

Advice for the Home Team Toolbox

by Dr. Debi Warner



Dear Dr. Debi,

With spring coming, I can't wait to get at my projects. I get energized with the longer days, especially having sun after work really gets my batteries charged. But then I can get over done. Got any ideas on best ways to channel that time?
Signed, Ready to Burst

Dear Sunshine,

The changes with spring are so super! Lots of people who move away say they most miss the spark that surges inside when the leaves bud, air warms, and the sun suddenly stays longer. It just can't be beat.

So, how do you funnel that excitement into an earthy project without going hog wild and dancing all day? Well, the dancing is fun, but we can indeed get so excited that we start too many projects and end up bogging ourselves down in an unfinished state of being. Who wants that? So, let's see what is going on inside of us and find out how to enjoy the surge for its own sake.

The body really reacts to seasons. Birds migrate; many animals hibernate; and our bodies also change. When spring arrives, we are more observant, energetic, ambitious and courageous. Well, more or less. In any case, many people find it pleasurable to experience the boost of spring.

But the extra energy can be like a slippery throttle on an off-road bike. You touch it and burst forth; you back off and it catches some more; you wind it up and it misses. Ouch. It feels good to have that powerful two-stroke engine pull you forward, but what a let down when it fails to catch. We need to catch our energy and gear it to our own engine and choose a good path we want to ride on.

One of the best activities for those initial surges happens with fresh air and exertion. In fact, many folks just gravitate to those naturally and find themselves out late raking leaves and fixing barn boards on a surprising spring evening. It is fabulous.

But the enthusiasm can be intoxicating. There are plenty of folks who get wound up in that moment and end up pulling off faulty siding, committing to a huge task before they know it. Oops. Maybe set your scope ahead for just day-length tasks and program your mind

to sleep on any larger commitments.

The impulsiveness of spring is part of its charm and allure. We don't need to knock it, just work with it. Maybe get yourself dressed for rugged work, then take a walk around the property. Notice things; pick up some stuff; dig a little here and there; but make it a goal to walk all the way around the house. When you get back to the start, then sit down and have some water. Now, breathe and scan the little tour again in your mind, playing the scenes like a movie. Breathing again, let your determination loose on something you saw, but with the nod that you will finish whatever you pick, something just small enough to get it done that day.

Does that sound too limiting? Well, it is a little. But that small condition on your impulses will save you plenty of fuss of your own and for the rest of the Home Team. Why? Folks who live with you are also invested in how things happen, what gets fixed next and what happens to your time and resources. It does work out to make decisions in coordination with the rest of the team when you are taking on a big load.

Don't worry, the joy of spring surge will reward you anyway and you won't mind the small gauge on your agenda. You can get lost in the projects you jump in – no matter their size, as long as it is outside and vigorous.

By the way, that good exertion and fresh air will help you sleep well. One of the funky things about spring is setting our clocks forward. That means that you get up an hour earlier and should go to bed earlier too. But most folks, getting up at that earlier time feel better by the evening and tend to extend their day with one foot in each time zone. Our inner clocks would have us operate on 25 or more hours a day, an observation from sleep research. So, when the wall clocks themselves are wacky with daylight savings, we naturally push the limits and extend our day, rather than seek good sleep. So, if you experience that exertion after work with your surge, you will indeed be more likely to hit the hay ready to Z. You will just need to choose to do that.

Just a caution about that sleep change – we can become uncoordinated when our sleep pattern changes. So be cautious that first week when driving and working on special tasks. Give your brain a chance to catch up too. Thankfully that outdoor activity is just the cure!

Happy Home Team!

Dr. Debi

Dr. Debi Warner is the Founder of Renovation Psychology® radio host, and author of the book, Putting the Home Team to Work, available now online at RenovationPsychology.com. Dr. Debi provides advice for greater domestic harmony to folks who are renovating their home – for True Home Improvement. This column is offered for enjoyment and enhancement and is not intended to replace your personal medical care. Photo by Bob Jenks, St. Johnsbury, Vt.

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