takes more effort to begin than it does to keep going, once started! ... so ... "Let's roll!" *[Todd Beamer, 9/11/01]*)

"People who are able to do great, large works do not say tedious things like, 'Let us do it if there is time.' If something is thought of, it is disposed of at once." (source: [Ability Development from Age Zero](#), by Shinichi Suzuki) "There are two types of people who never amount to anything. There are those who never do anything except what they are told to do. And there are those who cannot even do what they are told to do. The people who get ahead do the things that should be done without being told. And they don't stop there. They go the extra mile and do much more than is expected of them." (Andrew Carnegie)

"Habit is the flywheel of society, its most precious conserving agent. The great thing, then, is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. We must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against growing into ways that are disadvantageous as we guard against the plague. The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their proper work. There is no more miserable person than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision, and for whom...the drinking of every cup, the time of rising and going to bed every day, and the beginning of every bit of work are subjects of deliberation. Half the time of such a man goes to deciding or regretting matters which ought to be so ingrained in him as practically not to exist for his consciousness at all." (William James, "Psychology: Briefer Course") We make our habits, then our habits make us! We are what our habits make of us. Our overall aim in life – replace bad habits with good habits. Indeed, sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap an eternal destiny. The point is, we have a choice. Our destiny is determined by our habits and day-to-day decisions. Choose the right, and reap ALL the blessings Heavenly Father has in store – eternal life!

"Every time we have opportunity and fail to live up to that truth which is within us, every time we fail to express a good thought, every time we fail to perform a good act, we weaken ourselves, and make it more difficult to express that thought or perform that act in the future. Every time we perform a good act, every time we express a noble feeling, we make it the more easy to perform that act or express that feeling another time." (David O. McKay)

THE DAY THAT TURNS YOUR LIFE AROUND

(Resource: 7 Strategies for WEALTH & HAPPINESS, by Jim Rohn)

"If you keep on doing the same things you've always done ...
you'll keep on getting the same things you've always gotten."

To change your circumstances, you must first change YOURSELF (i.e. your Habits).

Then, and ONLY then, will you do that "something" different that will turn your life around.

Question is ... Do you REALLY want to change? ... Can you say to yourself -- "I'm READY, now!"

Disgust* with your current situation intensifies the **Desire** to change ... till you finally make the **Decision** to do so. At this point **Determination** "kicks in," and you will never be the same person again ... you have taken another step (dare we say ... LEAP) forward in becoming that person God meant for you to be!

So ... are you going to wait till your life is almost gone to become "that" person? Why not this year ... this month ... this week ... WHY NOT today !!! Yes, TODAY can be that day that turns your life around. No one else can do it for you – you must do it YOURSELF ... and the best way to "get the ball rolling" is to sit down right now with paper and pen and "brainstorm" – write down everything you can think of that you'd like to do and have ... places you'd like go ... people you'd like to get closer to ... who/what you'd like to become (i.e. DREAMS/ GOALS). (To *really* get this ball rolling – take our [free] workshop!)

Say YES to Yourself, and YES to Life. YES, this can be the day that you start reaping all the blessings Life has to offer, and is "eager" to give you ... so WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR ??? -- Go get that paper and pen ... and START WRITING!

(* The 2 primary sources of motivation -- Desperation and Inspiration ... often a combination of both. In his book, Awaken the Giant Within, Anthony Robbins states, "...when people finally do change, they do it in a moment, don't they? There's an instant when the change occurs. Why not make that instant *now*? Usually its the *getting ready to change* that takes people time ... the problem .. is that change is often a *should* and not a *must*. **The only way we're going to make a change now is if we create a sense of urgency that's so intense that we're compelled to follow through...** I've found that 20% of any change is knowing *how*; but 80% is knowing *why*. If we gather a set of strong enough reasons to change, we can change in a *minute* something we've failed to change for years." ... Obviously you're not going to lose 30 lbs in an instant ... what we're talking about is your "frame of mind" [mindset/attitude]. That can be changed in an instant ... and once changed, anything is possible!)

