

Why 'doing nothing' just isn't an option

by Mark Pavilons

We are reminded, time and again, to use our time wisely while we're running around on this planet.

We should make the most out of every day, every hour in fact.

And yet, there are days, maybe even weeks, when we are struggling, and resort to just doing nothing at all.

While I enjoyed some time off over the holidays and embraced a few days of lounging, it did get 'old,' like cheese left out on the counter. I found I was sore and maybe even bloated after a week of inactivity.

Given we only have a limited time, this isn't very productive. Sure, we all need 'down time,' but that time can be better spent.

I agree that doing nothing can bring things into perspective. But life is about balance.

My oldest daughter, who's never idle and is constantly buzzing between yoga, zumba and various appointments, said 'there's no fun in doing nothing.'

She's right, of course.

I recall when I was in my late teens and early 20s, we hated being idle. We were always itching to just get out of the house and do something, even if it was only to meet up with friends and just 'hang out.'

We also knew our priorities and responsibilities. Chores first, then homework, then fun. That gave us a lot of motivation to actually do what was asked of us. Our parents made sure we didn't lollygag. In fact, they typically only had to ask once, just once. If they had to ask a second time, we knew we were in trouble.

While things have changed dramatically, we hang on to some of those lessons. Old school ideology tends to stick with us.

And today, it seems many have adopted the do-nothing strategy.

How is that people 'argely those in the civil service, banking or customer service areas 're content to do nothing'? Sure, they tell you that 'someone will look into this for you,' but really folks, most often our request or inquiry disappears down some black hole in the department.

Maybe it does get 'bumped up' the ladder. Maybe it gets transferred to some desktop in the basement, of an office that's currently unoccupied.

These workers have a unique skill down pat 'the art of doing nothing without feeling guilty.

In the 'real world,' if our boss asks us to do something we do it. We often don't have a choice and do our best to comply.

Those customer service types have the public to answer to and not necessarily their managers.

Requests fly into the company, while staffers are 'responding to a larger than expected volume' of calls. I have never once heard the automated voice say 'it's pretty slow today, you're next in line!'

If there's a high volume of calls, then perhaps hiring more people to answer them would be in order. In my opinion, there's no reason for someone to remain on hold for 30 minutes with banking institutions or government agencies who have the resources to meet any and all demands from their customers.

For banks, while they claim "your call is important to us," it really isn't. They don't care about Joe Average and his call about an unfair charge or overpayment. And if they do have to issue a refund or credit, they take their sweet time.

I really can't comprehend why electronic transfers or transactions take 7 to 10 business days to complete. It's the push of a button, through a pretty intelligent computer system. It's instant. I would even accept 24-36 hours, but no more. There's no excuse.

If you work for such an institution and can explain that to me, please get in touch. I'll be right with you!

Banks sure waste no time in debiting our accounts when we make a purchase or pay a bill.

Also, many customer service reps are reading from a prepared script, a "cheat sheet" if you will on troubleshooting. I'm sure there are several mentions in their hand books along the lines of "if it sounds too complicated, put them on hold and send them to another extension."

I'm not sure if "doing nothing" is similar to just showing up, but here's another thorn in my side. For trades such as plumbers and electricians, they typically charge \$200 or more for just arriving at your door. I understand the term "service call," but where's the service in ringing the doorbell and stepping inside? The rest of the call is often less climactic, cheaper and done quickly.

Okay, some of us get paid to just show up to the office every day, but it's wrapped up in our pay cheques, not a separate bonus for gracing everyone with our presence.

Speaking of showing up at the office, none other than the President of the United States makes his daily trips to the office all about shock and awe.

There's no doubt that every time Donald Trump opens his mouth, our collective mouths drop wide open in disbelief. I can't imagine that his hare-brained ideas and orders are supported by his team and a host of politicians representing the people. Are Americans doing nothing to curb his willy-nilly actions? Are they merely accepting the cutting of diversity funding, foreign aid and "invading" and "occupying" a foreign land and sending Palestinian refugees elsewhere?

And the world watches in horror and yet what are the repercussions? Trump has withdrawn the U.S. from the United Nations Human Rights Council, and has asked for reviews of the U.S. funding of UNESCO. He dismantled USAID, which spends roughly \$50 billion annually on foreign aid and development assistance.

Cost-cutting in the name of isolationism? In just a couple weeks, the U.S. has taken a giant leap backward, dragging the whole world down.

Standing by and doing nothing is a sin, almost as bad as committing the sin itself. Our history is filled with examples of the silent lie and acts of omission, to utterly disastrous ends.

Albert Einstein once remarked that the world is a dangerous place, "not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."

Let's stop doing nothing and do something, anything!