



## Get Busy!

I think it has probably been quite a while since I wrote anything about the workroom construction project that is underway at my place. For those who don't know what is going on, I am renovating the lower level of my home - transforming it from a plain empty concrete 'box' into a fully appointed workshop for my printmaking. I began the renovation shortly after moving into this building nearly nine years ago, but have to confess that the job is still far from being finished.

Now that's not really a 'confession', because there is no real reason for me to be ashamed that the work is still not complete. I am very busy with my printmaking, and every hour that I work on the renovation is one more hour that I can't work on my prints, and they have to come first. The obvious solution to such a 'dilemma' would be to hire a carpenter to do the renovation work, but - in addition to the fact that I simply don't have the resources to do that - I really would like to handle this by myself. It is kind of a point of pride - after all, what could be more basic than that a craftsman should build his own workshop!

I'm not being completely honest with you though, when I blame the slow pace on simply being busy with other work. Nor is it just a matter of procrastination. The thing that keeps causing the delays - and this has happened at every major stage of the construction - is the difficulty that I have with finding the 'best way' to move forward.

The desire to do a job well - really well - is something that would seem to be a positive characteristic in a person, but if taken to extremes, it can be a real handicap. In my case, I have an over-riding compulsion to always figure out the best way to do the work. It might be the most efficient way, or the way that gets the most attractive result, or the way that needs the least maintenance later ... the word 'best' can have many conflicting definitions ... but whatever it is, I want to find it! So, because of this I inevitably end up with 'No, can't do it that way ... there must be a better way ...'

The job facing me at the moment is the construction of the stairwell, and it's been about two years since I got to the point where that was the next major step. And I haven't done it, because even though I've made plans, and sketched sketches, and made lists, and created Plan A and Plan B ... the inevitable hesitation about settling on one particular method because I *know* that later on I'll think of a 'better' way to do it, results in ... total paralysis!

Meanwhile, I think of my neighbour down the street, who is also a 'handyman' type. During the same time period that I have been 'thinking' about my stairwell, he has built an entire shop for his wife, who is a self-employed hairdresser. He planned it as he went along - the same approach that I am using for my workshop - but he doesn't 'give a damn'. He just charges ahead any old way and does it. If two pieces of wood don't fit - bang them harder. Don't have enough of the right kind of paint - just mix something else for the last wall. If a professional carpenter looked at his work they would say 'That's a pretty funky job!' But there is his wife, using the room and making a living as a hairdresser, and people come in and say 'Wow, what a neat place this is!' It's not 'perfect' at all, but it is eminently useable.

Back here in this building, my workshop isn't 'perfect' either, but I still don't even have a staircase! So which of these two approaches makes more sense? We all know the answer ...

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When my father reads this, he'll just shake his head. During our family years, he always took the 'get it done!' approach to home maintenance and construction. But now that I think about this a bit more carefully, I suspect that maybe he and I *do* share this same kind of character. Perhaps he too would have liked to 'think about' each step very carefully ...

But in his case, there was somebody else present - somebody who wasn't willing to wait two years for a stairwell to get finished - and I can well imagine what *she* would have said about it!

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