The "master key" is SELF-DISCIPLINE. Start this process of becoming the person you were meant to be by doing something small/easy that can be done right now, in just a few minutes (like starting your master list of desires/goals) ... and, as Jim Rohn puts it –

Out of this [small] beginning you'll learn how it *feels* to be disciplined. And from there, the Sky's the limit!

["Success breeds success."] ` ... the key is to take a step ... *today*.

Start reading good books ... *today*. Start setting your first goal ... *today*.

Start a sensible weight-reduction plan ... *today*. Write a long-overdue letter ... *today*.

... Make this -- the first day of your new beginnings – a part of the week of new beginnings. Go ahead, see how many things you can start and continue in this, your week of new beginnings. [Do this each week for a month ... it will become a habit, and] you'll never be claimed by the past!

[A parting thought/truth:] The real value in setting goals is *not* in their achievement. The acquisition of the things you want is strictly secondary. The major reason for setting goals is to *compel* you to become the person it takes to achieve them ... the greatest value is in the skills, knowledge, discipline, and leadership qualities you'll develop in reaching those goals. [www.PSLinstitute.com]

HOW TO STOP PROCRASTINATING

(Resources: [The 60-Second Shrink](#), by Drs. Arnold & Clifford Lazarus; and [Get the Most Out of Life](#), by Derrick Sweet)

Aren't we all guilty of this particular weakness? The great Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius said, "Think of your many years of procrastination; how the gods have repeatedly granted you further periods of grace, of which you have taken no advantage. It is time now to realize the nature of the universe to which you belong, and of the controlling Power whose offspring you are, and to understand that your time has a limit set to it. Use it, then, to advance your enlightenment; or it will be gone, and never in your power again." It's not enough to have good intentions; we all have good intentions. We need good habits. To have good habits, we need to be motivated enough to resist all the temptations that beg for your time. More often than not, we know those things we NEED to do, but have the natural tendency/inclination to only do those things we WANT to do and FEEL like doing. The challenge is to remind ourselves WHY those things we need to do are so important to us (perhaps by making a list of reasons "why" for each task/item and reading it periodically) ... and thus "converting" them to our WANT to do items! Here are a couple ideas quoted from [The 60-Second Shrink](#) –

The first and probably most important anti-procrastination method is simply to understand the relationship between motivation and action. Most people mistakenly believe that motivation must precede action—that before you can actually do something you must first feel motivated to do it. Right? Wrong! The fact is that in most cases action precedes motivation—that is, once action has been initiated motivation tends to gather momentum and it becomes increasingly easy to continue what has been started. As the old saying goes: "Getting started is the hardest part." [One key to getting started is breaking a task down into bite-size pieces. Once started, as another saying goes, you're "on a roll!" (Truly, success breeds success!)] So ... Don't wait for motivation before taking action – make motivation BY taking action! [read Ready, Fire, Aim!]

[Another useful method the authors suggest is "TIT for TAT" ... or trading Task Interfering Thoughts for Task Activating Thoughts!] "I can cut the lawn tomorrow." "The report is not due until Friday." "I'll take out the recycling after I watch the news" are all examples of Task Interfering Thoughts or TITs. "If I cut the lawn now, I can relax the rest of the weekend," and "Better get started on that report in case something comes up between now and Friday," and "Let me take out the recycling right now so I can enjoy the rest of the evening without unfinished chores hanging over my head" are all examples of Task Activating Thoughts or TATs.

If you have an "overwhelming" number of items on your "Do List," try the following! -

D-mystify your list by deciding whether to:

DO the task and schedule it into your calendar.

DELAY* it because it really can wait

DELEGATE# it because it's not one of your core competencies

DELETE it because you choose not to do it

* Delaying is a creative, positive use of procrastination that enables one to do "first things first" ... seeing to it that the most important is not sacrificed to the least important!

