

Advice for the Home Team Toolbox

by Dr. Debi Warner



*Dear Dr. Debi,
We have more than a dozen projects unfinished. I try to ask my partner every day, "When will we finish the house?" But they seem to do less and less. What can we do?*

*Signed,
Under Piles of Boards*

Dear Under Boards,

It is important to regain the joy in your project so that you both are motivated to move on. You will need to be a bit careful, because a couple of things can go on between you, when folks get into the situation you find your self. Unfortunately, loving inquiries can backfire and actually contribute to the go-nowhere conditions. Good news is – there are a bunch of easier things you can do about it that can get you all back on track.

The notion that a large project demands great time and energy will often glue a renovator in their chair. Our own ideas and words about our project can either intimidate our efforts or open the gate to action. It is possible that your inquiries may have the opposite impact that you desire, because of this. "Finish the house" sounds huge and can overwhelm most people. Just changing your question to a smaller step can bring this down to human size.

There can be feelings that develop from the stagnant situation you describe. Even grown ups who know a lot about building can feel overwhelmed and avoid the projects they love when they feel the pressure to do a large project perfectly. Key words are Large and Perfectly.

It is often good to have Home Team meetings, and at your next meetings, you can focus on which of the projects have some steps that are accessible to do. Don't pick big ones, but some small ones to choose from that can be completed in satisfaction in one or a couple of short work sessions. The point of this is to get back into the swing and to find the encouragement that comes from the tasks it self. You like renovating because it satisfies – let it do its job and send you some satisfaction, starting in little bites.

About perfection – I find this is a top contender for discontent among Home Teams. Yet it can easily be solved. We just need to recognize that we are amateurs at renovating and that it would be a miracle if we did these projects perfectly. Your love for each other does not hinge on being a perfect renovator; your need for help does not make you less of a person; and it is not hard to find someone who can give you the advice or help you need. Just getting these ideas into our brains will be the key. So, read them to each other at your next Home Team meeting.

So – getting to the task. As you get going and start touching the tools and projects, all sorts of good things happen inside of you. You break the habit of walking past a project. Your own feet and bones start remembering how this goes and not yearn so much for the chair. A new attitude develops inside, that finds contentment in action, moving, and seeing things take shape in front of you.

This negates the months (or years) of absence from the projects and helps one overcome the grip of feelings, fear, and inertia of that chair. Kind of like getting back on a horse after falling, we regain our balance and overcome the reluctance that could keep us off.

At your meetings, when it comes to planning, you will want to especially plan two things – when to start and how to have fun. A good start time that is reasonable for the start of a short task will do wonders for making this really happen.

And the fun! Gotta have fun in the balance. Rewards for effort, refreshment for the workers, amusement and rest are all important aspects of successful teamwork. Without these, your team will disintegrate. With them your Home Team will thrive and strengthen for the projects and for life!

Happy Home Team!

Dr. Debi

For another great resource on kicking procrastination out of your life, Dr Debi recommends reading *The Now Habit* by Dr. Neil Fiore.

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.

Dr. Debi has a consultation practice, from her studio in Littleton, NH, with house calls all over the East coast.

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