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## RAINY DAY WISDOM

What the rain has to say about dreariness, exuberance, and getting yourself going again – especially on those days when you just don't feel like it.



Image Source: Pixabay

by  
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## Introduction

Ever stop to think about how many things you already know? There are literally *zillions* of them – some big, some small, some important, some trivial. What we've got stored away in our brains is nothing short of amazing! Yet with all we *do* know, there are still times when we don't make *nearly* as much progress on things as we'd like.

### **Why is it that sometimes we just can't seem to remember how the heck to get ourselves unstuck and moving again?**

And ...

### **Why is it that even when we *can* remember, we can't seem to put it into action?**

Everyone gets stuck some times. There's nothing wrong with – or even unusual about – getting stuck. But what you do once you *are* stuck can make a world of difference in what does – or does not – happen next.

William James, founder of the school of philosophy known as Pragmatism, said, "Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task."

Now I don't know about you, but when I get stuck, it's *terribly* exhausting. I stop thinking logically or clearly. I take twice as long to do half as much (and three times as poorly). The littlest of things become soooooo frustrating or distracting that I can't help feel stuck-in-the-muck with the rain pouring down on poor, poor, pitiful me!

<Sigh!>

Yet, I don't feel I'm alone in this. In fact, I KNOW that an awful lot of people feel exactly the same way. Maybe you're one of them. And if you are – even if it's just *some* of the time – then this e-book was written for you.

Over the years, I've talked with literally hundreds, if not thousands, of people about WHY they get stuck and WHY they can't get motivated and WHY this is all happening to them. And you know what? I've come to realize that WHY isn't nearly as important as I once thought it was. Think about it – even if we could come to understand the WHY, we'd still be left with the larger issue of HOW ~

### ***How can we get back on track, regardless of the 'why?'***

And ...

### ***How can we do that sooner, rather than later?***

The shift from asking WHY to asking HOW, is pragmatic – thank you, William James – but it's also important. Because once we know HOW, we can then DO exactly that. And by doing that, or even something like that, by definition we will no longer be stuck.

So let's use the analogy of rain as a way of moving from the WHY to the HOW. Suffice it to say that it doesn't matter WHY it's raining; it just IS. Given that, what follows are 14 lessons from the rain about HOW to regain our resolve, HOW to become more energized, HOW to get unstuck and moving forward again, and HOW to make it all happen sooner, rather than later.

I don't always remember these lessons, myself. But whenever I do, I find that things get magically easier for me – and far less fatiguing, as well. My hope is that Rainy Day Wisdom helps you in the same way, come rain or come shine.

To sunny days ahead,



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# RAINY DAY WISDOM

Barry Zweibel

## 1. Puddles are for splashing!



Sure, there are probably more serious ways to start this e-book, but, hey, being overly serious is probably what has gotten you stuck in the first place! So let's start by having a little fun. Think of it as Mood Management, which really makes sense, because when we're in a good mood, we're more likely to be relaxed, receptive, happy, playful, and creative. So take fifteen minutes or so, and go have some fun. Dare to let your inner child run free. Go on. Put a smile on your face and e-n-j-o-y yourself! Then come back when you're ready, and continue. Ready? Go on, scat!

## 2. The sun can peak through any part of any cloud.



What this means is that even if we're unable to move forward with one thing, we quite possibly can move forward with another thing that's equally important. So instead of just lamenting that you're stuck, go find something you're willing to work on. And here's the best part – it often doesn't even matter *what* other thing you do ... as long as you do *something* ... because DOING is the solution. So go DO. Go do something that you know will make you feel glad once you're through with it. String a few of those together, and you're well on your way to a pretty good day, whether you move forward on your primary goal, or not.

## 3. You may need new wiper blades.



Imagine yourself in a car, it's pouring, and the windshield is all streaky and blurred. It's hard to see things clearly when your vision is distorted. So you know all that chatter you have rattling around in your brain about how you're such a procrastinator or don't have what it takes to get things done? Well, that's distorting your vision, as well. Now maybe some of it is *sometimes* true. But even if it is, by definition

that also means that it's not ALWAYS true. In fact, it also means that sometimes it's definitely UNtrue.

Here's an exercise for you to try: Make a list of each and every thing that you think is wrong with you. Read each item aloud followed by, "Sometimes I'm like this, but not always. Not NOW. Now, I've got new wiper blades and I'm seeing things far more clearly."

#### 4. Increasing the (barometric) pressure brings better weather.



This may seem counter-intuitive, but when we're stuck, it's often because there's not *enough* pressure on us to get the job done. All those conflicting priorities may *feel* like pressure, but it's really more the fatigue of procrastination ... and the passing of time ... that's wearing us down. And since we tend to procrastinate even more when we're worn down, the cycle repeats itself over and over again in a miserable downward spiral.