Delegating not only relieves your burden, but is also another way of involving others in a task/project and enabling them to feel part "ownership!" In many cases, expertise is not so crucial an element as participation ... an opportunity for another person to learn/grow).

The sure-fire way to end procrastination is to assign deadlines to all your goals, define your purpose in life, and take ongoing, tenacious action. Live your life with a healthy sense of urgency to accomplish your goals, live up to your full potential, and leave a legacy. Do this and you'll have no time to procrastinate!

(www.PSLinstitute.com)

FIRM, STEADFAST and IMMOVABLE

The overriding principle that will assure us of all the blessings Heavenly Father has in store is that we be firm, steadfast and immovable in obeying Him ... in keeping His commandments and following the promptings of His Spirit.

“Now this was the faith of these of whom I have spoken; they are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually.” (Alma 57:27) And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end. (Alma 27:27) “And he also spake unto Lemuel: O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord! (1 Ne. 2:10) “... in the thirtieth year the church was broken up in all the land save it were among a few of the Lamanites who were converted unto the true faith; and they would not depart from it, for they were firm, and steadfast, and immovable, willing with all diligence to keep the commandments of the Lord.” (3 Ne. 6:14) “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.” (2 Ne. 31:20) “Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with asurety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.” (Ether 12:4) “But he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved.” (JS-M 1:11)

As we can see from the scriptures, Heavenly Father has clearly outlined exactly what blessings He desires for us and how we are to act in order to obtain those blessings.

One might ask, “What do you need to do to *become* firm, steadfast and immovable?” What it takes is a new attitude ... a *change* of heart ... being born again, wherein the carnal man dies and the spiritual man comes fully alive. And what does *this* take. It takes ALL we can do, and more. For it is only by the grace of God that this is possible. And how do we *obtain* this grace? By doing what God expects of us (i.e. keeping his commandments) ... we do OUR part, then He does HIS part. It all starts with *understanding* the commandments ... what He expects and how we can receive his guidance (via the Holy Ghost). This is why we study the scriptures ... they are his “guidebook” to eternal life. With this knowledge, and the evidence/proof thus provided, we are then able to exercise a particle of faith by taking action on what we’ve come to know to be true (because we trust God’s word). As we do so, we reap His blessings ... and as we continue to exercise faith by continuing to do his will, he continues to bless us even more. With the guidance of His Spirit and these resultant blessings, we obtain a perfect knowledge of the truth (we gain a testimony) and therefore become firm, steadfast and immovable! Following are a few scriptures and quotes --

“For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

“Now faith is the substance [assurance, basis, foundation] of things hoped for, the evidence [proof] of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) “And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.” (Ether 12:6)

President Brigham Young said that the Lord “gives a little to his humble followers today, and if they improve upon it, tomorrow he will give them a little more, and the next day a little more. He does not add to that which they do not improve upon” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 90).

“And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens... And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed... And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments ... And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; ...” (Enos 1:4-5, 10-11)

“For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; ” (Mosiah 27:24-25)

Being firm, steadfast and immovable will ultimately allow us the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost and receiving the gift of charity. Our enthusiasm to share our blessings with others will know no bounds (enthusiasm < Gk *entheos*: having a god within) ... and we will truly live with passion! (“No person whose soul is illuminated by the burning Spirit of God can in this world of sin and dense darkness remain passive. He is driven by an irresistible urge to fit himself to be an active agent of God in furthering righteousness and in freeing the lives of men from the bondage of sin.” —Marion G. Romney)

LIKE A RAGING FIRE!

