

Stall no more on Mother's Day

Curtis Seltzer

BLUE GRASS, Va.—An inevitable part of growing older is growing slower. Most things take longer to do, and you can't do them as long as you used to when you're doing them.

You don't get around to things you should have done.

I need to speak to someone in authority about this.

To make aging worse, it's often hard to tell whether increasing slowness is also a matter of becoming increasingly lazy. Age-related slowing is one thing. It can be understood and accepted.

Laziness, on the other hand, has been much maligned in recent centuries even though it's highly esteemed among individuals who distrust purposeful activity. Had certain manical kings, dictators, presidents and individuals been less industrious, the world would be better off.

Every virtue can have a downside, and every flaw, the odd benefit.

The two variants of laziness with which I've become increasing familiar in my senior citizenship are stalling and quitting.

Of the two, stalling requires more dedication and raw intelligence. It must be carried off with finesse.

Excuses, which are the building blocks of every successful stall, must have plausible credibility. They require imagination, Old-World craftsmanship and attention to detail. One good excuse is worth a thousand words.

Stalling, in my opinion, is much preferred to quitting. For one thing, stalling prevents conditions from arising that lead to quitting. For another, stalling can always be renamed, planning or studying options.

Quitting, too, can be renamed. Call it, "taking a break." But that sleight-of-tongue never holds up under interrogation. Most quitting smells a little, and some smells a lot.

Quitting leaves a job half done, an ever-present reminder that it needs to be finished. Nagging of this type leads to depression and loss of appetite.

Stalling, in contrast, leaves the unsatisfactory status quo in pristine shape. It allows you to fly free for years without drag or baggage. Stallers are emotionally healthy and good eaters to boot.

Farms produce numerous opportunities to perfect stalling strategies. It is important, however, to learn which jobs can be stalled safely and which

can't. You should not, for example, put off planting corn until Halloween, but you can postpone fixing the roof...until it rains.

I've become so expert in the art of judicious stalling that leaders from around the world have promised that they will sign up for my online tutorial on procrastination, though none have so far. The longer they delay, the higher their grade.

Greek politicians, to name one client group, have been in constant contact during the last few months in seeking ways to prolong their crisis, as is. I suggested that they elect a government so hopelessly divided that they would spend the Nation's few remaining euros on new elections every three months with the same result. They've agreed.

I've promised them that stalling will bring down the country and revive the city-state system that will allow Sparta and Athens to start duking it out once again with the Persians and the Trojans. A new Socrates will wander the ruins in sandals and a bed sheet, asking unanswerable questions of teenagers.

The Germans have asked me how they can delay having Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain fall into the last functional lap in Europe—theirs. I've advised Chancellor Merkel to do what Britain did some years ago: dig a moat around its borders and float the island into the Atlantic Ocean. This will take several years, during which she is not to accept collect calls from any country that is better at producing world-class olive oil than world-class turbocharged diesel engines.

And the biggest stall of all?—that's easy.

Not thanking our Moms when it mattered for doing the best they could with what they had to work with, namely us.

All those speedy, athletic guys on television saying, "Hi Mom." Not good enough.

They should be saying, "Thanks Mom."

So even as age slows me, I will stall no longer. While it's 40 years too late, "Happy Mother's Day. Thanks Mom."

She'd understand. Moms always do.

Curtis Seltzer is a land consultant, columnist and author of **How To Be a DIRT-SMART Buyer of Country Property**, available at www.curtis-seltzer.com where his columns are posted. His latest books -- **Snowy Mountain Breakdown**, **Land Matters** and **Blue Grass Notes** -- are available through his website.

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