Contrast that to what tends to happen when we're under REAL pressure. REAL pressure is what we feel when something *must* get done. Don't feel like it? Too bad, it **MUST** get done. Can't find the time? Too bad, **MUST** means *MUST*. Don't know how to do it? Better learn because you're running out of time and there's absolutely no wiggle-room on this one.

It's a credit to the species that when things **MUST** get done, they tend **TO** get done. So how might you **INCREASE** the pressure on you to complete the task that's got you stuck? How might you eliminate the wiggle-room so that you simply *can't* procrastinate? Asking others to hold you accountable is a good first step. Another approach is to tie the completion of the task to the start of something else that you really **WANT** to do. You know that show you want to see, dinner out with friends, and that way-cool thing at your favorite store? Treat yourself to whatever you'd like -- but not a moment before completing your work.

## 5. Let the wind fill your sails.



Sure, high winds can be treacherous. Anyone who's ever lived through a hurricane or tornado can attest to that. But it's not *usually* like that. More often the wind is a natural power that can be harnessed to take you places.

So where's the wind blowing you? It may not be a straight line to where you intended to go, but that doesn't mean there isn't value to be derived from going anyway. Be open to the possibility that a temporary change in direction can be exactly what you need right now. Use it as a reason TO change your direction – permanently or temporarily – and feel the wind in your face lift your spirit.

## 6. Sometimes, it's best to just ride out the storm.



Sometimes Mother Nature just likes to remind us who's *really* in charge. And who can blame her?!

Paradoxically, there's *always* weather, but any specific weather is temporary. Storms don't last forever. So if you can't seem to get *anything* done, no matter how hard you try, try NOT working so hard. Doing LESS is often a great remedy for what ails ya!

A little more on LESS: Many of us rely on our mind to get things done. So it's not surprising that when we get stuck, we rely on our mind to get us free. Yet, like a car stuck in the mud, when we gas the accelerator, we usually just make things worse. The harder we try, the deeper and deeper we sink into the mud.

Stop spinning your wheels by thinking *less*, not more.

## 7. See what you see in the clouds.



This is about giving yourself permission to be totally free and creative, and to let that creativity recharge your batteries. So go to an art gallery and admire the work. Or if you're not the museum type, go to the mall and

people-watch. Or imagine yourself as some sort of superhero. What would be your special power? How would you use it? See the world through a child's eyes and look for pictures in the clouds, or go to the beach and play in the sand. Or draw with markers, have some



cookies and milk, or talk with your pet. Give the adult in you a well-deserved mini-vacation and come back refreshed and invigorated.

### 8. Weather is a location-specific phenomenon.



If it's raining here, there's a good chance that the sun is shining somewhere else nearby. So make a point of changing your *personal geography* by taking a new route to or from work today, trying something new for lunch, socializing with some different people, or just doing some old things in new ways.

Sometimes attitude affects behavior, as in the way that Affirmations help us change what we do. Other times, it's behavior that affects attitude: The more we practice new skills, the more confident we become in doing them. So if the sun's not shining where you *currently* are, see if you can find where the sun *is* shining by shaking up a few of your daily routines and seeing what it does to your mood, energy level, and sense of well-being.

### 9. In every weather forecast they talk about both highs AND lows.



Some say that to fully appreciate the good things in life, you have to experience some of the tougher things, as well. Like opposite sides of the same coin, each helps define the other by clarifying exactly what the other is not. Heads means *not* tails. Tails means *not* heads. And *both sides* are needed to form the whole coin. (This might be a good place to write about the Möbius Strip – a one-sided, one-edged, thing-a-ma-jig – or the *half a hole* Ringo gave his friend, Jeremy, in *Yellow Submarine*. But I digress.)

That there are two sides to every coin informs us what to do when we're feeling particularly stuck – that is, flip it over. And the best way to do this is to ask yourself the following question: "What would I be doing right now if I *wasn't* stuck?" being sure to answer yourself in as much detail as you possibly can. In other words, what *specifically* would you be doing right now if you *weren't* stuck? Simply

considering the question is often all that's needed to unblock your mind and dissipate your dreariness.

### **10. You can always get an umbrella or pair of galoshes if needed.**



When things aren't going well, many people have a tendency to cut themselves off from the outside world. Yet often times, it's our friends, family members, colleagues – and even complete strangers – who can provide exactly what we need. Case in point: A while back, I was trying to solve a particularly tricky problem I was facing. As each day passed, I found myself becoming more and more reluctant to talk with anyone who might be able to help me puzzle through the matter – I was cutting myself off from the outside world. On the same day that I realized that, I ran into a fellow I had seen a few times but never really spoken to before. I struck up a conversation, and wouldn't you know it, not only had he faced exactly what I was grappling with, but he had some real pearls of wisdom to share about dealing with it!

