

I'll start tomorrow

I often wondered why the former self-service restaurant chain, Morrison's, now Piccadilly's, always had the array of desserts greeting you when you walked in and picked up your tray. Eyes popped wide, stomachs expanded as they all cried out, "Pick me." Usually hungry patrons had no problem in choosing a scrumptious dessert. In order to ease their conscience, they would then order a diet drink to compensate.

Secondly, I often wondered why patrons drive up to a fitness center and then, if there is not a parking place close to the door, they drive around until one becomes available.

I just got back from a Chinese buffet. The trouble with it was that the choices were too many and the plate not big enough and I didn't want to be a pig and go back for seconds.

The whole experience reminds me of self-control or the lack thereof. So often, we see life as one giant all-you-can-eat buffet that not only offers us more calories, information, sex, procrastination, pornography, as well as any excuse to live for today without its consequences for tomorrow.

Everything seems to be dictated by the need for instant gratification. We have to have and experience everything now. Freedom, privileges, impulses drive us to have it all now, without having to wait. The kid who throws a temper tantrum in the candy store echoes the indwelling desire that we need it now, no matter what the cost.

The Internet has become our workhorse for research, for answers, for information as we Google and discover. We show up at work but, with Internet available computers, we are easily distracted from work to answer the latest email, chat invitation, the latest YouTube video in our inbox or listen to our favorite Internet radio station which demoted the boom box years ago. We can shop and drop our credit cards without leaving our screen and track our purchases along the way.

A cursory glance at any Ann Landers or Dear Abby columns reminds one of the fickleness of people's commitment as well as the things that cripple a marriage – affairs, abuse, alcohol, drugs, loneliness, suicide, jealousy, anger, resentment.

Kiddingly, sometimes, I suggest to students that teachers should give them more homework. They abhor the suggestion. I also notice that, with homework, we start by doing the homework in the subjects we enjoy first and leave the distasteful subject homework to the end. All along the way, in the back of our minds, is the distasteful thought that we have to face the part of the homework we abhor eventually. I suggest to kids to do the homework in the subjects they hate first, then, with that out of the way, they can enjoy doing the homework they really enjoy. Obviously, it falls on deaf ears as self-control is absent.

Recently, I came across some statistics about suicide. The global suicide rate is up 60%. In America, four times more men than women commit suicide but women try it twice as often. The great psychiatric guru, B.F. Skinner, saw suicide as another form of self-control; an effective way of ending the deep heartaches within.

Tomorrow is another day; another day to put something on the back burner; on the long-finger; to postpone the pain, to procrastinate. And when tomorrow comes, there will be other opportunities to postpone things again until tomorrow because, invariably, tomorrow will always be tomorrow. It will never come and face us with the need to act, to diet, to change, to face, to decide, to tackle the issue, to face the demons.

St. Paul, probably reflecting on the ancient Olympic games, reminded the Corinthians "that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize. Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly. I do not fight as if I were shadow-boxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."(I Cor.9:24-27)

I knew there was something I was supposed to do today. Now, I will have to forego Paul's advice and maybe get around to doing it tomorrow.