Hello. My name is Charles Augustus Lindbergh ... and am I EXCITED – I just became the first person to fly non-stop cross the Atlantic Ocean!!! My trusty plane, the “Spirit of St. Louis,” and I made the 3600 mile journey from New York to Paris in 33-1/2 hours. We left New York yesterday (May 20, 1927) at 7:52 am and landed in Paris just now (May 21st) – looking at my watch ... 10:22 pm! Many people told me it was impossible for one man to make such a long trip by himself ... and on only one tank of gas. But I had absolutely NO DOUBT I could do it. And WHY, you might ask, did I KNOW I could to it? ... I can tell you in one word – PASSION! I literally had a raging fire within me that was so intense NO ONE could possibly quench it. Now you may ask ... *where* did this passion come from(?) Well ... let me tell you! It takes three “ingredients” -- VISION, HOPE and FULFILLMENT.* Permit me to explain, from my own experience –

You must have a dream (a VISION, if you will) that you have a burning desire to fulfill. Mine came from my interest and skills in flying ... and an extraordinary offer, a purse of \$25,000 to the first aviator to fly nonstop between Paris and New York, by the French businessman, Raymond Orteig! I was already excited about flying and skills acquired from barnstorming ... so I thought, why not me?! The second ingredient, HOPE, comes from planning every detail and seeing *how* you can make your dream a reality ... to formulize the steps that can and must be taken and realizing that because each step is small enough and therefore *possible*, your success will be virtually *inevitable*! Because my reputation as an ace pilot was unassailable in St. Louis, I was able to convince Harry Knight, president of the St. Louis Flying Club, to assist me in contacting and procuring the financial assistance of a number of businessmen locally (hence the name of my plane: the “Spirit of St. Louis”)! Now I needed to find the plane I envisioned – a light weight single engine plane which could fly the entire distance on just a single tank of gas. Ryan Airlines of San Diego, California, took me up on my offer to build such a plane ... and even agreed to construct it in two months rather than the three they said it would take! We planned together what had to be accomplished from one week and one day to the next to create what was needed. Here I must correct myself ... this plane would have tanks both inside and under the wing to increase effectiveness of lift (and keep me from being caught between the gas and the engine in case of a forced landing). The wingspan would be extended to 46 feet for the extra lift needed to support 450 gallons of gas, and the engine would be a state-of-the-art 220 HP, air-cooled, 9-cylinder, Wright J-5C “Whirlwind” outfitted with a special mechanism to keep it greased the entire transatlantic flight. I already knew how to navigate over land and had just enough time to study how to navigate over water. To further conserve on weight, I would sit in a wicker chair rather than a heavy leather pilot’s seat and wear special light weight boots. Since I didn’t need them I would not take a radio or parachute, nor would my plane have gas gauges or navigation lights. My transcontinental maiden flight from California to New York, made in record time, proved the plane “flight worthy” before my transatlantic flight on May 20th! With all these steps planned and taken, there was an intense feeling of FULFILLMENT (that third ingredient of passion) ... and I KNEW with all my heart, like a raging fire, that my success was inevitable!!!

A helpful companion to passion is DRIVE. Drive most often comes from knowing that your dream will benefit others outside of yourself and will live on when you are gone. Here’s a story[#] to illustrate -- In the summer of 1993, the rivers of the Midwest—the Mississippi, Missouri, and others—surged over levees into communities and farmlands. During this worst flooding in regional history, heroic volunteers worked to near exhaustion filling sandbags around the clock. In one instance, they were joined by a group of convicts from a boot-camp prison program in Greene County, Illinois. The convicts had been sent to help with sandbags for shoring up a levee. If it failed, the little town of Inota on the Iowa-Illinois border faced destruction. The criminals worked with furious passion and energy. They refused to sleep. They wouldn’t leave the sandbag brigades even to eat. Still, the levee gave way and the town, with its two hundred houses, was lost. Now the convicts wept openly in frustration and compassion. Why had they suddenly become good Samaritans? Because after dealing in drugs, violence, and destruction, they had a positive purpose in life, perhaps for the first time. They had a mission to save a town. Observing people who cared for each other working as one for the same goal, they began to care.

* Resource: Mentored by a Millionaire, by Steven Scott, pp. 260-263

from Empires of the Mind, by Denis Waitley, p. 137