So what kind of support would be really helpful for YOU right now? Even if you don't know WHO can help you like that, chances are good that just getting clear on WHAT would be helpful will bring that help closer to you. And maybe, as a result, you'll realize who CAN help, as well!

### **11. Look at what's showing up on your radar.**



Storm-tracking is part art and part science, which is probably why forecasting isn't always locked-in accurate. But over the years, the accuracy of weather forecasting has been improving dramatically. It wasn't that long ago that a 72-hour forecast was not much more than a guess. Now, most 5-day forecasts are pretty accurate. Sure, the technology has improved, but INTERPRETING weather model data has become much more advanced, as well.

The lesson here is that the more we can scan the horizon for what's out there – for what's headed our way – the less disruptive those



problems will be when they arrive. The business term for this is “*thinking more strategically*” and it’s based on the notion that there are signals out there that can alert us to problems – and opportunities – sooner, rather than later ... if we’re properly tuned in to them.

These signals often take the form of a flash of understanding, or insight so the more we can start to notice these lightning bolts and capture these fleeting ‘feelings’ the more prepared we’ll be to deal with whatever comes our way.

So scan your radar. And whenever you get an ah-hah, or a new idea, or something just suddenly makes sense, take a moment to write it down, date it, and put it in a special folder. Call it your Incubator File because even though these may not be fully-developed ideas, they’re still worth nurturing to see what they might turn into once given some time to ... incubate.

Then, on a regular basis, review your Incubator File to see what you see. If you do this, you’ll probably find that some ideas still need more time, but others are ready to go – ideas that would have been lost if you weren’t paying attention to what was on your radar.

One more note about Incubator Files: Don’t just capture your ideas in words. Clip magazine ads, interesting looking graphics, fonts, colors, textures - whatever catches your eye (and tweaks your interest) could very well be a seed worth cultivating.

## 12. A good downpour isn’t necessarily bad.



Funny thing about the rain – the same stuff that gets us all soaking wet is what makes the flowers grow, and the grass green. (April showers bring May flowers.) It feeds the fruits and vegetables we eat. It helps the trees provide shade. It gives losing ball teams an extra day off to rest and regroup. (Chicago Cubs fan.) It lets dogs wash down their coats and gets them an extra ‘goodie’ once you’ve finished drying them off! (Angel, a yellow Lab.)

So the next time you're feeling sorry for yourself because you're feeling stuck in rainy-day mode, don't fall victim to the woe-is-me trap. Instead, go get yourself a nice piece of fruit to enjoy. Order a salad. Take a nap under the shade of an old oak tree or on the couch while you're watching your favorite rainy-day movie. Or just wash down the dog for the fun of it. (You may want to wash the dog anyway – she's smelling like she rolled in something, isn't she?!)

### 13. Weather forecasts are often inaccurate



Just because it looks like a storm's-a-comin' doesn't mean it really is. Yet we often get spooked into believing that being a LITTLE stuck automatically means that we're going to get a LOT stuck. And while, yes, the slope *can* be a bit slippery, it's by no means a fait accompli. People get UNstuck all the time. And so can you. It takes some discipline, but you *can* do it. You've done it before; you can do it again.

### 14. Clogged storm sewers can be unclogged.



It's always a mess when the rain comes down so heavily that the streets flood. But the flooding rarely lasts all that long. Why? Because there's usually someone who's willing to go outside and clear away the leaves and debris that are blocking the street grates. It's not an elegant process, but it works. So if you're still finding it hard to help YOURSELF get something done, go try helping someone ELSE get something done. You'll still be stuck but they'll owe you one, which may be just the boost you've needed all along!

## Conclusion

So how about it? Isn't it time that *you* got back to work? Isn't it time that you *stopped* feeling sorry for yourself and got going again? Sure, feeling stuck is the pits. But by virtue of you reading this e-book, you now have fourteen different strategies you can use – starting NOW – to get unstuck and moving forward again. Surely, there's *something* in here that might work for you, isn't there?!

And once you get started, you'll pretty soon realize that the worst is over, that the clouds are parting, and the sun is starting to shine brightly for you again. And as it does, be sure to take a moment and admire the rainbow that's there. It'll be big, and beautiful, and just off of your right shoulder, congratulating you for having weathered the storm and wishing you the best for all that's to follow.



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